Heywood Foundation Public Policy Prize - "Volunteering"

11.7.2021

Categories: Volunteering

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ID: 1200-11 - Category: Volunteering

Response to Q1. Meals+: A New Take on An Old Classic – 'Meals on Wheels'

What is Meals+? It's concept that can be described as a new take on the long established 'Meals on Wheels' offer… defined by the DoH as: 'Meals on wheels' are hot, nutritional meals delivered to people who are unable to, or find it difficult to, prepare a meal for themselves. A range of meals are produced, considering people's cultural and religious requirements, personal preferences and dietary needs.

 This is an opportunity to reimagine the service in a way that aggregates many benefits to create large scale social value: a preventative caring service, embedded within the community health and care economy. The idea is the design and implementation of a new national meals on wheels service. Meals+. Meals on Wheels have almost universally been withdrawn – leaving no comparable offer suitable for older people with social care needs. There are real tangible examples of negative health impact when services are withdrawn. Limited number of existing services remain but underachieve in terms of their potential social and economic value.

The service can act as eyes and ears alert to the usually hidden signs that people may be struggling or experiencing a decline in their wellbeing, shining a light on someone's circumstances, and proactively linking in the right support or intervention, avoiding a more detrimental outcome for that person. A summary of the achievable benefits include:

Addressing Loneliness and Social Isolation – a face to face service available 7 days a week at a pre-agreed time. Deliveries will be made by friendly, reliable people who form positive relationships and build rapport with their customers. Research has proven that the person-to-person interaction is the single most valued element of the service. Reduce demand and address capacity challenges in

Homecare services – consultation with homecare providers has revealed that between 20%-30% of the care visits they complete are for meal preparation and welfare checks, which neither activity requires a CQC regulated service provider to complete. The opportunity to replace these non-regulated care visits with a meal delivery and welfare check exists now. Linking the meals service with homecare providers will help to support their customers in a more integrated and holistic way.

Improve health outcomes and nutrition- Malnutrition (undernutrition) is characterised by low body weight or weight loss, which simply means that some older people are not eating well enough to maintain their health and well-being. It is estimated that around one in ten people over the age of 65 are malnourished or are at risk of malnutrition - over one million older people in the UK today. Malnutrition is both a cause and a consequence of ill health. It affects health and wellbeing, increasing hospital admissions, and can lead to long-term health problems for otherwise healthy and independent older people. It can also mean more visits to the GP, increased chances of being admitted to hospital and longer recovery times from illness. A nutritionally balanced daily two-course hot meal can support healthy nutrition and avoid some of these risks to health and wellbeing.

Develop links with Primary Care – the service can provide additional intelligence to GP's and health professionals in the community, identifying red flags and making referrals to the appropriate service, enabling early intervention.

Create jobs, use Kickstart Scheme and Apprenticeships – the service will create a range of new jobs and well suited to take advantage of the governments Kickstart scheme, offering opportunities to young adults and a possible career pathway within social care. There is also the opportunity to develop apprenticeships, supporting the varied business functions.

Investment in electric vehicle fleet – the delivery of hot meals and face to face interactions with customers in their homes will require a fleet of suitable vehicles. Electric vehicles fit this bill well, because of the local nature of deliveries and opportunity to charge overnight between shifts.

Creation of new supply chains (in-country sourcing) – the setup of the service will inevitably require a supply chain. This is likely to include frozen meals, commercial catering equipment, premises, vehicles, and various support service contracts. The supply network that enables the optimisation of the service will inevitably require or provide the basis for a good degree of collaboration between public, private and non-profit sectors.

This service would also provide an opportunity to explore how support could be provided in the provision of free school meals to family homes.

Investment and financial model – with the current older population arguably being the most affluent of recent generations there is strong potential this could be a service charged to each customer e.g. £7 for a hot two course lunch meal. However, to achieve the maximum social value means testing may be a more appropriate model. There may also be an opportunity to free up some capital by making changes to the 'Winter Fuel' payment eligibility, for example offered only to those older people in receipt of means tested benefit. This would release some

of the £2 billion currently spent annually on winter fuel payments as seed funding.

ID: 1380-11 - Category: Volunteering
Personalised Charity
There are a lot of people driven into poverty through loss of employment and ineligibility for government support, eg self employed or new businesses less than one year old.

 On the television we see cases that invoke a charitable response, however, the charitable institutions are too impersonal. A donor might wonder what fraction of their donation would reach the recipient and how soon.

 We see examples such as a single mother with just £10 to feed a family for a week or a person losing their accommodation for want of a few hundred pounds, an old person unable to put the heating on for fear of the cost. Some viewers might think " I'd give them that money just to see them through that crisis if I knew they'd get it". To some donors a few tens of pounds might be possible, others hundreds.

 A solution might be to "personalise" the support mechanism.

 It might work through an app or website, social media or somesuch. Cases might be prepared by reputable members of society, doctor, social worker, vicar etc., and then "posted" on some on-line platform. Videos might be most influential.

 Volunteers to the donor scheme would accept suggestions to support at some predetermined level - £10, £50 /month/year, whatever. They would be sent a number of these authenticated cases and when they have reached their donation limit they'd stop.

 If the request is for grocery funding the supermarkets might be encouraged to add financial support (pay 25% say) and the donor could pay the supermarket directly to be sure the funds went where they were intended.

 Upon receipt of the support the person helped would send a "thankyou" email or similar communication to the donor. Both could remain anonymous if they preferred, but the donor might see the outcome of their generosity. "Thanks to your kind donation I was able to give the kids hot meals this week" or similarly. "Your kindness meant that I am not out on the street now"

If all that were anonymously made public, human kindness might well flourish.

ID: 670-11 - Category: Volunteering

Corporate Tax Credits for Employee Volunteering.

How would it work?

Employees would be entitled to spend up to 10% of their working week away from their jobs, performing voluntary services in the local community.

Employers claim a tax credit against their wage costs (salary & NI).

The voluntary work would need to be approved, but should include: • Youth sports coaching • Reading and numeracy support for younger children in primary schools • Support of elderly people, mental health patients and other vulnerable members of society with social visits, shopping, gardening, transportation and other non-clinical support • Parenting support such as Homestart for young families • Mentoring teens & young adults • Magistracy • Special Constabulary • Education & skills training to prisoners • Environmental work (clearing waterways, restoring woodland) • Cultural enrichment (e.g. music, theatre & art projects)

Cost/Benefit analysis by Stakeholder group

1. Employers. Disadvantage: Higher wage bill by approx. 10%

Advantages: Reduced corporation tax by the equivalent of their higher wage bill. • Additional talent in the business for no additional net cost • Motivated & fulfilled workforce leading to better retention & productivity.

2. Employees. No disadvantages.

Advantages: Better work/life balance • Fulfillment outside work • New skills • Improved social network. 3. Government. Disadvantages: Reduced corporation tax receipts • Administrative burden of the scheme

Advantages: Reduced unemployment benefit due to additional hiring by employers • Higher income tax receipts • Higher consumer spending • Massive resource available to the 3rd sector,

especially social and health care and education, with positive patient and student outcomes from a volunteer force • Later retirement age and improved mental health of more fulfilled workforce.

ID: 116-11 - Category: Volunteering

The Challenge Hub - A "Duke of Edinburgh's Award" for over-55s. Not for profit.

1(a) Relevant problems enhanced by Covid: Disrupted communities, loneliness, isolation, mental health / low self-esteem / loss of purpose, a stressed voluntary sector, reduced physical health and enforced early retirement.

(b) The opportunity: An enhanced willingness to listen to new ideas. A catalyst to address the above problems (which pre-existed but to a lesser extent).

(c) The idea: The young have structural signposting such as DofE, Scouts, Cadets, National Citizenship. Older people have no such equivalent. Many struggle with loss of status, structure, motivation and social connection after retirement. c.25% suffer from psycho-social issues (see Centre for Ageing Better research)

A scheme equivalent to The Duke of Edinburgh's Award for over-55s would help to address the above issues as well as the following social issues:

(i) The issues for society of an ageing population (mental and physical health plus a resource for social contribution)

(ii) The difficulty for many in transitioning from the structure of a work-place

(iii) Perceived loss of meaning to life without the demands of a job

(iv) The need of some to build an alternative productive life when children leave home

(v) Loss of status and peer validation

(vi) Avoidance of loneliness or isolation

(vii) The loss to society of cumulated skills and wisdom

(viii) The difficulty of finding charities to work for

(ix) The difficulty of accessing low-cost adult learning.

2. I have explored this for 4 years. I have letters of support from former CEOs of DofE and PHE, from the CEOs of RVS, College of Medicine and Activity Alliance and from OU.

Based on that consultation period I have myself funded and established The Challenge Hub at www.thechallengehub.org. We launched after piloting in January 2020. The worst possible time for an initiative designed to build community and to promote physical activity but emergence from the pandemic offers a significant opportunity.

To become a significant piece of social infrastructure with widespread participation and so to meet its potential as a low cost / high social impact initiative it needs to be recognised at the highest institutional level.

Potential: Historically DofE has c250,000 registrations per annum and income of c£15,000,000 per annum. The over-55s demographic is bigger and wealthier.

3. The Challenge Hub

 (a) A free to use online members' inter-active hub designed to inform, inspire and motivate people based on learning, physical activity and social contribution - with pathways into (a) affordable adult learning opportunities (b) volunteering opportunities and (c) physical events and opportunities which encourage participation by older people.

 (b) The Hub's ideology (scientifically backed) is that people feel most fulfilled if they are simultaneously learning new things, taking physical exercise and helping others.

 (c) That ideology is reflected in a challenge (called "The All in One") which calls for achievements in each of the three categories of (i) learning (ii) physical activity and (iii) social contribution. Participation with the challenge is very much encouraged but the first hope of The Challenge Hub is that people aged over 55 will simply do and sustain something positive and fulfilling as a result of its activities.

5. Are we solely an on-line initiative?

 No. Within the overall context of the initiative we run the following specific programmes:

 (a) "Bridge to Retirement" by which we encourage HR departments to register retirees with us so that we can provide support, ideas and motivation during a period of potentially difficult life transition.

(b) "Generations Together" by which we will work with organisers of physical events to encourage participation by those aged over 55 plus also with youth organisations for intergenerational initiatives.

(c) "The Charities Challenge" by which we work with community groups or individual charities to develop separate challenges operated through The Challenge Hub under the generic name of The Charities Challenge and tailored for the community in question or for a charity's service users.

(d) A body of Challenge Hub volunteers. 22 people are giving their time. There are no employees.

6. The public benefits

(a) It is a low cost / high social impact initiative.

(b) It enhances health and well-being at exactly the time when people are focusing on preventative medicine and initiatives such as social prescribing.

(c) It taps into the huge pool of talent available for use in the charity sector or in social care at a time when the services of the voluntary sector are in great demand.

(d) It encourages raising sponsorship monies for charity by those performing the physical challenge.

(e) Many people are reserved about offering to help because of a fear of being sucked in but

this gives them a passport with an end-date.

(f) It offers inter-generational contact.

(g) It does not recognise geography or socio-economic descriptions.

(h) It encourages older people to be part of the solution to the problem of an ageing population.

7. The personal benefits

(a) It maintains or creates mental health and physical health.

(b) It gives a structure and motivation to those who would benefit from it. For example, those seeking to replace the work place structure or who otherwise simply need "something more".

(c) It gives easier access to charities for rewarding volunteering roles.

(d) It offers a pathway into low-cost adult learning.

(e) It offers a sense of personal achievement and so maintains self-esteem.

(f) It offers peer validation by participation in a recognised scheme.

(g) It offers a possible springboard to new skills / sports / connections afterwards.

(h) It uses cumulated skills and wisdom which might otherwise be lost.

(i) It offers enjoyment through self-tailored challenges which enable different personalities to set individual goals.

(j) It recognises that helping others has the benefit of also helping oneself.

ID: 939-11 - Category: Volunteering

Devolved cultrual renewal hubs and a public works of art project.

Cultural renewal implies growth and regeneration. The pandemic and Brexit provide a perfect opportunity to re-structure and re-charge culture in the UK, levelling up areas that have been left behind and building on the communities that have been vital to so many throughout the last 10 months.

