



All-Party Parliamentary University Group

Weekly update

9 – 13 December 2024

A regular digest of House of Commons, House of Lords, and higher education sector business.

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Parliamentary business

Education oral questions

On Monday 9 December, the Secretary of State for Education, Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP, and her ministerial colleagues answered oral questions in the House of Commons.

During topical questions, there was the following exchange with Shadow Education Secretary, Rt Hon Laura Trott MP, about the Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023:

Laura Trott MP: The Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2023 was passed by Parliament prior to the election. By the end of its passage through both Houses, the Labour party had agreed in principle with the need for the Act. However, just after the election, Government sources said the Act was a Tory “hate speech charter”. Now I read in the papers that the Department may commence the legislation without the tort. Can I ask the Secretary of State to clear up this mess and to tell the House what her plan is for the freedom of speech Act?

Bridget Phillipson MP: This Government are absolutely committed to freedom of speech and academic freedom. We want to make sure that our universities are places of intellectual challenge and rigour, where people will be exposed to views with which they may disagree. We paused commencement of the previous Government’s legislation because of the serious concerns raised by very many people, including from minority groups, about how the Act would apply. We are consulting with stakeholders, and we intend to set out our position in due course.

Laura Trott MP: Since the Secretary of State decided to pause this legislation, gender-critical women, among others, have racked up enormous legal fees, which have caused some to remortgage their houses. Professor Jo Phoenix has said publicly that if it had been in force, the Act would have saved her that precise ordeal. Inaction has consequences, and this delay is causing harm. Will the Secretary of State accept that, and get on with implementing the legislation?

Bridget Phillipson MP: I do accept that academics should be free to express a wide range of views, and there will be views that people sometimes find challenging, but it also matters that we have legislation that is workable. I am afraid that the legislation the right hon. Lady’s party set out just did not



achieve that, and we have had to consider so many challenges raised by minority groups. The former Universities Minister herself said that she was concerned about what it would mean for Holocaust denial on campus. We need to get this right.

You can [read a transcript](#) and [watch the session](#).

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill – HoC committee stage

On Monday 9 December, the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill passed its final reading in the House of Commons. It will have its second reading in the House of Lords on Tuesday 7 January.

You can [read more](#).



Forthcoming business

Christmas recess

On Thursday 19 December, the House of Commons and House of Lords will both rise for Christmas recess. Both Houses will return on Monday 6 January.

You can [read more about recess dates.](#)

Written questions and statements

Universities: Student Numbers

Lord Wigley (Plaid Cymru): To ask His Majesty's Government how many students were undertaking undergraduate degree courses at universities in England, at the most recent date for which figures are available, whose home addresses were in (1) Wales, (2) Scotland, and (3) Northern Ireland. [UIN HL2486]

Minister for Skills, Baroness Smith of Malvern: The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA – now part of JISC), is responsible for collecting and publishing data about UK higher education. The latest statistics refer to the 2022/23 academic year.

Figure 9 of HESA's 'Higher Education Student Statistics: UK, 2022/23' reports the number of enrolments for UK providers based on student permanent address prior to study between the academic years 2018/19 and 2022/23 and is available by students' study level. Figure 9 can be accessed at: <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/sb269/figure-9>.

It is possible to filter the figures in the table to undergraduate degrees in English universities by setting the 'Country of HE provider' drop-down menu to 'England', and the 'Level of study' drop-down menu to 'All undergraduate'.

Higher Education: Graduates

Matt Bishop MP (Labour): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, whether they are taking steps to financially support individuals who have already completed a university degree to retrain in another area at university. [UIN 17053]

Minister for Children and Families, Janet Daby MP: Currently, the Equivalent or Lower Qualification (ELQ) rules prevent those studying for a second higher education course, at a level lower or equivalent to their first qualification, from receiving either tuition fee loans or maintenance loans for that course.

There are some exceptions for students who want to retrain in teaching, architecture, social work, medicine, dentistry, veterinary science and healthcare. Students on these courses may qualify for some support, even if they already have an ELQ. The support received will depend on the course studied and, in some cases, the mode of study.

However, the Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE) will launch in January 2027, giving new learners access to a loan entitlement equal to four years of full-time tuition

funding. This is currently equal to £38,140 based on fee rates for the 2025/26 academic year. Returning learners who have previously received government support will have a reduced entitlement, depending on previous funding received.

