**Curriculum and Assessment Review- Interim Report**

**March 2025 Summary**

Earlier this month, the Department for Education released an interim report on what has come out of the Curriculum and Assessment review and what next steps Professor Becky Francis and her colleagues are focusing on.

The Curriculum and Assessment Review launched in September, with a consultation that gathered over 7,000 responses and a range of evidence and polling. The Review is being conducted in close consultation with education professionals, other experts, parents, children and young people, and stakeholders such as employers, universities, and trade unions.

Cogent hosted a series of roundtables to hear the views of employers and young people to collate a response where we made specific references to:

* There is a need to modernise the curriculum and to improve the contextualisation of maths and learning how to present to different audiences in English.
* There is a need to provide improved information, advance, and guidance to individuals and educators to better understand education and career pathways.
* Improve support for those not meeting Level 2 requirements by 16.
* We raised concerns about the curriculum model for T Levels and continued concerns raised by our sector about the ability to support placements due to the high-risk work environments.
* We raised feedback from younger people on how the curriculum should be woven together better, young people need to be taught financial and business literacy and how they want to develop their skills more to be work ready earlier.

The evidence shows that many aspects of the current system are working well. However, stakeholders' views about the present arrangements for the curriculum and assessment are very diverse.

The Review Panel has identified four areas it will focus on in the next phase, where it sees the greatest opportunities and need for improvement:

**The system is not working well for all**

* Socio-economic gap remains ‘stubbornly large’, and large people with SEND make less progress than their peers.

**Challenges with specific subjects**

* Minor changes= citations of specific dated content
* Major changes= lack of preparedness of languages taught in primary to the needs at secondary level.
* *“Securing mastery in a subject is vital for raising standards and enabling future expertise”,* but there are inhibitors to this in the current construction and balance of content. There is an imbalance between breadth and depth.

**The curriculum needs to respond to social and technological change**

* Being secure in foundational subjects such as maths and science will remain pivotal, now and in the future; ‘*as will young people’s understanding of human culture through the humanities, languages and arts’*
* *‘Attention is needed to address opportunities and challenges created by our fast-changing world. The rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and trends in digital information demand heightened media literacy and critical thinking, as well as digital skills. Likewise, global social and environmental challenges require attention to scientific and cultural knowledge and skills that can equip young people to meet the challenges of the future.’*
* Young people and their parents or carers have been clear that they would like to see more applied knowledge in certain areas, to support young people to be ready for life and work (such as financial education, careers knowledge and politics and governance).

**16-19 technical and vocational qualifications**

* A broad and balanced curriculum for all up to age 16 is supported, and the provision for 16-19 offers diversity, but it is relatively specialised compared to some jurisdictions.
* A levels in England provide successful preparation for a three-year degree.
* T Levels have introduced a new, high-quality technical route for young people who know their intended career destination. *‘While teething problems remain, T Levels show great promise.’*
* A significant proportion of young people require a mix of qualifications, or cannot access A levels or T Levels, or have not yet decided on career plans.
* For young people who did not secure strong level 2 qualifications at school, including those who need to continue their study of maths and English, the quality of provision appears to be uneven.
* The Review also wants to ensure that the assessment system captures the strengths of every young person and the breadth of the curriculum, and that it has the right balance of assessment methods, while maintaining the important role of examinations.

**Next steps**

Particular areas of focus for the next stage of the Review include:

*• considering questions that have been raised across different subjects about the specificity, relevance, volume and diversity of content;*

*• conducting deeper analysis to diagnose the specific issues affecting each subject and explore and test a range of solutions;*

*• continuing to consider the impact of current performance measures on young people’s choices and outcomes, and their impact on institutional behaviours;*

*• continuing to consider how best to equip children and young people with the essential knowledge and skills which will enable them to adapt and thrive in a rapidly changing and AI-enabled world;*

*• exploring level 3 pathways, with the aim of building on the successes of existing academic and technical pathways, with particular attention paid to how best to support learners who do not study A levels or T Levels;*

*• considering how best to develop strong occupational pathways at level 2 and examining how to strengthen progression routes from level 2 to level 3;*

*• considering how best to ensure learners who did not achieve the required standard in English and maths at GCSE are best supported to do so by age 18; and*

*• conducting further analysis of assessment at key stages 1 to 4 and considering any necessary improvements.*

A final report will be published in autumn 2025 and early indications are that a phased programme of work for different subject/subject areas will be recommended.

Cogent will continue to advocate on our members and stakeholders behalf to raise the feedback we gained through the roundtables.