I propose that new cultural renewal hubs are set up across the country, most especially in deprived areas, that can act as focal points to boost cultural activity in these regions. The remit of these hubs would be to distribute funds more locally so as to support local art and local regeneration. Their purpose would be threefold. First, they would provide educational sessions in local primary and secondary schools, demonstrating art, instruments, popular music, the artistic opportunities of technology and other activities that focused on unique local interests and talent. They could also provide after-school help for choirs and local youth orchestras, something previously provided by local council music services, but cut in Cameron-era cuts.

Second, they would redistribute the generous cultural funds provided by the government to create art. However, instead of funding institutions, the funding would be targeted to actual artists and musicians and ask them to produce new work that represents the UK. This would combat the lack of inspiration that lockdowns have produced and create a post-Brexit boost of new musicians and artists to fill the institutions that were saved by the generous Cultural Renewal Fund. This takes its inspiration from the Public Works Project (PWAP) announced as part of the New Deal in post-depression America. Artists were directly funded by the state to produce art and were asked to focus on the 'American scene'. In total 3,749 artists were hired, and 15,663 works of art were produced. The artists were paid a modest wage and was relatively inexpensive given the massive post-depression cultural renewal it produced. This could be recreated in the UK and could be time-limited to coincide with the Festival of Britain 2022. The opportunity it could create for artists and musicians across the UK would be enormous, helping to level up the country, provide inspiration for young artists of the future, and renew a distinctive cultural Britishness that would mark the new age of a truly global Britain.

Third, the hubs could provide a database and meeting point for local artists that could collaborate with each other and provide a community in which to express ideas. This takes its inspiration from the Society of Finish Composers who provide a community for all professional musicians in Finland. The community creates a valuable opportunity to discuss and create works and brings the community closer together. As a result, Finland boasts one of the highest compositional outputs compared to its population size in the world and is internationally famed for its standard of musical collaboration and modern composition.

These hubs would be centrally organised by Arts Council, England, showcasing the fantastic institution this is and Nicholas Serota's new term as head. Crucially, however, they must be granted a certain amount of operational independence that can allow them to focus on local issues and local talent. This cultural devolution can bring the UK closer together under a common sprit and community values. The advantages of such a project for the UK and the current government are immense. It would combat the idea that the government doesn't care about cultural industries, something I know not to be true. The post-Brexit touring issues have made many in the industry incandescent with rage and a public works project on this scale would show this government knew the importance of culture in post-Brexit Britain. It would also inspire communities that are not traditionally included in art and cultural education, combating the cutting of the performing arts BTEC. The project would create a British cultural distinctiveness that could showcase national renewal.

Crucially, this idea is fairly practical to implement and wouldn't need to be expensive. Much of the infrastructure for a project of this kind would just need to be revitalised from the local council music services of the past and could be set up through local artistic leaders. It would rely partially on voluntary service, asking artists that are financed through the Public Works Programme to also help in the educational aspect of the hubs. In return for the state funding their art, they should be happy to give back to the community around them. Little new funding is needed, it is more about restructuring the system to devolve responsibility to communities that can create local, and simultaneously national, works of art. This idea could create a new national cultural voice that is the product of collective responsibility, a trait found across the country during this pandemic. It could drive cultural renewal and fill the world-beating institutions that have been skilfully preserved.

ID: 1622-11 - Category: Volunteering

Capitalising on volunteering for all - 'Crowd-resourcing platform'!

Issues with current volunteering process: 1. Often inflexible time options (e.g. lots of opportunities throughout the working day, or minimum time commitments); 2. Often not accessible/inclusive (e.g. travel); 3. Opportunity cost to society when not everyone can afford to volunteer; 4. Slow to achieve impact (manual matching/application process, hard to gather group of volunteers). Solution: UK Crowd-Resourcing Platform – volunteering for all! Centralised repository for requests: Charities often need donations e.g. laptops/coats – it's difficult for individuals to find these across multiple sites. A centralised platform allows more people to search, donate and volunteer! Instead of a 'crowdfunding' platform, this becomes the UK 'crowd-resourcing' platform - charities and those in need can be more flexible and creative with their requests, with a bigger audience, opportunity to tailor alerts locally, and skills-match, will mean more impact quicker! E.g. town flooding, the local council can use the platform to issue an alert for immediate volunteers to help or request donations of clothing to those displaced. Improve efficiency and reduce costs: Creating a database of UK volunteers where volunteers register with one profile and one application process (screening can be largely automated) saves charities searching for volunteers in multiple places and saves volunteers having to do several applications each time they want to volunteer. Qualifications and skills can be verified on the system (e.g. DBS, degrees) and charities and volunteers can provide feedback/references after volunteering to build trusted network. More inclusive and flexible opportunities: As well as traditional volunteering requests, the platform should take inspiration from NHS/GoodSAM in enabling 'volunteer now' opportunities, sending alerts to local volunteers who opt in and set status as 'on call' when available. This is great for e.g. those with care responsibilities or chronic illnesses who may struggle to commit in advance but can often be available last minute e.g. a food bank may find they are short on volunteers one Saturday, they send an alert and anyone available at the time can come volunteer. Charities could get extra support by providing more remote opportunities – e.g. helplines, administrative activities, remote social groups (e.g. online choirs/drawing classes/exercise classes etc.) I have a disability that can make travelling to volunteer difficult, but I have plenty of time to spend writing reports, analysing data, updating social media, or mentoring/listening/advising on zoom/phone/email etc. but I rarely see such opportunities. Charities should capitalise on the increase in remote collaboration tools available. More remote opportunities increases inclusivity in volunteering and therefore increases impact! Peer to peer volunteering and community building: Calls/messaging and forums provided through the platform will allow volunteers to build a community and uniquely provides opportunity for communities to 'self/peer-to-peer' volunteer! E.g. those receiving mentoring or those who normally receive calls to help loneliness could connect with each other and support each other, with the 'volunteer now' and online messaging this means more

people can get help at the time it's needed instead of having to wait for a weekly volunteer time. It is also empowering for communities to have opportunities to support each-other, as well as with volunteers to assist. The platform should allow volunteers to skill-share too. E.g. volunteers can opt in to 'volunteer mentoring' whilst volunteering they train a volunteer in this area. E.g. a volunteer needing marketing experience matches with a volunteer with these skills, they complete a volunteer activity together so the individual learning can then go on to volunteer for more of these kinds of activities! The volunteers have increased the volunteer skillset! Skills based profiles = project based opportunities: Volunteer opportunities are not always tailored to skills this misses opportunities for impact and societal good. E.g. many charity processes are manual and could be automated yet these kinds of opportunities aren't usually offered. The profiles allow volunteers to update their skills and share what they can offer/donate. E.g. a website developer might be willing to build a charity's website, or an academic researcher might be able to support a charity through their research. Charities can therefore be more creative and create 'project' requests and also search for volunteers offering services (projects like this can easily be remote/flexible) e.g. 'data analysis' or 'website build', matching volunteers based on their skills and availability. This also allows those with less work experience to volunteer in a way that builds their job potential. Care would need to be taken to ensure volunteers aren't exploited through demanding projects so projects should clearly be volunteer appropriate/short term and equivalent in required demand to existing appropriate and accepted volunteer opportunities. This leads to a huge and innovative opportunity that could be capitalised through this platform: 'National Voluntary Service'. Many have suggested universal basic income (and I think Covid shows the value of such a scheme) however many have reservations about 'income for nothing'. Therefore a compromise and 'win-win' is using this platform to support a 'volunteering basic income scheme'. Jobseekers/those receiving benefits can choose national voluntary service and record hours volunteered weekly through the platform. Volunteering provides far more flexible opportunities than work (e.g. 'volunteer now' would supplement low-income gig-economy workers) as well as a lower entry requirements and opportunities to learn (volunteer skill-share). Those who opt in should receive an additional 'volunteer-based income' in line with minimum wage and funded by government or sponsors (paid additional to jobseekers/universal income and could also be funded jointly like apprenticeship levy). This allows people to build their skills and contribute, without losing time/money. People struggling to find work but having to demonstrate a certain number of hours searching per week - instead replace some of these hours with volunteering so they build the skills and experience for their CV, are provided additional funds to support themselves and gain wellbeing and confidence through volunteering (research proves). This should hugely increase their chances of finding employment therefore reducing overall cost to government through increased employment and by creating a more engaged, skilled and inclusive society! More volunteers, more opportunities, more diversity, more inclusion = greater communities,

greater wellbeing, greater social good and reduced economic costs!!

ID: 871-11 - Category: Volunteering

Create Cornerstones in every community

Within our community a Cornerstone was begun as a central place for a community of 3,000 to build on the trust and self-reliance established during the health crisis. The template should be promoted and encouraged across Britain.

As in many neighborhoods, towns, and villages, there are underused community spaces. In our case, an empty property was rented and decorated and a hub for giving and receiving was begun. Originally a response to a growing number of people who were finding it hard to feed their family in a time of joblessness, Cornerstone developed into a place where surplus could be donated, and shortages made up. Excess produce from people's gardens and allotments, books, toys and games which had been used and enjoyed but were no longer wanted, outgrown school uniforms with plenty of life left in it; all these things flowed into the Cornerstone – and out again.

All types of people use the Cornerstone, removing any stigma as recipes involving quinces were swapped, and fresh eggs from over productive hens eagerly seized upon. Other organisations began to look to Cornerstone as an outlet for their giving, whether fresh meals, information on funding or resourcing. Staffed by paid and voluntary workers, it became a place to meet and chat, giving and receiving so much more than was originally imagined, a symbol of what could be achieved if a community worked together. Had it not been for the lockdown, Cornerstone would probably not have happened. Had our old way of doing things not been broken, we would not have found a new way.

Starting a Cornerstone requires: a small start-up grant of about £5,000; an intrepid local leader of which there are thousands in Great Britain; a local administrative group such as a church or a community organisation; available space to rent on a short-term basis; local part-time paid staff. Once established, a Cornerstone can become self-sufficient through local donations and available grants.

If we were to be awarded funds from the Heywood Foundation the funds would be used to help another Cornerstone get started in another community. We will help with our experience and advice to get new hubs started. We have seen how communities and individuals have gained from giving as well as receiving and have increased their understanding of their neighbors. This is not an opportunity to be missed as from here it can lead on to helping communities deal with future crises - health, economic, and environment.

ID: 432-11 - Category: Volunteering
Open-book exams for 2021.
Open-book exams allow students to access and refer to class notes, text books or other approved material.

Crucially, an open-book exam focuses on a student's understanding of a subject, rather than an ability to simply remember rote learnt information. The teaching and exam preparation approach may have to be adapted to focus, for example, on understanding and application of knowledge rather than simple recall, but I beleive careful exam question prepaation and marking will deliver a more level playing field for students of mixed abilities.

Open-book exams will also allow students to develop and practice their critical and analytical thinking, rather than focusing on "cramming" . Given the wide variety and extent of students' particular home circumstances, this is a more flexible and adaptable approach to exam preparation.

I believe open-book exams are a sensible, easily implemented and flexible solution to the current situation, and are certainly a better solution than exam cancelation.

ID: 931-11 - Category: Volunteering

How VAT could be replaced with a "no-value-added tax"

Summary

This proposal is for a policy change that will help the environment, help businesses, and help level-up poorer parts of Britain.

The proposal is to reform Value-Added Tax.

Specifically, it is to replace a tax on adding value with a tax on not adding value.

Current Situation

At the moment, almost all food bought at a British supermarket is effectively VAT-free, even if it's battery-farmed, picked by child-labourers, flown in from far away and wrapped in plastic.

All food from restaurants has VAT of 20% added to the price, no matter how ethically sourced the food is, whether the staff are paid a "living wage" or how beneficial the restaurant is to the local community.

At the moment, all vehicles have a 20% VAT added to their price, whether it's a bicycle or a high-polluting car.

And VAT is applied at the same rate, no matter where in the UK the product is being made or sold, meaning the same proportion of turnover is taken as tax whether the sale happens in Hampstead or Hartlepool.

VAT is charged even when a product or service is provided to a 'VAT-registered' business, meaning both the seller and the buyer must complete a VAT return even though the exchequer gains nothing from it.