Under the LLE, ELQ rules will be removed, thereby enabling more people to retrain and upskill throughout their working lives.

Overseas Students: Hong Kong

Alex Sobel MP (Labour): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what information her Department holds on how many (a) students studying at UK universities hold British National (Overseas) visas and (b) such students are from Hong Kong. [UIN 17013]

Minister for Children and Families, Janet Daby MP: The department does not hold data on the number of students studying at UK universities who hold British National (Overseas) (BNO) visas, including those from Hong Kong.

The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) is responsible for collecting and publishing data on the UK higher education (HE) sector. This data is shared with the department and includes a wide range of information on students coming from overseas to study in UK HE providers. However, information on students' visa status is not collected and those that are studying in the UK and holding a BNO visa cannot be identified by the department.

Data from HESA shows that there were 17,905 students from Hong Kong studying at UK HE providers for the 2022/23 academic year.

Turing Scheme: Disadvantaged

Chi Onwurah MP (Labour): To ask the Secretary of State for Education, pursuant to the Answer of 4 December 2024 to Question 16156 on Turing Scheme: Free School Meals, how many and what proportion of students with Turing grants are from disadvantaged backgrounds. [UIN 17812]

Minister for Children and Families, Janet Daby MP: Through the Turing Scheme, in the 2024/25 academic year, education providers and other eligible organisations from across the UK and British Overseas Territories have been allocated over £105 million to send their students on more than 43,000 study and work placements across the globe. Around 23,000 (53%) of these opportunities will be for participants from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Information on the number and proportion of disadvantaged students in previous years of the Turing Scheme is available at the following links:

- 2021/22 Academic Year: <https://www.turing-scheme.org.uk/funding-opportunities/funding-results-2021-to-2022/>.
- 2022/23 Academic Year: <https://www.turing-scheme.org.uk/funding-opportunities/funding-results-2022-23/>.
- 2023/24 Academic Year: <https://www.turing-scheme.org.uk/funding-opportunities/funding-results-2023-to-2024/>.

For the 2022/23, 2023/24 and 2024/25 academic years, the figures are subject to change following quality assurance of providers' final reports of the placements that took place. This data will be published in due course.

Overseas Students: Hong Kong

Lord Alton of Liverpool (Crossbench): To ask His Majesty's Government, following a letter from Baroness Smith of Malvern to Hong Kong Watch on 3 October, in which it was suggested that Hong Kong British National (Overseas) students who cannot afford international university fees could appeal to have their fees waived, what assessment they have made of the number of international students that have successfully waived their fees, in whole or part, due to financial shortcoming. [UIN HL2804; Grouped Question: HL2803]

Minister for Skills, Baroness Smith of Malvern: Higher education (HE) institutions in England are autonomous bodies and it is for them to assess whether applications for fees which do not meet the criteria for automatic home fee status should be reduced or waived in line with individual circumstances. The department has not made an assessment on the number of international students that have successfully had their fees waived.

There are a range of resources and support for international students looking for scholarships, which can be found on the UK Council for International Student Affairs website and the British Council's Study UK page.

Many HE institutions in the UK offer a range of bursaries and scholarships to international students and the department encourages students to contact their institution to find out what support may be available. We have not carried out an assessment of the number of university scholarships or bursaries available to prospective students on British National (Overseas) visas.

Higher Education: VAT

Ian Sollom MP (Liberal Democrats): To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the Answer of 22 November 2024 to Question 14160 on Higher Education: VAT, whether she has made an assessment of the potential merits of enabling groups of universities to share VAT-exempt costs at contract level without creating a separate legal entity. [UIN 17327]

Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, James Murray MP: The requirement for groups using the cost sharing exemption to create a separate legal entity is in place to ensure that use of the exemption aligns with normal VAT principles that apply to all taxpayers. The Government keeps all taxes under review as part of the policy making process, but there are currently no plans to change this.

Research: Investment

George Freeman MP (Conservative): To ask the Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology, whether his Department plans to measure the private sector investment in the research and development economy by (a) sector, (b) cluster and (c) departmental spend. [UIN 17526]

Minister for AI and Digital Government, Feryal Clark MP: The Office for National Statistics routinely publishes official statistics on Gross Expenditure on R&D (GERD), Business Expenditure on R&D (BERD), and Research and development expenditure by the UK government. These publications include various levels of breakdowns, including by sector and government department.