And the reclaimable nature of VAT allows criminals to make fraudulent claims, costing the exchequer billions of pounds.

As VAT is levied on revenues and not profits it harms low margin businesses disproportionately. Indeed, it forces most businesses with profit margins below 20% out of business.

And VAT is just one of a dozen indirect taxes, such as alcohol duties and air passenger duty, that all aim to raise tax revenue on discretionary spending and alter consumer decisions.

This means there are a dozen different compliance burdens, rules and rates, very few of which are understood by the average taxpayer.

Yet taxes should be transparent and understandable. But how many people know how much tax is on a pint of beer? Or a flight to Marbella? Or a litre of petrol? Having so many different indirect taxes removes transparency and makes ethical decision making more difficult.

Surely the businesses that should pay the most are the ones that don't recycle, that emit carbon dioxide, that blight local neighbourhoods, that encourage addictions, and a dozen other ethical wrongs?

It seems we have this tax the wrong way round. We shouldn't be taxing businesses that add value, but those that do not. This proposal is for Value-Added Tax to become No-Value-Added Tax ("NVAT").

Opportunity

If there was a single, clearly visible "NVAT" number that was added to all goods and services then consumers could easily alter their buying choices, led not just by price but by the NVAT rate – a rate which would indicate the societal and environmental harm caused by the product.

Producers would have to alter their manufacturing and business practices to ensure they can charge a low rate. The government could still collect the same total amount of tax. Everybody would win.

Imagine choosing between two packets of salad, but one costs more because its packaging is not recyclable, and the NVAT percentage clearly shows it to be worse for the environment.

Cars would cost more as their CO_2 emissions rise, and bicycles would become cheaper.

Fish from unsustainable stocks would cost more, and it would be clear to the consumer why

this was.

Businesses in parts of Britain that need to be "levelled-up" would charge lower rates of NVAT than those areas that don't need assistance.

High street stores could charge lower rates than Amazon.

Clothes makers that could prove their cotton wasn't picked by forced labour would have lower prices.

Private schools would charge different rates depending on how much they shared their resources or offered bursaries.

This change would mean businesses become liable to pay for their "negative externalities" – that is, the harms they cause society and the world, whilst being rewarded for ethical business practices.

Practicalities

To reduce fraud and reduce 'red-tape', NVAT would only be charged (and thus become payable to HMRC) when a sale is made to a consumer who is not registered for NVAT. The purchaser of the good or service would be informed of the correct NVAT rate to use in their own onward sale.

To make the transition to NVAT as smooth as possible it could be introduced at the same rates as VAT is at currently. The NVAT rate would then be calculated as an adjustment to that base rate, depending on government policy.

For instance, imagine a business selling sunglasses online. The standard rate of NVAT would be the same as VAT is now – 20%. The seller would then select their product or service from existing classification codes, then follow a short questionnaire to determine the correct NVAT to charge, such as:

• Is this product made from recycled materials? (If no, add 6%; if yes, deduct 4%; if unsure, add 6%)

• Is your business based in an officially designated economically disadvantaged region: (If yes, deduct 5%)

Businesses over a certain size could be asked:

• Are at least 25% of your board members women?

• Is your average director remuneration less than 10 times the average pay of your employees?

And if the answer was 'no' a percentage point or two could be added to their NVAT rate.

If sufficient businesses improved their conduct to qualify for lower rates of NVAT then the base rate of NVAT could be raised, ensuring that the overall revenue collected from sales taxes

remains the same.

Conclusion

With the adoption of an NVAT rate we could help make business practices fairer, we could support businesses that are more environmentally friendly, we could encourage a fairer distribution of resources, we could help consumers make more ethical choices, we could reduce fraud, we could encourage economic activity in poorer parts of the country, and we could do all of this without changing the overall amount of tax collected

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ID: 140-11 - Category: Volunteering

A national GCSE resit teaching programme created by education providers and employers

One of the most inspiring innovations to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic was the Oak National Academy platform of free online lessons and teaching resources produced by teachers for other teachers to use. Learning lessons from this model it would be possible to develop a national programme of learning for the tens of thousands of students who resit GCSE English and maths each year. While existing resources for school children can be useful, they are not always relevant for post-sixteen learners. Best practice from across the country could be crowd-sourced and used to develop a suite of resources that would sit alongside and/or could be used in full by any student or organisation. If lockdowns continue to occur materials would be readily available for anyone to use.

A key issue facing organisations delivering maths and English resit courses to students is a lack of motivation often driven by the perceived lack of relevance of these subjects and students' lack of confidence as a result of their own sense of having "failed". An approach we adopted within our further education organisation was to involved employers in the design and delivery of GCSE courses that demonstrated to students the relevance of what they were learning. This work enabled us to boost student motivation and engagement in these subjects while also enabling them to develop their employability skills. By engaging employers in this work, they were able to make a direct contribution to the education of young people in order to support

their progression into employment. Using an online platform, the success of which has been demonstrated by Oak National, it would be possible to spread the impact of this work further. In the area of education, the COVID-19 pandemic has presented problems but also, through an increased and widespread familiarisation with online learning, opened up greater opportunities for collaboration and for making resources widely available to as many young people as possible. The solution outlined here would build on these lessons and would engage employers more fully with one of the sector's key challenges. In doing this it would address not only the educational impact of the pandemic but would help to confront the broader economic challenges that young people will be facing in the years to come.

ID: 880-11 - Category: Volunteering

Preparing a new generation for a truly Global Britain

CoVid-19 has reminded us all how inter-connected the world is. As we have all realised over recent years, globalisation produces challenges and difficulties as well as benefits. One of the prices to pay for the last thirty years of global economic growth has been the expansion of airline and transport networks that do not just allow goods to move quicker and more cheaply around the world; they allow pathogens to do so too.

Anyone who says they know what the world will look like once CoVid-19 has passed should be ignored. As the Chinese scholar Lao Tzu put it two and a half thousand years ago, 'those who have knowledge do not predict the future; those who predict the future do not have knowledge.'

One thing, however, is certain. We in the UK need to understand other parts of the world better. We need to do this to be aware of future challenges, disease-related or otherwise; we need to do this to be able to take better advantage of opportunities both at government level, and for the private sector. We need to do this make sure that our education system, and perhaps most importantly, those it produces remains world-class.

There are lots of ways that this can be achieved.

My proposal though is practical, achievable, measurable and modest. It is also essential.

Being globally competitive in the first instance means being globally aware. That is something we are conspicuously bad at in the UK today – unless we are looking in the familiar direction of the United States and Europe.

When it comes to Russia, the Middle East, North or sub-Saharan Africa – let alone South Asia, China and South East Asia, the next generation of students, teachers, civil servants, business leaders and politicians are singularly poorly prepared.

These are places, regions, entire continents that barely feature in the school curriculum. When they feature in public consciousness, in films for example, they appear as caricatures and pale imitations of reality.

My proposal is that we address the challenge of preparing for a genuinely Global Britain systematically.

At present, there are just a thousand students at universities in the UK taking courses in Chinese, Arabic, Farsi, Hindi, Urdu, Thai, Khmer, Korean, Japanese and Turkish – combined.

Although language learning is not the only way to learn about other cultures, supporting in depth, specialist knowledge of other peoples' histories, literatures and languages is a vitally important step in setting the direction for the country's future.

I therefore propose two inter-related programs.

The first is to provide full scholarships for students who do undergraduate degrees in an initially defined set of six languages: Chinese; Arabic; Farsi; Hindi; Turkish and Japanese.

These would be government-funded awards that pay tuition fees in full, provide for a maintenance grant and an allowance for travel to and study in a country where these skills can be further developed.

Funding 1,000 Heywood scholarships in this way would have a cost to government that is effectively negligible – at c£30m per year (compared to an annual budget of the British Council of £1.25bn).

These scholarships would be competitive and awarded using contextual data to enable high participation rates amongst low income households -and therefore additionally serve to promote social mobility, raise aspirations and provide avenues for bright, ambitious young people from deprived socio-economic areas.

The second element is the creation of a Heywood scholarship network that means that more opportunities are provided than support with fees alone.

While Heywood scholars will study at many universities in the UK (rather than at a standalone language school), a support network would provide logistical support for travel abroad; but perhaps more importantly, connects young scholars to enable them to get to know each other,

learn from each other's experiences, and take advantage of networking opportunities.

Heywood Scholars would meet for a week, once a year, out of term time for courses on global government, international finance and contemporary international relations as a way of stimulating their education further still, enabling them to meet and build social networks with each other, and to help nurture talent

This additional week need not take place on-site, but could be hosted remotely – with prominent names from the private sector and from government giving talks, advice and providing insights alongside students presenting their own research and experiences.

Establishing a link to the civil service and to fast-stream entry would not only be a tribute to Sir Jeremy Heywood, but also demonstrate that government is actively trying to recruit those with valuable skills and encouraging them into public service after graduation.

Structuring this proposal is not complicated; it requires a set of trustees to oversee the scheme and select students using AI and data; a Director to co-ordinate students and set up and run the annual program; and a administrator and finance officer to oversee logistics.

My proposal is tangible; cheap; and effective. And it would bring benefits to the UK almost immediately, engaging a cohort that will be well placed to understand a rapidly changing world.

We cannot afford to be complacent in the UK and expect the world to come to us. Pioneering spirit is not easy to cultivate; but if Britain is to succeed in the 21st century, we should be doing everything we can to help, encourage and promote young talent.

This proposal does just that.

I think it is one that not only Sir Jeremy Heywood would have supported. It would also be one he would have been proud of.

ID: 1976-11 - Category: Volunteering
Back to basics
[in reference to the increase in antisocial behaviour]

During the pandemic we have seen an increase in antisocial behaviour. We must go back to basics and insist on better behaviour in schools.

For too long children have had their school day curtailed by teachers needing to deal with poor behaviour.

Now that children are returning to school this will continue and worsen as some children from chaotic backgrounds have not had the stabilising influence of school for a year and have not been able to access lessons.

Far from attempting to minimise school exclusions, they must be increased. Prolonged poor behaviour must not be tolerated. A greater understanding of disruptive pupils needs to be embraced.

To that end, current pupil referral units need to have a complete overhaul, becoming staffed with highly trained behavioural experts, gifted teachers, mental health practitioners, psychologists, mentors, those with skilled apprenticeship knowledge, sports teachers, etc. and being equipped with whatever resources are necessary.

Disadvantaged children must be given opportunities to thrive and achieve their full potential. One to one contact needs to be available if needed.

Attendance at these new centres will be non-negotiable. Absentees will be continually contacted and will attend. The aim of all the children and staff must be a return to mainstream schooling.

The advantages of such scheme would be many:

1. Mainstream school teachers currently stressed with having to deal with poor behaviour would be able to teach lessons unhindered by a disruptive minority.

2. Children in class seeing poor behaviour being dealt with will no longer emulate it in the certain knowledge of their being excluded.

3. Teacher stress and resulting absenteeism will reduce, saving supply teacher salaries.

4. School refuseniks and disadvantaged children will be in a safe, encouraging environment daily,

preventing approaches from criminal gangs.

5. The goodwill of volunteers and charities could be called upon to help in the new centres in the form of sports coaching etc.

6. Excluded children will be part of an encouraging environment providing them with opportunities to become their very best selves.

At present there is a great deal of government and nationwide hope for the future of disadvantaged children after a difficult year.

If strategies can be put in place to enable them to move forward we should see a great deal less antisocial behaviour, greater self esteem and a desire to change their lives for the better.

All children must be enabled to aim high.

ID: 1187-11 - Category: Volunteering

Building Digital Education Networks to integrate online learning into post COVID-19 education

Online education has exposed numerous issues including serious inequalities in IT provision, the importance of schools in building friendships and communities, and schools previous underrecognized role in allowing parents to work and power our economy. As we begin to focus on a post-pandemic future there will be a renewed focus on returning schools to classroom-based education as quickly as possible. This is, after all, the default educational model and it's many benefits including the ability to support students, especially the most vulnerable, build communities and give parents the opportunity to work will remain vital. As teachers, students, and parents across the country can testify this is model which has not, and most likely could not, been replicated in a wholly digital environment. However, such a rush to return to normality would fail to utilise the many benefits of online education. The most important of which is flexibility of location. Lessons can be held by a teacher anywhere to students anywhere. The current educational model - which online education throughout the pandemic has tried and in far too many cases failed - to replicate involves one teacher teaching one lesson to one class in one school at one time. While it is right to return schools to a primarily classroom-based model it would be a mistake to lose the additional flexibility. Instead, Government should encourage schools to set up Digital Education Networks (DENs). In an ideal world, students at every school would have access to in person tuition in every subject they may wish to study. However, this has never been true. In recent years studies of both primary and secondary education have repeatedly highlighted major issues in the provision of both Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) and Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects. These are subjects which will be vital in a Global Britain seeking to expand its technological sector and secure its position as a leading nation. These issues have centred on a lack of trained teachers and a lack of time allocated to those subjects in schools. This has led to widely ranging provision at all age levels and a vicious circle of low subject take up at GCSE and A-level, resulting in both low subject budgets in schools and a small pool of suitable graduates who can – in part due to their scarcity – demand higher wages than schools are able to pay. According to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Modern Languages report from March 2019 "there are now fewer MFL graduates each year than there are MFL teacher training places." This is clearly unsustainable. Instead, DENs will allow schools to establish support and resource sharing

networks across the United Kingdom. Where one school alone cannot provide in person tuition, particularly in subjects with lower take up, then it could draw on the resources of the others in their network. Only a small number of pupils may wish to study mandarin in each school per year, thus making it unaffordable for a specialist teacher and so making mandarin unavailable. However, if only two pupils per year in a network of ten schools wished to study mandarin then that cohort would be able to form a joint online class with a specialist teacher. The cost of providing that staff member would then be shared by the network on a per-pupil basis. This has clear benefits to pupils through expanding the range of subjects they can study and expanding their social and educational networks across the country. It has clear benefits to schools through allowing greater flexibility in it's hiring and teaching methods as well as a clear way to minimise the impact of budget pressures. It also has clear benefits to the wider country through providing better skilled citizens who have connections not just in their own local communities but also across the country. DEN classes would be integrated into the normal school timetable meaning that pupils would have the manifold benefits of a physical classrooms, with the geographic flexibility of a decentralised network. Indeed, those two mandarin students could study at computers in a supervised classroom with students being taught French, German, Italian, and physics taught by teachers physically located on the other side of the country. By using recording features, lessons could even be available in flexible time as well as flexible location in order to suit children who have been absent from school or operate poorly in the normal timetable such as some of those with Special Educational Needs. This would allow all students a fairer educational experience which works for them, not just on them. Given the uneven balance of STEM and MFL teachers working in private schools Government could encourage their participation in DENs as an important part of demonstrating the charitable status of those schools. Networks could also include mixed classes between areas with differing social backgrounds (for example Cornwall and Brixton) to encourage the building of a UK wide network of friendships and support integration. This could build on the work already done by the Faith & Belief Forum's linking programme of interconnected schools and shared inter-community relationship building projects. Indeed, DENs could form partnerships with other schools across the world to build language skills and international relationships with only a fraction of the cost and other challenges of physical exchanges. A high skilled, technologically advanced, and united Global Britain could be built from every classroom in the country. Government could help the development of DENs by providing 1) a schools matching service to help schools across the country share resources effectively; 2) a certificate programme in digitally delivered education to allow teachers the skills to teach effectively online; 3) continued funding for laptops to be provided to school pupils as standard, this will provide additional flexibility in learning location and methods.

Expand provision and participation in community based lifelong learning.

NB: (material for this article is drawn from the writers current research for a book)

Summary: Community learning needs to be expanded so that young people who have suffered disruption to their full-time education will have access to a much wider range of accessible, part time learning opportunities in the future. This will also help people who have lost jobs to develop skills and qualities to pursue future occupations. The solution is based upon using secondary schools to provide lifelong learning and community development opportunities. In the C20th some schools were designated community colleges: responsibilities that were conferred upon them to provide community education i.e. adult education, youth and community development work. Community education tutors (usually 2/3) developed such work in colleges. Many were successful in this role and they embodied the concept of lifelong learning. But most colleges ceased to provide community education by the end of the C20th. In the early part of the C21st, a new form of community college (extended schools) was introduced in some parts of England but were not continued beyond 2010 - although there are still some community schools in Scotland and extended schools in Northern Ireland.

There is good evidence of the effectiveness of community colleges and extended schools in increasing participation in learning and meeting the varied learning and social needs of their communities - as well as improving their compulsory education provision. Staff and governors need to be committed and trained for this extended role. They will also need to develop partnerships and work closely with other professionals so that the principles of community education can be put into practice. Headteachers and school staff will not be able to provide these additional services on their own.

The first principle is commitment to lifelong learning through a curriculum that reflects the learning and social needs of their communities. Many C20th colleges provided community education programmes that consisted of academic, vocational, health, leisure, recreational, language courses and other informal learning activities. Educational advice and guidance, open learning, special provision for people with learning difficulties, extensive adult basic education programmes were also important provisions. School pupils were able to access these activities,

and, in return, adult students were able to access some post 16 academic and vocational courses. College youth tutors ran a wide variety of evening, weekend and holiday time activities such as sports, drama, holiday play schemes and outdoor activity clubs to complement the school extracurricular programmes. All these activities contributed greatly to the economy, health and well being of the local communities served by the college.

Another important principle is shared use of premises. Schools are an important educational resource, funded by public monies. They are open 5 days a week for 6-8 hours a day for 40 weeks of the year to deliver compulsory education. To optimise efficient use of resources they could and should be used more extensively. Successful community colleges and extended schools were used by local community groups, alongside secondary education and lifelong learning activities, especially in the evenings, weekends and holiday times. Links were made between the community and the school curriculum to mutual benefit, such as sports clubs supporting various school sports with coaching expertise and providing progression from school teams to local club teams. Similarly, community cultural groups such as drama and music worked closely with school drama and music. These links enhanced and enriched the learning experiences of all concerned, not least school pupils.

Community development is another principle. Many colleges/extended schools made big contributions to the development of their communities by supporting community groups, providing learning activities and guidance to individuals that helped them grow in confidence and in leadership and entrepreneurial abilities. Roles that contributed to the social, economic, political and cultural life of the community. For example, an Access to Higher Education student went on to gain a degree; was then elected county councillor and served her community with distinction for over 20 years. She initiated many improvements to community life, through her political work. Others went on to run successful businesses from their initial adult education courses such as cake decoration, flower arranging and reflexology. Many students in adult education activities such as badminton, archery, pottery, photography progressed to form community clubs, including sections for young people. This contributed to the social and cultural life of the community and its general well being. There are many more examples.

The extended schools of the early part of the C21st built upon community college principles

and practice of being open to pupils, families and the wider community during and beyond the school day. Community activities were aimed particularly at vulnerable groups, in areas of deprivation where services were limited. Community cohesion was promoted by building links between schools and the wider community, thus contributing to neighbourhood renewal. Positive attitudes to learning were also promoted, including participation in lifelong learning. These schools were founded upon greater 'multi-professional' partnership working with other agencies such as health, social services and the voluntary sectors.

Conclusion: The challenges presented by the pandemic can be met by creating more community-based learning hubs, using the principles and good practices of previous community colleges and extended schools. The future challenges we face need a radical increase in lifelong learning provision and participation, as well as community support and renewal schemes. Everyone deserves ongoing access to lifelong learning for whatever the reason: the future success of the country depends on this.

The government should act as a good employer by providing ongoing continuous professional development and looking after the health and well-being of its work force. In return, our citizens will be enabled to make greater and more efficient contributions to our economic, social and cultural recovery.

'Levelling up' needs to start by investing in community based lifelong learning.

ID: 480-11 - Category: Volunteering

The Return of the Jedi

Covid-19 will significantly exacerbate the education gap between rich and poor students. In 2019, disadvantaged pupils in English schools lagged behind their more affluent peers by the equivalent of 18.1 months of learning by the time they finished their GCSEs. At primary school, this gap was 9.3 months. Several steps have been taken to address this such as setting up the National Tutoring Programme. We still need a better high-quality teaching intervention plan for at least a couple of years to bridge the attainment gap. This can be done making use of the pool of qualified teachers who are out of service and giving them tax credits to return to teaching.

This is the Return of the Jedi. When normality returns in a post-vaccination world, disadvantaged pupils will require intensive face-to-face support. Students who struggled in a traditional classroom environment will have fared far worse trying to cope with online and remote learning techniques. There are research studies which suggest that in-person learning is, on average, more effective. Being in person with teachers and other students creates social pressures and benefits that helps motivate students to engage. This is particularly true for students with weaker academic backgrounds. The Government's focus so far has been on vulnerable children. However, there is a wider group of children who are at risk of educational disadvantage during this lockdown: low-income families above the Universal Credit threshold and not receiving free school meals as well as young carers who have come under particular strain. We suggest that local authorities should be given the freedom to include more pupils in the 'pupil premium' bracket based on criteria such as above. All such children would be eligible for the Jedi treatment. The School Workforce Census published on 25 June 2020 states that there were 33,565 qualified teachers who are out of service. These are teachers who are taking a break from teaching and who may return to teaching in a later year as well as those who are leaving the profession. Furthermore, there were 5,979 qualified teachers who retired. There is a pool of nearly 40,000 qualified teachers which can be tapped for this cause. The Jedi should return. Even if 10% of this pool of qualified teachers enrol, we have a batch of 4,000 Jedis who can be deployed immediately. The enrolment should happen centrally – an interested Jedi would register their details with their teacher reference number and disclosure details, if available, would be checked or referenced. The aspiring Jedi would indicate preference for two local authorities along with the subject(s) that they will teach. Mind the Gap is a face-to-face, individual or small-group, school-based programme and therefore convenience of commute for the Jedi must be borne in mind. Local authorities will assess the numbers of disadvantaged pupils (using the new, wider definition) in primary and secondary state schools in their areas. The schools will determine the groups – preferably not more than five pupils – in each subject area that needs support. Using the Jedi enrolment database, schools will select qualified teachers who are needed for Mind the Gap in their schools. There is a wide resource base present in our schools – textbooks, computers, practice workbooks – and we suggest making use of these. Mind the Gap can be run before, during and after school hours – its administration is best left in the hands of the school leadership team. Each learning session would be for an hour's duration and the Jedi can do as many sessions in a day in that school as is practicable. Each Jedi will be given a timetable by the school before the start of the school term after mutual agreement. It is in the payment mechanism that we suggest a different solution. The pandemic has already burdened the exchequer and more cash handouts as proposed in the National Tutoring Programme (£1 billion) puts further strain. We recommend that the government give tax credits – instead of cash payments – to the Jedis who have returned to participate in the "Mind the Gap" programme. Each Jedi can earn up to £10,000 in tax credits a year by tutoring

under this programme. The tax credit can be used to offset income tax and would be available for use anytime in the next ten years. It could also be used to offset other liabilities such as student loans which the government might decide. Such tax credit payments will be school-certified each term by at least two persons – one from the school leadership and the second from the relevant year or department. This will be done electronically at a website maintained by the Department of Education and then passed on to HMRC. We suggest a payment rate of £25 per hour for primary school lesson and £40 per hour at the secondary school level. The hourly rate is for lesson delivered at the school and excludes the time taken to commute and preparation for the lesson by the Jedi. Assuming Mind the Gap is delivered to 500,000 disadvantaged children in the country in groups of five pupils, this means 100,000 groups in action. Each school will determine how many Mind the Gap sessions in different subjects will be delivered. If 3 subjects are under the programme with 2 sessions per subject each week, this entails 600,000 weekly sessions across the country. At an average of £30 per session, running Mind the Gap for 30 weeks a year hands out tax credits of £540m to the Jedis annually. This cost is matched by the benefit to the economy as it narrows the attainment gap. UK spends an average of £5,500 per pupil each year in the state schools. For 500,000 disadvantaged students, the annual cost is £2,750 million. If Mind the Gap narrows the attainment gap by 2.5 months, the economy gains by £573m. Can the country put a value on the boldness, confidence and intelligence of its youth?