The Innovation Clusters Map published by DSIT in 2024 presents firm-level innovation activity across the UK, including public and private investment, allowing users to explore clusters to better understand the UK's innovation ecosystem.

Medicine: Training

Nadia Whittome MP (Labour): To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the level of financial support provided to medical students through the NHS bursary. [UIN 18413]

Minister for Secondary Care, Karin Smyth MP: The NHS Bursary funding arrangements are reviewed annually ahead of the start of each academic year.

We have applied an uplift of 2% to all NHS Bursary maintenance grants and allowances for the academic year 2024/25. This is the first time the maintenance grant has been uplifted since 2015.

Overseas Students: Hong Kong

Lord Tyrie (Non-affiliated): To ask His Majesty's Government after how many years of residence in the UK Hong Kong citizens admitted to the UK on a British National Overseas visa qualify for home fee status at English higher education institutions. [UIN HL2951]

Minister for Skills, Baroness Smith of Malvern: To qualify for automatic home fee status in England, a person must have settled status or 'a recognised connection' to the UK. In the case of persons with settled status, they must be ordinarily resident in the UK and Islands (Channel Islands and Isle of Man) for three years prior to the first day of the first academic year of the course.

Subject to meeting the normal eligibility requirements, Hong Kong British National Overseas status holders will be able to qualify for home fee status and student finance once they have acquired settled status in the UK, usually after five years. Most persons who acquire settled status will automatically meet the three-year ordinary residence requirement for home fee status and student finance.

Apprentices

Lord Taylor of Warwick (Non-affiliated): To ask His Majesty's Government what steps they are taking to address the decline in apprenticeships in recent years. [UIN HL2948]

Minister for Skills, Baroness Smith of Malvern: The new government has inherited a context of a declining number of apprenticeship starts. Following reforms to apprenticeships, including the introduction of the apprenticeship levy in 2017, apprenticeship starts by young people under 25 fell by 38% between the 2015/16 and 2022/23 academic years, with an overall decline in starts of 34%.

This government has a driving mission to break down barriers to opportunity and we want to rebalance opportunities towards young people, who have the most to gain from apprenticeships but who too often have been locked out of accessing these opportunities.

This government's reformed growth and skills offer, which will have apprenticeships at its core, will deliver greater flexibility for learners and employers, including through

shorter duration apprenticeships in targeted sectors. This will help more people learn new high quality skills at work, and fuel innovation in businesses across the UK. The department has also begun work to develop new foundation apprenticeships, a training offer that will give more young people a foot in the door and support clear pathways and progression in work-based training and employment.

The department is also continuing outreach work in schools and colleges through the Apprenticeship Support and Knowledge programme and targeting young people through the 'Skills for Life' campaign.

Public Health: Research

Lord Scriven (Liberal Democrats): To ask His Majesty's Government how many applications they received for funding to establish Health Protection Research Units based in (1) the North East, (2) Yorkshire, and (3) the North West. [UIN HL3208]

Minister for Patient Safety, Women's Health and Mental Health, Baroness Merron: In September 2023, the Department funded National Institute for Health and Care Research launched a two-stage open competition to fund 13 new Health Protection Research Units (HPRUs). Each HPRU is a collaborative research partnership between the UK Health Security Agency and a university or group of universities. Overall, the HPRUs have been awarded £77 million of funding over five years for research to protect the public from health threats.

The following table sets out the applications received by region, and where the university is either the lead applicant or a collaborating partner on the HPRU application:

Region	University as the lead applicant	University as a collaborating partner
North East		1
Yorkshire		2
North West	2	7

Sector news

Drivers of growth: Universities’ enhanced civic role at the heart of national prosperity – Lloyds Banking Group and PwC report

On Monday 9 December, Lloyds Banking Group and PwC published a report co-authored as part of a joint project to build on their respective longstanding and ongoing work with the UK higher education sector.