ID: 1781-11 - Category: Volunteering
Year of Service scheme
Short summary

 All school-leavers should be offered the opportunity to undertake a 'Year of Service'. Schemes would be offered in three broad categories: public sector, charitable sector, and overseas development assistance. The Government should establish an overarching body to set the criteria, monitor quality, and to allocate and administer participants, as well as to work with organisations and businesses in each sector to design individual schemes. Participants would receive a living allowance and potentially financial incentives for higher education or future employment opportunities. In relevant sectors, such as education and health, participants would be asked and incentivised to commit to be part of a civil contingency reserve.

Proposition

A 'Year of Service' would tackle three critical public policy challenges in the UK that have been exacerbated by the COVID crisis: providing opportunities and skills for young people, fostering national community spirit, and building civil resilience.

First and foremost, a 'Year of Service' would provide an enriching continuation of education whether as a bridge to tertiary study or full employment. It would act as a counterbalance to the UK's academically focused curriculum and provide much-needed workplace and life skills. Participants would receive some universal basic training as well as training specific to their scheme. Universities and employers would be expected to give credit to participants in future applications. This is likely to be especially welcome to the post-COVID generation of school-leavers who will be confronted with a challenging jobs market.

A universal 'Year of Service' scheme would provide all young people with the opportunity for a shared experience, helping to counteract the UK's structural divides that are rooted in geography, culture or class. All schemes would be geared towards public service, albeit manifest in different ways, helping to engender community spirit and a sense of shared national endeavour.

A UK 'Year of Service' would echo similar schemes in other countries: The German Voluntary Service Year, or 'Freiwilliges Soziales Jahr' (FSJ), describes itself as 'primarily a practical aid activity in institutions serving the common good' including education, youth work, welfare, health, disability and elderly care, cultural and historical preservation, integration, civil and disaster protection, and environmental protection. Some former participants are also incentivised to form part of civil defence schemes such as auxiliary fire or paramedic services.

In the US, 75,000 young people participate in AmeriCorps each year, split across three primary

programmes that each take a different approach to improving lives and fostering civic engagement. Participants aim to address community needs such as increasing academic achievement, youth mentoring, fighting poverty, sustaining national parks, and preparing for disasters. AmeriCorps currently receives c.$1 billion of federal funding each year which is matched by private or state/local public funds, however a bipartisan group of lawmakers recently proposed a massive uplift of the scheme in response to COVID-19 that would see is increase to 750,000 participants over the next three years, as well as increase the stipends and educational grants offered as incentives.

Schemes in the US have been shown to deliver 12% higher incomes for participants, equivalent to an extra year of post-secondary education, and an unemployment uplift in the year after the scheme of 27%. Longitudinal evidence also shows participants volunteer, donate and contribute more to their communities throughout their lives.

In order to facilitate such a scheme in the UK, I propose that Government establishes an arms-length body to set the criteria, and work with host organisations to design individual schemes. This body would then monitor quality and allocate and administer participants. State services such as schools and the NHS would be mandated to offer certain numbers of placements, but charities and certain private sector providers in critical sectors – such as social care and agriculture – would also be invited to design schemes. I propose that 10,000 placements are offered in year one, growing to 50,000 (or c.10% of cohort) by year five.

Participants would be remunerated at a base level – perhaps equivalent to the apprentice minimum wage – and the expectation would be that, where possible, (domestic) participants would continue to live with parents. Government should however develop a grant scheme to supplement living costs where appropriate, and should also explore an exchange programme so that participants might travel to different parts of the country (or world). Government should also consider offering other incentives such as lower university tuition fees for participants or grants to employers that hire participants.

Overseas programmes should be designed so as to be ODA eligible as a successor to the ICS schemes. The oversight body should invite interest from appropriate charities and Government should consider what posts could do to identify opportunities.

Participants would all be asked and incentivised to register as part of a 'civil contingency reserve' for a period of time – say fifteen years – following their participation. Government could then call upon them in moments of national crisis to support efforts such as test and trace or vaccine roll-out. Currently such efforts are ad hoc such as the London 2012 Olympics 'gamesmakers' or, more recently, the Sun newspaper's 'vaccine army'. Or else they are subcontracted to private service giants or the army.

A 'Year of Service' scheme would bring many benefits to individual participants including experience, employability and enrichment. There would also be considerable societal benefits including levelling opportunity, encouraging cohesion, increasing understanding of public and third sector institutions, and engendering a stronger sense of collective endeavour.

Such a scheme would also build long-term resilience for core services. Had it been established policy before the pandemic, current participants and the civil contingency reserve could have been drawn upon to offer support across the whole response effort, from rapidly manning test and trace and vaccination centres, to organising community schemes to tackle loneliness and isolation.

Implemented successfully, a 'Year of Service' policy speaks to several of Government's core objectives: improving skills and opportunities for young people, building back better from the COVID-19 crisis, shoring up our critical public services, and strengthening the Union.

ID: 1814-11 - Category: Volunteering
Build social bonds with a Social Bond
Summary: To repair the eroded bonds of social cohesion by empowering our communities, the

UK will use an innovative financial bond – the world's first Social Cohesion Bond. This will attract investors switching into sustainable environmental and social investments. We'll place the cheaply-financed money raised into a National Social Cohesion Fund. Having impact in 2021 is achievable with the Fund investing into those community services which are proven to strengthen social cohesion.

Recommended solution: Establish a new National Social Cohesion Fund financed by a new type of social bond.

The Fund will be national in reach, significant (& scalable) in terms of financial impact, and target those local services which enhance social cohesion. It will ensure it finances the best-possible community outcomes covering youth, skills, sport, leisure & cultural opportunities. A major benefit of establishing the Fund will be to send a strong signal to the parts of our society that feel marginalised, that their well-being and communities matter – this in itself supports cohesion.

The Fund with its financing method – is a practical and innovative solution to the erosion of social cohesion. Practical because government already has the mechanisms in place to kick-start it; and innovative because the Fund will emphasize holistic outcome-based projects, funded by a world-first form of social financing.

It will have impact because this Fund will operate at scale; not be niche or narrow (as UK social funds are now); and be additive to existing funding streams. It will target socially-cohesive programmes in communities which have been starved of funding; and will build longer-term financial sustainability into recipient operating models, because the finance will have to be repaid in some form. The Fund will be flexible, available to single projects proposed by communities or to Councils with comprehensive plans – all that matters is that proposals meet the Fund's investment criteria and that regional distribution is fair.

The size of the fund will be dependent on demand from communities and the supply of investment funds – but once the mechanisms are in place, it will be easy to scale-up. Estimated demand would be in excess of £1 billion (e.g. real cuts to library funding alone since 2010 is £600 million), against a social bond investment supply of over £100 billion (2020 figures).

Timing: This could be implemented in 2021 because the mechanisms already exist.

• A Fund could be set up in based on existing HMG investment fund architecture (e.g. British Business Bank or Shareholder Executive models) – the mission and investment framework could be agreed in consultation with major stakeholders such as the Local Government Association, Whitehall depts., arts & sports bodies, and the devolved administrations.

• The Bond would be issued by the Debt Management Office which currently working on the UK's first Sovereign Green Bond and so is already targeting a set of investors that would be interested in social bonds.

Background

1: The National Social Cohesion Fund – key elements

• Access: Available to local authorities, umbrella organisations for community sport, culture & training and social enterprises providing such services. The fund would be independently managed and governed to ensure that distribution was equitable and wasn't eaten up by large national projects.

• Use of funds: Local socially-cohesive proposals, such as youth services including skills training; culture; and community sport & leisure. Aimed at all business needs – whether capital investment or working capital to fund staff investment or expansion of ongoing operations. This makes it distinct from the current Public Works Loan Board model which lends from central government funds only for capital projects.

• Investment decisions: Over-seen by an investment committee drawing on existing skills, youth, culture and sport bodies and in line with the categories of investment defined at the outset – supported by UK Government Investments ('UKGI').

• Funding style: The Fund will make investments – either equity or debt – and will seek a long-term return. As such, debt-funded recipients will need a repayment plan. The purpose of this is to build long-term sustainability into the recipient operating models – with the Fund (as equity holder) or recipient (as debtor) focused on eventual investment return.

• Existing funding: The investments would be additive not substitutive to existing government funding and charity (e.g. National Lottery) and so ring-fenced from central government control.

• Establishment: The Fund could be set-up by UKGI, with their experience of governance and fund structures; and representatives from major stakeholders as noted above.

2: Financing through a Social Cohesion Bond

• Innovation: Financing will be through a new form of social bond – the Social Cohesion Bond –

and guaranteed by HMG – so providing access to a historically low cost of finance. The bond and its interest will be repaid from those organisations who access the Fund.

• Investors: This Bond would tap a huge and growing investor base which targets investments in "sustainable bonds" – some $750 billion of which (mainly green bonds) were issued in 2020. These investors often include government pension schemes and targeting these investors in particular would effectively see the savings of older generations being recycled into local services for younger generations.

• Structure: The bonds would need a legal framework around them (e.g. project evaluation, use & management of proceeds, reporting etc) – which could be adapted from UK work on green and Islamic sovereign bonds and standards from international bodies. The bonds will also have to match comparable market-returns or provide some other form of benefit which has value to the investor (such as a clear social benefit).

• Scalability: With the initial bond, a template will have been created for future funding which can easily be accessed through further issues. Current UK social bonds are small-scale, expensive to launch and tap a more specialised and much smaller investor base.

• Spin-off benefits: Would include showcasing the UK's role in sustainable and innovative finance, and the framework could be exported as a global good for similar Social Cohesion Bonds around the world.

ID: 1596-11 - Category: Volunteering

Volunteers register

To provide a streamlined process of obtaining volunteers for major incidents or events I suggest a national register of volunteers divided into categories dependant on requirements.

In relation to returners to services such as the Police in most instances when an officer retires

an exit interview takes place with a check list provided by HR.

I suggest a tick box is included to ask if an individual would like to volunteer in the future for major events of national import. Employers could send these to a national register where the administration could carried out centrally.

The general public who did not go the employer route could go directly to the register to show their interest. Specialist skills held by individuals could be recorded there such as First Aid or if police checks or security vetting was valid with end dates.

The British population are known for their great desire to volunteer as with the 2012 Olympics. I suggest a national register so people know where to go would only help to increase the volunteer pool and reduce costs to the government by in effect getting free labour.

ID: 1591-11 - Category: Volunteering
Supporting unpaid carers and organisations in employment.
There is a gap in provision for employers and employees who are unpaid carers. This gap could be addressed by my proposal Statutory Care Leave Pay (SCLP), similar to Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), before the abolishment of employers being able to recoup the cost from government. There are approximately 13 millions carers in the UK, and only 5 million of them are in paid work.

Every day 600 carers leave work or reduce their hours, citing their caring responsibilities, I am one of them. I am a mother of a disabled child. My working life, since my son was born, and later, my daughters, has followed a cycle. It goes something like this; life feels manageable, I am able to meet the needs of my disabled son and the rest of my family, my son's medical, educational and social needs are stable. I feel the urge to work, I am an intelligent, driven person who craves the community of work, the opportunity to earn, the chance to be 'seen'. I manage to persuade a potential employer that the random nature of and gaps in my CV are not problematic, and that the experience, skills and expertise I have gained from being my son's carer are actually a positive. I get the hard sought, term time only job. Then, perhaps a few months later, an acute care need arises, often in the form surgery or temporary collapse of childcare for my son with complex needs, or maybe a flurry of appointments and meetings for him. This need for my attention and time takes me away from work, I either take unpaid leave (if that is even an option) or be signed off by my GP with 'stress'. This provides me with a legal

framework to protect both me and my employer. It is not a reflection on my ability to do my job, nor a true reflection of what is actually happening. Then the guilt and pressure, lack of empathy from my employer mount up and I resign. I have to reapply for Carers Allowance, Universal Credit etc. A few weeks later, after the dust has settled, in creep the old feelings and need to earn. And thus, the whole sorry saga starts again, each time trying to find a job that will work around my family's needs, as well as provide me with the opportunities I need to earn and thrive, feels more and more unicorn like.

My experience is not uncommon.

We all know that money makes the world go round, and carers often have very little. The majority of carers rely on the benefits system; Carers Allowance, Universal Credit (encompassing housing benefit and others), Pension Credit. The cost to the state of these benefits, along with loss of tax revenue and earnings if they were employed, is estimated to be £5.3 Billion a year. The government's own 'Future of an Ageing Population' report states that carers are more likely to be….economically inactive. It is inarguably better for working age carers, who need to or wish to, to work.

The cost to carers is far greater than the obvious economic ones; 1.2 million carers live in poverty, Carers Allowance is widely regarded as not fit for purpose and the lowest paid benefit, just £67.25 a week. The other aspects are the emotional, psychological and physical costs, along with all the individual nuanced experiences in between. The majority of carers in a Carers UK poll said they felt their contribution is not understood or valued by the public and society more broadly. They cite loneliness, isolation and societal exclusion. This cannot be a surprise when there is no provision from government to enable this group of resilient, tenacious and hardworking people to remain in employment. The message is clear – you are not worth keeping. This appears to be in direct opposition to the words of the current ruling party's Amanda Rudd, when she was Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, "Good work is good for our mental and physical health, and by working closely with employers we can help prevent the loss of talent when people unnecessarily leave the workplace."

By introducing a Statutory Care Leave Pay, many of the challenges experienced by both employer and employee would be addressed. Carers surveyed in 2017 said the top three things that would help them to remain in work were; a supportive, understanding manager/employer, the ability to work flexibly and the right to extra paid time off work to care. The SCLP would elevate the status of the pivotal role unpaid carers carry out, saving the economy around £132 billion a year. Their status would be formally and legally recognised as valuable, their contribution to the working world safeguarded. Employers would have state support to retain and pay these employees who temporarily need to carry out extra care. There is no legal requirement for employers to pay an employee for time off to care for a dependant, unless it has been written into their contract, even then it is usually only applicable after a stipulated length of time in service. The SCLP should be accessible to employees and employers from the day their employment begins.

SSP can be claimed for 28 weeks, at a statutory rate of £95.85 (note that this is significantly more than Carers Allowance!) employers are now liable for this cost, but I propose government, not employers, fund SCLP. If each carer in the workplace required per year around a total 6 weeks leave to care at this same rate, the cost is around £2.8 billion – significantly less than the £5.3 billion a year cost of those individuals no longer being employed.

By enshrining carers rights in law in the form of SCLP, and providing the means where the need is so clearly present, the health of carers, the people they care for, their personal finances and the wider economy would be greatly improved. If the government supported carers, perhaps the rest of society would too.

ID: 1464-11 - Category: Volunteering
Reviving Adult Education post-pandemic in the context of Lifelong Learning
Idea in brief: Given recent pandemic experience, a huge need has been revealed for home based activities which can occupy and enhance the mind. I see Britain's once vigorous but now etiolated Liberal Adult Education provision in dire need of revival for many social and cultural reasons. My belief is that a new body, loosely based on the successful existing educational charity, the u3a, would repay a hugely disproportionate dividend from even a small funding investment by government.

Personal Interest: From 1972 to 1993 I worked for the Extra-Mural Department of Manchester University, serving as Director 1986-93. This meant I had close involvement with the UK's Adult Education system and developed a strong commitment to improving its reach and function.

Britain's Adult Education System: After the 1870 Education Act and those which followed it, the notion of education as a fundamental right was permanently established but for millions of still uneducated adults there was a huge education deficit. In 1903 the Workers Education Association looked beyond literacy to more systematic study, sometimes with Higher Education in view. After the trauma of war, the 1919 Ministry of Reconstruction's Final Report on Adult Education turbo-charged adult education, based on the following principle: "Adult education is a permanent national necessity, an inseparable aspect of citizenship, and therefore should be both universal and lifelong"; it "should be spread uniformly and systematically over the whole community". The spread of university extra-mural departments all over the country fulfilled some of the above ambitions, complemented by the development of adult education via local education authority (LEA) provision: adult education centres and further education colleges. The Army Bureau of Current Affairs helped educate soldiers returning home from the war and the scene was set for further expansion of provision post-war. Millions annually attended adult courses on a huge range of vocational and liberal adult topics in EMD, WEA and LEA classes. Later in the 1960s the Open University provided high quality degree courses for adults prepared to study using distance learning technology. Within this system, liberal adult education was a major element, along with more vocational studies and, via LEA provision, skills-based handicrafts.

Liberal Adult Education Under Attack: Initially the idea of educating the minds of adults was essentially liberal: this was the way they could discover the magic of literature, art history, languages, foreign cultures and the sciences. Course fees were accessible by pensioners and the low paid and, despite a predominantly middle class audience, many found this provision not only fulfilling but frequently, for mature students, a gateway into higher education. However, as the debate over public expenditure evolved during the latter part of the century, the utility of liberal adult education was questioned: such courses rarely led to qualifications; did not contribute directly to improving the national economy (though in less visible ways, they did);

and the majority of attendees could afford to pay more for them.

Decline: During the 1990s funding for Extra-Mural Departments disappeared. Some provision survived but fees were usually beyond the pockets of the low paid. LEA funding was reallocated gradually to vocationally directed provision and the plentiful LEA classes in most areas of the country faded away apart, again, from courses accessible only to those who could afford them. As one-time leader of the National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education, Sir Alan Tuckett, explains Liberal Adult Education has been thrown out with the overall adult learning bathwater: 'We are, alas, overwhelmingly obsessed with initial education – the clockwork model that starts with early years and ends with labour market entry – at the expense of learning throughout life. As a result, over the past 15 years we have lost two million places in publicly funded adult education…. If we had set out consciously to destroy adult learning opportunities we could not have done a better job.'

My Proposal: Revive Liberal Adult Education

a) That foundation principle of the 1919 Report is still more relevant then ever: "Adult education is a permanent national necessity, an inseparable aspect of citizenship, and therefore should be both universal and lifelong.'

) With appalling statistics of functional illiteracy in the UK - an average of 1 in 8 - every possible opportunity for easy access, low cost study should be provided.

c) With an ageing population and the problem of loneliness for so many elderly people becoming acute, there is a real demand for the return of cheap well-constructed and taught adult education classes.

d) To attract late 50 / early 60 year olds, made redundant by COVID.

The University of the Third Age (u3a): Founded in 1982 as a national charity to provide learning as an absorbing and entertaining activity, the u3a is a UK-wide movement which brings together people who are no longer in full-time employment, to develop their interests and continue their

learning in a friendly and informal environment. It now has over a thousand branches, with close to half a million members who on average pay £20 annually. u3a members draw on their knowledge and experience to teach and learn from each other but there are no qualifications to pass – it is just for pleasure. Learning is its own reward. At present there is an age limit of 55 for attendees but if this were adjusted downward there is no reason why a fully national adult education service should not be revived primarily to fill leisure time richly, both socially and productively, for the individual. Alan Tuckett correctly describes it as 'a candle in the gloom.'

Change Name? My suggestion is to base a new body to replace or run in harmony with the u3a with a government funded body called something like 'The Lifelong Learning Community': lower age limit of 21 or 25 utilising the enthusiasm of people to organise their own learning. Even a small investment of funding in such an expanded national organisation would pay a huge dividend in terms of well being and personal satisfaction not to mention raising the overall cultural level of society.

ID: 200-11 - Category: Volunteering

Building Back Resilience: an integrated approach in the aftermath of an Anti-Social Virus.

Summary: Jeremy Heywood left a legacy of an innovative, locally-led programme (Greater Manchester's Working Well pilot) that demonstrated it could improve resilience even in challenging circumstances, where other programmes had failed. Building Back Resilience proposes to take the learning from this work and apply it to the challenge of the impact on unemployment and mental health in the aftermath of the pandemic. It will introduce and test two additional innovative features: a diversion scheme away from sanctions and focused on life-skills and new vocational skills acquisition for those at risk of dropping out of employment, education and training as a result of depression; a new remote multi-disciplinary support team, with keyworkers drawn from experts-by-experience at its heart, to take the place of the face-to-face teams of talking therapists and keyworkers previously. Policy Background: Jeremy Heywood provided the kind of open-minded, pragmatic leadership that was always willing to reconsider existing policies in the light of the changing facts - in the words of another great leader: "However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results" (Winston Churchill). No sooner had we agreed with the Treasury, in 2007, for an investment of £300M in the new IAPT programme to roll-out talking therapies on the NHS, than we were faced with the financial crash in 2008. It is recognised that IAPT has gone on to be a world-leading exemplar for implementing access to evidence-based therapies. But as well as the promise to scale up access

(IAPT was set to achieve a target of 1.5M adults per year, prior to the pandemic), which it has delivered, when Lord Layard and myself agreed the business case with Jeremy Heywood and the Treasury mandarins there were two further promises that we made: 1. To reduce the burden of depression as a common mental illness and 2. To support people with depression who were also unemployed to return to work, to achieve cost-savings on welfare benefits, as well as improve population wellbeing. After the financial crash in 2008, IAPT was unable to achieve either of these other 2 promises. Under the Coalition government, during a period of austerity, we saw rates of suicide increase; rates of self-harm, depression and anxiety also increased; rates of disability and long-term unemployment attributed to depression increased, along with steep increases in rates of prescribing antidepressants (from 35M in 2008 to 70M in 2018, notwithstanding the success of IAPT on reducing waiting times for talking therapy, and the fact NICE guidance in 2009 had not recommended antidepressants as the first line treatment for most cases of mild-to-moderate depression). Government policies had been designed to be evidence-based and faithfully implemented. But on the health side (IAPT) and welfare side (Universal credit and the Work Programme) their results were both showing up as increased harms. Building Back Resilience: an integrated approach Heywood was persuaded that what he called 'a market failure' was responsible. IAPT services were not prioritising the employment support needs for these patient groups because that was 'not our responsibility' ("we are mental health professionals, not job coaches"). The Work Programme providers, who were contracted under a Payment-By-Results programme, were not prioritising the mental health needs for these client groups because that was 'the responsibility of the NHS' ("why should we waste our money on offering access to private therapy when the NHS says it is already offering this for free?"). RAND Europe were jointly commissioned by the Ministers (Lord Freud at DWP; Sir Norman Lamb at DoH) to report on a more integrated model that could overcome these problems. Out of this a series of pilots were set up by the Joint Work and Health Unit and, in Greater Manchester, given the opportunity of a newly devolved agreement, an investment of £10M was match-funded by the Cabinet Office and European Social Fund for a Working Well pilot. The results of the 3-year Working Well pilot in Greater Manchester were impressive: over 20% of clients returned to sustained employment (4-5 times better results than elsewhere). Building Back Resilience: adapting to changed circumstances The cost-benefit aspect of Greater Manchester's Working Well design was based on an ambitious target for 20% of clients returning to sustained employment (over 12 months). In the areas of the country that are most impacted economically, and in certain employment sectors, a more innovative cost-benefit model will need to be built. We will draw on work done by the What Works Centre for Wellbeing, bring in expertise from the British Business Bank and elsewhere, and use this to construct and adapt a new cost-benefit model based on local, social resilience returns for investment. In addition to the independent quantitative evaluation of Working Well, we undertook a qualitative evaluation, led by a joint LSE and Durham University team, funded

through a European Research Fund project – Knowledge for Use. From this we learned more about the untapped knowledge and potential for greater use of non-professional, expert-by-experience skills and expertise. There are challenges to enable effective teamworking when multi-disciplinary teams include different professional backgrounds working alongside non-professionals. The changed circumstances of the pandemic, however, offer an opportunity for greater collaborative working via remote platforms (e.g. MS Teams, Zoom etc), as well as greater flexibility in working with clients remotely likewise. Key to this are good attachments and building trust with clients over time which, in turn, needs good support also for teams. It is precisely the kinds of interpersonal relationships that Building Back Resilience will aim to improve, through what we refer to as conditions for building epistemic trust, where the consequences of the pandemic have wreaked additional collateral damage. Hence, we believe, that the urgent crisis for mental health that we face also presents an opportunity. Building Back Resilience combines learning from previous evidence-based policies with adapting to a changed situation by offering a new solution with realistic promise of success.