The report argues:

- Universities should explicitly recognise that playing an active civic role in their region is core to their purpose and not ancillary to their teaching and research.
- Universities need to collaborate with regional higher and further education institutions, public bodies and business.
- Universities can simplify engagement with prospective partners through a physical or digital “single front door”, supported by staff who are experts in collaboration and business development.
- Universities can benefit from modern leadership and management practices which motivate academic staff towards greater agility, commerciality and risk tolerance.
- Universities need to articulate better both the costs and the significant value of what they create — both financial and societal — and broaden the use of their existing physical assets, intellectual property and relationships.

You can [read the full report](#).

Campus Antisemitism in Britain 2022-2024 – CST report

On Monday 9 December, the Community Security Trust (CST) published its third biennial campus antisemitic incidents report. CST has recorded a total of 325 university-related antisemitic incidents in the last two academic years: 53 incidents in 2022/23 and 272 in 2023/2024.

This is a record total for university-related antisemitic incidents and marks a 117% increase from the 150 university incidents recorded in 2020-2022, the two academic years covered in CST’s previous report.

CST’s recommendations for universities include:

- An independent process for complaints of discrimination, bigotry or hateful language should be developed by universities. This means ensuring that staff assessing complaints do not have a known or close relationship with the member of staff or student involved, where possible engaging external advisers with specialist expertise in the type of discrimination or bigotry being alleged.
- Institutions ought to ensure that the adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism is accompanied by training for staff who will be investigating complaints so that they know how to use the definition, and have a wider understanding of the nature, language and impact of antisemitism on British campuses.
- In times of heightened tension, universities should take care to formulate public stances and messaging that emphasise support for all students and do not ostracise Jewish students.
- Universities should take care to act on complaints within a reasonable timeframe. Where delays cannot be avoided every effort should be made to ensure frequent communication to inform the student of delays, progress made and when they can expect a response.
- Ensure the confidentiality of students reporting incidents where possible.
- Initial complaint and/or reporting forms should incorporate a specific space for students to say that they have specifically been the victim of an antisemitic hate crime.
- Universities should take action to ensure that encampments are not established in central areas of campus that impede or obstruct the regular flow of student life and that external individuals are restricted in their ability to access formal and informal (but established) student groups on university property. Appropriate investigation and disciplinary procedures must be taken against students who promote antisemitism or other forms of extremism.

You can [read the full report](#).

Survey of Adult Skills 2023: national report for England – DfE report

On Tuesday 10 December, the Department for Education (DfE) published a report looking at the literacy, numeracy and problem-solving skills of adults in England in comparison with other countries.

The Survey of Adult Skills is a product of the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) led by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

The survey took place in 31 education systems with adults aged 16 to 65 in their homes. This report:

- provides analysis of the 2023 findings for England
- compares England's performance internationally and since 2012

You can [read the full report](#).

Do Adults Have the Skills They Need to Thrive in a Changing World? Survey of Adult Skills 2023 – OECD report

On Tuesday 10 December, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published the latest Survey of Adult Skills, highlighting a mixed global picture of literacy, numeracy and adaptive problem-solving proficiency.

Key findings include:

- Adults with highly educated parents outscored those with low-educated parents by 50 points in literacy.
- Individuals with high numeracy skills are 11 percentage points more likely to report very good or excellent health compared to those with low numeracy skills.
- The share of adults using the internet rose from 76% in 2012 to 93% in 2023.

You can [read the full report](#).

Priced out? The Accommodation Costs Survey 2024: London Edition – HEPI and Unipol report

On Tuesday 10 December, the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) and Unipol published a report presenting data from a wide range of universities and private providers, covering over 70,000 student beds in London. It highlights the growing affordability gap faced by students and the escalating financial pressure on those choosing to study in the UK's capital.

Key findings include:

- The maximum student loan (£13,348) is now less than the average student rent (£13,595), leaving students unable to afford basic living costs.
- Rents for Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) have risen by 18% over the past two academic years.
- 14% of Purpose-Built Student Accommodation rooms in London now cost more than £20,000 per year.

You can [read the full report](#).

How can science and tech innovation boost regional economic growth? – HoC SIT Select Committee inquiry launch

On Tuesday 10 December, the House of Commons Science, Innovation and Technology Committee launched an inquiry to assess the role of the UK's innovation ecosystem in achieving the government's mission to kickstart economic growth across the country.