ID: 1643-11 - Category: Volunteering

Universal Basic Income a Solution for a Secure Society

The challenges we've seen during the COVID-19 pandemic has given us the chance to re-imagine our society and think about how we want to live in the future and also to think about what values are important for us to live by. My solution to the challenge of providing a society in which all the population are able to live a good standard of life, adequately providing for their needs, despite emergencies and unexpected global pandemics or catastrophes, is to implement a Universal Basic Income scheme (UBI). There are many advantages to providing every adult member of the population with a regularly paid basic amount of money which will enable them to maintain an adequate life style. Contrary to popular opinion, a government UBI scheme does not make people lazy or refuse to work. In countries that have implemented the scheme in a limited experimental way (Finland, for example and Kenya), it was found to encourage the unemployed to look for work (in Finland, the scheme was implemented amongst a small number of random unemployed people). It also gave people a sense of confidence in their future and a feeling of self-respect. The cost of the scheme is often used as a reason for not pursuing this but many countries have found in hard economic times, that giving the population an amount of "free" money boosts the economy (Australia has done this and the USA and, indeed, the British government did it in a small way after the first lockdown, when introducing the £10 meal in restaurants and pubs – this immediately gave a huge boost to the food industry). More money available, to be spent in the economy, actually improves the economic growth of the country. Since the 1970's we have been told by Futurologists that our working lives will become redundant because of more automated and roboticized technologies.

It was predicted that by 2000 most of us would not be working. This did not happen as, instead, unnecessary middle management positions were created to "use up" the working population. This in effect, stultifies innovation and creativity as it just maintains the status quo. If a UBI was implemented, more creative business could be explored – more suitable to servicing our modern technological world with more recreational opportunities than ever. Indeed, we have already seen, in the midst of a pandemic, many innovative and creative businesses have started up and thrived. Businesses that would not have been thought of without the pandemic. We have seen a rise in online colleges, offering video courses, zoom lessons and lectures, home delivery of ingredients for all styles of baking and cooking, craft materials booming, home-made masks being made, etc. Another advantage to society when adopting UBI, is that in countries that have experimented with the scheme, it was shown that people had more time and inclination to volunteer for charity work or work in the community to improve the society they lived in. Communities became closer together and there were more points of contact between young and old people, therefore, ameliorating loneliness and isolation. A huge benefit from having a population who are well fed, not worried about money or security and with time to relax, is that stress and anxiety is lessened, diet is improved (as there is more money for healthy food choices) and sleep improves. All of these benefits (which implicate improved health – both physical and mental) takes the strain from medical services. People also have more time for relaxation and recreation, doing things like yoga, meditation, working with clubs and societies, starting community gardens and farms, all of which, then again, affects the health, sociability and well-being of the people participating. From the above, it can be seen that to have a population that is secure and thriving brings many benefits. Many will still say that the cost is prohibitive but this is a scheme for the long game. Improved health and mental well-being will bring their own advantages – making a happy, contented, motivated society – as well as saving huge amounts of money on medical resources. Social services will also not spend as much as it does now as many problems of poverty will disappear. As we know, deprived areas of Britain suffer from educational inequalities, if this deprivation is addressed, we will also have generations of children and young people who are much better educated and who will then contribute their own skills and attributes to the work environment and the country. If we want to live in an egalitarian society where everyone is given an opportunity to thrive, as well as maintaining a caring society and economic growth, then a Universal Basic Income is a good solution.

ID: 2173-11 - Category: Volunteering

Research and Putting Together a Toe in the Water "Pitch"

So, if this is an opportunity, what would be the first thing to do? The first would be to check I am right: that there is no hidden reserve of high quality, syllabus linked computer games out there.

The second would be to ask "why"? Why are there no educational computer games? Providers must have considered this. Was it the cost? The technical delivery? Yet surely, to take one example, to have 480,000 fifteen year olds studying An Inspector Calls at any one time, is a potential market?

Obviously, to receive support and funding, while very welcome, is only to start a small seed that might ultimately bear fruit. But it will take time and money. A lot of money - especially if we want to come close to the scale and professionalism of the game companies. So the small beginning would be to ask for funds to research and write a "pitch", a professionally produced and researched document, almost a business plan, outlining the need and suggesting the remedy, which could be taken to potential suppliers such as the BBC, Pearson, Longmans, Collins and other educational suppliers. Other organisations might help. BAFTA, for instance, runs courses for young game makers. Could they be enlisted? The prize money would be to hire technical support for writing the pitch; I would supply the educational data for free. Then to also, if possible, receive help from the Department of Education to open doors to such educational providers and examining bodies, would also be a huge advantage. There may be many other non-pecuniary advantages the profile of such a prize would give.

I am realistic. There is probably a very good reason why my school has no computer games on the shelf. But how wonderful it would be if, one day, a young child would run up to me and say" "Hi, sir. I really enjoyed the Grammar game last night!"?

ID: 2058-11 - Category: Volunteering
Redefining the Civic Journey
We capitalise on this opportunity by reframing and reimagining how we think about citizenship, in general, and supporting young people, in particular. Although there are no simple solutions to complex problems it is possible to suggest that thinking about 'the civic journey' offers huge potential in terms of thinking about supporting individuals and building communities.

The perennial weakness of policies in this area is that they tend to be either age-related or place-specific in ways that prevent the full potential of any investment ever being realised. Short-termism and fragmentation prevents a more vibrant focus on nurturing positive social change. In the post-Brexit, post-Covid context there is a very rare opportunity to completely reconsider how policy is conceived and delivered in order to produce a more integrated policy framework – thereby increasing efficiency and effectiveness while at the same time delivering

demonstrable public benefits in the places or amongst those sections of society that need it most.

The notion of 'the civic journey' is therefore a new framework for thinking about and designing policy not only so that it matches the everyday real-world lives of people, but also so that policies dovetail in ways that build civic momentum as young people move through various life stages and into adulthood.

To provide an example of how the civic journey might be utilised to deliver a more efficient and integrated policy landscape it is useful to just consider the introduction of citizenship education in schools, the National Citizen Service and the new investment in a Civic Universities Network. These are all aimed at different age groups – broadly 11-15, 16-18 and 18-21 – but they are discrete policies with absolutely no thought as to how they might be designed to create a more integrated tapestry of opportunities. Citizenship education is poorly taught, poorly assessed and has evolved towards a focus on character education (i.e. the individual) rather than on active citizenship (i.e. on the community). The National Citizen Service is a brilliant idea but again struggles to reach the sections of society that would benefit the most and is totally lacking in innovative creativity. (For example, where is the NCS alumni scheme that supports young people that have been on the course to develop and continue their interests.) The Civic Universities Network is very new and a brilliant idea but it seems to have lost its core focus and has little to offer those young people who do not go to university. Never before in British post-war history has there been a time when thinking about the fabric of British society has been more important.

The notion of the civic journey provides a way of building a more innovative and ambitious policy framework that is aware of the significance of transition points between phases and policies. This is not to suggest that there is just one single 'civic journey' that can be mapped and that is suitable for everyone; but it is to suggest that thinking about the civic journey and the portfolio of policies and opportunities that are intended to nurture positive individual attributes and a commitment to active citizenship could be far better integrated. The benefit being that the social value would then add up to far more than a sum of the individual parts. In sum, the problem is increased social polarisation, increased fragmentation and increasing levels

of public apathy and disaffection, especially amongst the young, about political processes, political institutions and politicians. The recommended response is a cross-government focus on the civic journey which seeks to promote civic engagement and political understanding amongst all age groups, identifies and fills gaps in provision, appreciates that achieving cultural change takes time, has a laser-like focus on transition-points and building momentum between policies but does not try and ram all young people into a 'one size fits all model' that will only confirm the idea that politicians are out of touch and the state is a blunt instrument.

A really smart post-covid approach would be to innovate by working with young people for young people by promoting and funding forms of co-production and co-design through which disengaged sections of society can take responsibility for charting their own civic journey. The great benefit being that this is likely to produce enthusiasm for inter-generational engagement that could well address related demographic challenges regarding loneliness and isolation.

ID: 1970-11 - Category: Volunteering

Expand free child care to 1yr+

Add 3 more year groups to the state education system: Nursery 1 (1-2yrs), Nursery 2 (2-3yrs), and Nursery 3 (3-4yrs). School hours (9-3:30) would be free, and school meals would be provided for those eligible. Parents would just pay for hours needed outside of the 9-3:30 day, with the hourly rate being proportional to their earnings to keep it fair. Not everyone would want to put their children into nursery this early, so this additional care should be non-mandatory, but available to all parents who want to benefit from it. Single parents would then be able to focus more time on their careers, to increase income to support their families while also increasing tax income to the government to offset the cost of providing this free care. Children in low socio-economic households would also benefit from better nutrition and more one to one time. It would also result in many children starting to read and write earlier than they otherwise would have done. This would put children on a more level playing field by the time they reach primary school. By supporting parents who want or need to get back to work sooner, and supporting the children of those parents to give them the best possible start in life, this would have a double pronged approach to boosting the prospects of people from lower income families, while boosting the economy at the same time.

Alongside this, employers could also be incentivised through the tax system to provision private

day care for the children of their staff and neighbouring businesses to minimise the increased burden on the state. Larger employers could rent out surplus office space within their buildings (as a result of the inevitable post-pandemic shift to increased home working) to child care providers, allowing those companies to incorporate creche facilities into their employee benefits packages. This would be win win for employers keen to encourage staff to come into the office at least some of the time, and for staff looking for convenient child care support to be able to work to their full potential. It would promote closer bonds between staff that make friends through their children and help to promote a positive family friendly culture. As flexible working will inevitably be on the rise post-lockdown, promoting this use of vacant office space would also help to encourage companies to not downsize to smaller locations, helping to bolster the commercial real estate sector

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ID: 1896-11 - Category: Volunteering

Recognition of the Right to Language for all children, particularly to support Deaf children

Language Deprivation is a cruel and harsh reality for many deaf children. In the UK, 4 babies are born deaf each day, with 90% of these born to hearing parents with little to no knowledge of sign languages (NDCS).

When deaf children are not able to fully access either signed or spoken language they are faced with many lasting effects. 'Cognitive delays, mental health challenges, lower quality of life, higher trauma, and limited health literacy' are just a few of these, with evidence suggesting 'permanent brain changes' when children are not able to access any language fully during their critical early years (Hall, 2017).

With access to sign language from the start Deaf children can thrive. I. King Jordan once famously stated 'Deaf people can do anything hearing people can do, except hear', however, when children are not afforded the basic human right of language, they are not able to fulfil their individual potential.

The rights of deaf children to signed language are not explicitly stated, and many people,

including hearing parents, are not ever made aware of these concerns. The UN Rights of the Child (Article 19) explicitly state many examples of neglect, yet language deprivation is not mentioned once. The vital significance of signed communication is thus continuing to go unknown by many officials, parents and schools, and Deaf children are falling behind.

The Rights of the Child are thorough, sound, and undoubtedly beneficial. This cannot be denied. They are lacking in one key area, however – the Right to Language. Therefore, I present two calls to action:

1- Broaden or develop the Rights of the Child to include the Right to Language.

2- Broaden the description of 'neglect' as present in the Rights of the Child Article 19 documentation to include, explicitly, language deprivation.

Taking these steps will help to ensure that no Deaf child is left behind.

It is not simply desirable to see these changes - it is necessary. In 2021, it is surely embarrassingly negligent to continually overlook Deaf children in this manner. Where their right to language is overlooked, as it currently is for all children with no explicit documentation on the matter, the basis for support on a local level is non-existent. Movement from the bottom up must occur; change, support, and awareness from within UN Nation States and pressure from these spaces ensuring that no Deaf children are left in a life of silence simply by fact of birth.

ID: 1774-11 - Category: Volunteering
New infrastructure to enable people to work for the good of society
-- The country needs new infrastructure to enable voluntary work. --

To capitalise on the public's unsatisfied desire to contribute to society in a time of crisis, that we identified in our problem statement, we suggest that policymakers should create a new national system of voluntary work underpinned by a cutting edge digital platform. Any digital tool should be designed based on user needs in line with the GDS service standard, but we will

point out some of the most exciting avenues to explore.