The chair of the Science, Innovation and Technology Committee, Chi Onwurah MP, commented:

In the budget, the Committee was pleased to see the government deliver record levels of funding for UK R&D and reinforce its commitment to invest in innovation to boost economic growth.

This inquiry is a chance to assess exactly how this innovation investment contributes to regional growth. We'll examine the different ways that local and national government fund and encourage science and tech innovation, and how this in turn delivers economic growth and productivity across the entire UK.

We will look closely at the UK's innovation landscape and how it can drive economic development across the UK, not just within the 'golden triangle.'

The Committee are welcoming written submissions until 13 January 2025.

You can [read the full announcement](#).

Educating teachers of the future – Russell Group briefing

On Tuesday 10 December, the Russell Group published a briefing outlining how its universities are ready to work with the government and with Skills England to ensure ITE delivers high-quality, well-supported teachers into classrooms, who then remain in the profession for the long term.

Russell Group universities train:

- 18% of all biology teachers
- 23% of all physics teachers
- 26% of all modern foreign language teachers

You can [read the full briefing](#).

Evaluation of the UK Research Partnership Investment Fund – UKRI interim report

On Tuesday 10 December, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) published an interim report providing a comprehensive interim analysis of the UK Research Partnership Investment Fund (UKRPIF), examining impacts, processes and progress toward achieving the UKRPIF programme objectives.

The fund's objectives are to:

- a. Enhance the research facilities of higher education providers (HEPs) undertaking world-leading research
- b. Encourage strategic partnerships between HEPs and other organisations active in research
- c. Stimulate additional investment in HE research
- d. Strengthen the contribution of the research base to economic growth

The report finds UKRPIF is a long-standing scheme that is in good health. It has enabled HEPs across all four nations of the UK to establish high-quality research infrastructure, enabling high-quality research. It is a popular programme, with proponents keen to emphasise its strengths, only highlighting minor limitations.

You can [read the full report](#).

How are universities protecting freedom of speech and academic freedom? – UUK insights and analysis

On Thursday 12 December, Universities UK published findings from a survey on freedom of speech and academic freedom.

Key findings include:

- 93% of universities surveyed have a free speech code of practice.
- Of these, 81% have reviewed their code of practice since May 2023, with a further 16% either currently reviewing or planning to do so.
- Nearly all (96%) universities that responded to our survey said that students have or will be made aware of the free speech code of practice.
- Three-quarters (74%) of universities told us that they were confident their institution has effective mechanisms for dealing with complaints relating to free speech.
- 22% of universities have a freedom of speech panel or similar for reviewing complaints related to freedom of speech and academic freedom, with a further 33% planning to implement this.
- Since May 2023, 74% of universities have reviewed other relevant policies and procedures through a freedom of speech and academic freedom lens.

You can [read the full insights and analysis piece](#).

How can UK universities improve their strategies for tackling integration challenges among Chinese students? – HEPI report

On Thursday 12 December, the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI) published a report investigating the integration challenges facing Chinese students and considers the quality of related services provided across UK campuses.

Key findings from the report include:

- UK universities, particularly the Russell Group, are highly reliant on Chinese students for financial stability, with Chinese international students paying £2.3 billion a year in fees.
- China's unique domestic digital ecosystem creates technological barriers for Chinese students moving to the UK, increasing ethnic clustering.
- English language proficiency, particularly spoken, is lower among Chinese students than those from other developing economies like India and Malaysia.

- There is an uneven distribution of Chinese students across UK higher education institutions (HEIs), with over 15,000 at some institutions and less than 10 at others.
- International students would like more targeted career support from their universities: most (almost 80 per cent) have never received support.
- Some Chinese students feel like they are being treated as revenue sources rather than as valued members of the community.

You can [read the full report](#).

UCAS Undergraduate end of cycle data 2024 – UCAS data release

On Thursday 12 December, UCAS published its end of cycle data, showing the number of UK 18-year-olds accepted to university or college is up 2.9% on last year's figures, with 279,550 accepted in 2024, compared to 271,735 in 2023.

Key insights from the data include:

- A record number of UK 18-year-olds have accepted a place at university or college in 2024, including record numbers of those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds.
- UK mature acceptances (aged 21+) also increased compared to 2023.
- International undergraduate accepted applicants via UCAS were down compared to the 2023 figures.
- More students are choosing to use Clearing to find a new course or destination.

You can [explore the data in full](#).

Consultation on OfS strategy for 2025 to 2030 – OfS consultation

On Thursday 12 December, the Office for Students (OfS) opened a consultation on a new strategy for 2025 to 2030.

The consultation is open to responses until 20 February 2025.

You can [read more about the consultation](#).

Evaluation of condition B3 (student outcomes): Case studies thematic report – OfS report

On Thursday 12 December, the Office for Students (OfS) published a report they commissioned from Shift Learning, which conducted four in-depth case studies with providers to explore their awareness and their response to the revised condition of registration for student outcomes (B3).

The report looks at changes providers have made, including problem assessment, decision making and implementation, to support their students' outcomes.

You can [read the full report](#).

Returns to Public Research and Development – DSIT report

On Thursday 12 December, the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT) published a report created on behalf of the Department by Frontier Economics, which conducted an econometric study to estimate the rate of return to public research and development (R&D) spending.

The new empirical results indicate that public R&D generates economically significant positive returns in terms of increasing private sector productivity growth.

The study finds an average rate of return to public R&D of 40% 6 years after the investment is made. In other words, £100 million of public R&D investment could be expected on average to yield, in 6 years' time, an increase in annual private sector productivity worth £40 million. The £40 million increase persists over time, and if anything the estimates suggest that an even greater return could be experienced over a longer time period.

You can [read the full report](#).

Monthly entry clearance visa applications – Home Office statistics

On Thursday 12 December, the Home Office published monthly statistics on visa applications for people coming to the UK for work and study.

Applications from Sponsored study visa main applicants in January to November 2024 (372,700) were 16% lower than January to November 2023.

There were 20,400 applications from dependants of students between January and November 2024, 85% fewer than January to November 2023. This followed the rule changes that came into effect in January 2024 which prevent students from bringing dependants, apart from those studying postgraduate research courses or courses with government-funded scholarships.

You can [explore the data in full](#).

Courses key to government growth mission will stay – DfE press release

On Thursday 12 December, the Department for Education (DfE) announced post-16 courses key to government growth mission will stay, with 70% of the remaining qualifications due for defunding to be saved.

All of these sectors will be at the forefront of the government's ambitious plans to fix the foundations of the economy and deliver growth.

Instead of blanket restrictions, the new approach is informed by more than 250 individual contributions from employers, colleges and awarding organisations.

Minister for Skills, Jacqui Smith, said:

Vocational and technical qualifications are crucial to our Plan for Change and our number one mission to grow the economy.

This government is committed to the long-term delivery of T Levels as the best quality technical education option for young people.

Qualifications are not one-size-fits-all, and we recognise we must take a pragmatic approach. Our ambitious programme must meet the needs of employers and our public services if we are to see our economy flourish.

We took decisive action as soon as we came into government to ensure the best outcomes for learners and I am thankful to all those who contributed to the pause and review.

You can [read the full press release](#).

Employers raise the alarm over plans to cut funding for the highest-level apprenticeships – University Alliance letter

On Thursday 12 December, University Alliance published a letter to the Chancellor written by a coalition of employers and apprentices spanning sectors including healthcare, science, construction, manufacturing, creative, business and local government to express deep concern over the planned defunding of level 7 apprenticeships.

Vanessa Wilson, CEO of University Alliance said:

As part of a broad coalition of apprenticeships experts spanning the education, healthcare, architectural, creative and business sectors, we are calling on the Chancellor as one voice not to defund level 7 apprenticeships.

If the government were to defund level 7 apprenticeships it would have far-reaching effects across different industries and unintended consequences for multiple planks of the government's skills, opportunity and growth agenda.

With over 600 signatories, the strength of feeling from a diverse set of professionals on the same issue is irrefutable. In particular, those working within NHS trusts are concerned about what this means for the development of high-level skills for roles that will be essential to our health and social care workforce.

We urge the government to rethink this decision and carefully consider the impacts of shifting levy payments away from high-level skills development, and instead increase the overall apprenticeship budget to support these vital level 7 qualifications, so we can build and sustain a robust, highly-skilled workforce that will drive the UK's innovation and growth for years to come.

You can [read the letter](#).