-- Good design allows people to complete an activity. --

To get people browsing an online shop to make a purchase, or, as it is known, to "convert" site visits, businesses invest heavily in research, testing and data analytics. They know that making a simple and pleasurable shopping experience creates a 'good path' where the individual encounters no obstacles to their sudden fancy of purchasing an item. Why would you place any deterrents in the path of someone who is considering parting with their hard-earned money?

The voluntary sector needs this sort of thinking. This isn't about coercing people to give up their time; it's about giving them an experience so smooth and simple that when one day they think "I could volunteer…", and reach for their phone, and look up volunteering, they don't get distracted, wander off, or run out of time to find an opportunity. It's about matching them to an experience that is so perfect for them that they are surprised by how fortuitous it is.

-- Latent demand --

As mentioned in our problem statement, people were eager to help others during the pandemic's first wave. Forcibly disconnected from their work and friendship communities, they were much more likely to experience local amenities, neighbours and community behaviours. People described feeling useless, not sharing the burden that NHS staff were carrying. Thousands signed up just to pick fruit, but were not asked to actually do anything.

Imagine if less of this effort petered out, and more of it came to a positive conclusion. Imagine if just 30% of this energy had been directed into activities that benefited the lonely, the hungry or the vulnerable. Imagine if even a quarter of the people had had a 'good path' to useful activity, instead of being blocked by bureaucratic hurdles, poor signposting, confusion, unanswered calls or generic autoreply emails. Imagine how much good could be done in society if it was possible for a willing volunteer to find a task that matched their availability, their

location, their transport options, their skills and their inclinations, in under a minute.

-- Digital as standard. --

It would be relatively simple to create an application to do this - and it is overdue. The 16-24 age group is the most likely group to volunteer (BHF 2019). Moreover, all age groups are becoming increasingly at home with digital technologies. Their expectations are rising as they interact on a daily basis with delightful and intelligent apps. Surveys show that younger people prefer online chats and notifications to telephone calls. If the volunteering sector does not modernise how it communicates, it will consistently disappoint people; it will appear to be a relic of the 20th century, and this might impact on whether people interact with it at all.

-- Platforms. --

The infrastructure of volunteering is outdated. There are websites, but they only list opportunities in the same way that the online Yellow Pages used to do. A new system would be the opposite of the (now defunct) Yellow Pages. It would be more like JustEat. Twenty years ago, who could have envisaged that thousands of businesses, individual restaurants all with different buildings and phone numbers, could be connected into one system with one front end for ordering, and a standardised delivery system. But it happened. This is the power of platforms. There is no reason why charities and other institutions like hospitals could not advertise tasks on a single platform. Data analytics could show them what people were most likely to help with.

Locally focussed platforms, such as Facebook Groups and Gumtree, have played an important role during the pandemic. They have been used to coordinate donations or community efforts, but they are not optimal because they are primarily designed for other activities. A purpose-built solution could, nonetheless, take inspiration from these sites' peer to peer exchange features.

-- Volunteering, or working for the good of society? --

Covid uniquely affected volunteering: at the same time that a crisis moved people to want to assist others, it freed up a large number of people who would previously have been working full time. Those people gained time, but their lives lost a large part of their purpose overnight. In some cases they lost income too. Jobs have already come back in some sectors and they will in others. But we expect to see a significant long-term economic impact with jobs lost and knock-on effects as people tighten their belts. It is well known that work gives people meaning in their lives as well as income. Without work, people feel useless.

At the same time, there are always people in need of help, and post-crisis there will be so many areas of society in need of restoration that charities may not know where to begin. As such, we propose that the 'volunteering' system has a dual mission - to attract those who are prepared to give and also to provide meaning and some remuneration to those who are unemployed. This could be managed through a Universal Credit top-up or a cash voucher scheme integrated into the platform. It could be paid for by government, by the new digital business tax on platforms, by a levy on participating organisations or by a mixture of these. Working for the good of society would bring dignity, purpose and self-worth to individuals who have been adversely affected by the pandemic even as they contributed to repairing the damage suffered by others.

ID: 1538-11 - Category: Volunteering

Support to essential services - The Retained Reserve.

Could we create a new part-time organization to support essential services when they are stressed, using retired personnel to work part time?

In education, retired teachers could be assigned individual pupils for support in their studies which could be via Skype, Zoom or other on-line medium or even 'learning stix' which I have suggested elsewhere.

In the health services, retired doctors and nurses could provide support on non-essential health issues (varicose veins and piles spring to mind) via either the local surgery or 111. Retired paramedics and nurses could back-up the ambulance service by dealing with low priority calls.

In the area of crime prevention, retired officers could be retained as special constables to back up permanent staff when services are under stress.

Overall, this would be controlled by a new organization called The Retained Reserve or 'RR'. They would have a register of volunteers which would be made available to the main service providers to call upon. Each 'volunteer' would opt for an area of expertise and state the number of hours that they would work each week. They would be provided with a tax-free, nominal annual payment and something for each hour worked - again tax-free.

Not only would this take some pressure off essential services, it would provide meaningful occupation in times of great stress.

ID: 505-11 - Category: Volunteering

Creating a virtual network of community heroes who can respond to a call to action

This pandemic has created a clear opportunity to bring the country together and enhance the desire of people to make a difference in their communities. But how do we create a positive and lasting national inclusion legacy? With the latest request for people to sign up for the NHS Jab Army, I downloaded the Good Sam Responder app. The app sends you a notification if your services are needed to help someone local who is self isolating or in need of support, allowing you to accept or reject requests. So we know the technology is there for two-way communication from an app provider to a database of registered volunteers to inform them when they are needed in real time, at scale. As we hope to move past the pandemic, we should look to build on this network model and expand it into a platform to support a wide range of public life and community causes. Targeted notifications could be sent to a national database as and when opportunities arise, to drive support for key projects in advance or for an instant response. Whilst the technology to develop the platform could be outsourced, it will be a formal recognition scheme that could drive and incentivise an army of volunteers across the country. By creating an all encompassing, easy to access place for all DBS checked volunteers, people could pick and choose a wide range of opportunities to get involved in. From joining local litter picks, to helping out at local sports clubs, painting community spaces, supporting lonely people

and working with a range of organisations who need volunteers, the general public will have a more accessible way to give back to their communities than ever before. Through a points based incentive system, participants would earn points or badges for their volunteering hours. Volunteers, who have logged the most hours or added the most value to society could be formally recognised at a Number 10 reception with media coverage for Britain's Community Heroes. Such a nationally backed scheme would not only provide organisations with much needed support but also be an effective way to combat loneliness and build stronger communities.

ID: 497-11 - Category: Volunteering

Care Home First Responders (Matrons)

There is a real problem with a growing population of frail elderly and particular those in care homes. Elderly patients in care homes have increasingly complex conditions. It is not uncommon for homes to have residents regularly attending casualty (revolving door effect), regularly calling paramedic services and primary care services. Weekends and nights are a particular issue. It is not uncommon for a GP or primary care nurse to have done a weekly ward round earlier in the day only to be called back later to see residents as they cannot be managed by staff. Often the caller lacks confidence and cannot assess the patient in simple health terms. There is an onus on the carer not to make mistakes and not to take to much responsibility.

We also all know that elderly people do better if they can be treated outside of hospital.

Many care homes are now increasingly large may be with over a hundred residents offering many extra services at high weekly cost to residents but they do not provide basic acute health care assessment. As more and more homes open in a particular area this can have huge implications on a practice or practices in the catchment area.

The idea would be to make it mandatory for large care homes or groups of smaller homes to employ a first responder on duty at all times to make basic assessments of sick patients, liaise with primary care teams and rapid response teams where appropriate in order to avoid unnecessary transfer to hospital. The First Responder/Matron could be a former senior HCA, Nurse Practitioner or Paramedic and would also have a role to up-skill on topics around appropriate treatment and illness prevention in the elderly. They would become proactive 'champions' in adequate hydration, nutrition, reducing medication errors and harms and timely diagnosis of infection. They would liaise with casualty departments to return an elderly person back to the care home as soon as safe to do so with their new care plan.

Although large homes could be asked to provide these posts within their staff budgets as they stand, smaller care homes may need some financial support or work in networks where possible with a mobile responder. This support could come as incentivised payments based on reduction of admissions to casualty compared to average local data.

We owe it to our increasing elderly population to reduce any need to visit or stay in hospital which is often very distressing and can be counterproductive. Residents in care homes are much more likely to be escalated up the line and be transferred to hospital. We need also to ease the burden on primary care and paramedic services for unnecessary home visits so they can concentrate on other tasks to hand. We need to raise confidence in our care homes so that they can manage residents/patients much more holistically for the future.

ID: 169-11 - Category: Volunteering

Homeschool

There are many areas of the country where Received Pronunciation is not the norm which could be alienating. Perhaps the regional stations could pre- record a story in their local accent; an actor to read a story and subtitles to be shown.

This model could be used when needed because of a pandemic or very poor weather conditions.

ID: 11.Nov - Category: Volunteering

We could fix this problem by mobile laboratories which are easy to assemble, affordable and able to greatly increase testing capacity. Laboratories are built within shipping containers, then shipped to the designated country. Once in the country, the mobile lab can be transported by trucks to provide testing in areas with less hospitals or areas suffering from a lack of testing. Such laboratories fulfill the requirements of a Biosafety Level II lab which is the standard required to deal with COVID-19 samples, and are equipped with PCR machines to allow for testing. This is a cheap and efficient way of quickly increasing COVID-19 testing, in identifying invisible super-spreaders and in saving lives.

ID: 1883-11 - Category: Volunteering

Distance Learning: A Core Educational Provision Addressing Urgent Learning Gaps and the Ongoing Achievement Deficit.

Distance Learning ("DL") should be funded across all our primary and secondary schools. Essentially, the staffing and funding of this should be carried out by treating DL as an additional subject to be delivered through existing structures. For example, schools should establish DL leads, funded in the same way as subject or department leads. School collaborations and trusts should establish a dedicated DL role to support their schools and deliver DL efficiently depending on identified needs.

OVERALL PROGRAMME

• Design catch-up lessons for needs perceived by headteachers and class teachers. This could be carried out face-to-face for groups. Individuals, on the other hand, could use either live or recorded materials, depending on the available resources.

• Proactively help address the educational attainment gap by allowing extra tuition to be provided within the local education system. Again, this could be provided in groups or individually, depending the nature of the identified need.

• Flexibly allow DL during the school day, weekends or holidays, where appropriate for individual pupils.

• Organise flexibly at school collaboration, trust and local authority level. Depending on demand, lessons may be more efficiently provided at local authority level, as dictated by numbers.

• Leverage best practices, based on shared lockdown experience. An approach to pooling knowledge will need to be developed. Local champions will need reach out to frontline staff, but well-constructed national questionnaires and follow-up materials would establish a common basis for discussion.

• Leverage use of nationwide or local materials as appropriate.

• Utilise the increased availability of laptops effectively. Properly funded broadband access and computer facilities at schools should be available to children without good access at home. These would need to be staffed and available out of hours.

• Subject to availability, encourage pupils to take modules electively. Ultimately some non-core subjects, such as foreign languages, could be provided via the DL platform.

SHORT TERM OBJECTIVES AND REQUIREMENTS

• Target the more serious education gaps arising from lockdown, as observed by teachers at the pupil level.

• Additional DL staff will be needed as front-line staff will not have the stretch capacity. These can work at the school or local authority/academy level as necessary.

• Could utilise: recently retired teachers and TAs; tech savvy volunteers; recent graduates considering the new employment landscape.

• Individual schools to set up or expand on-site access to PCs to address technology shortages at home.

LONG TERM BENEFITS

• Once the short-term bulge in resources required post pandemic subsides, there should be a steady-state provision of DL. This will:

• Help address the persistent attainment gap.

• Facilitate pupils with certain special needs to achieve an appropriate blend of distance and face-to-face learning as appropriate.

• Allow children who have fallen behind for any reason (such as ill-health or family disruption) to catch up in a timely fashion.

• Allow parents to select home learning times that suit their work schedules.

• Provide a core competency in home learning as contingency planning for future emergencies.

ANCILLARY BENEFIT

• The systemic approach to the inclusion of DL in our schools could generate a significant business opportunity to develop exportable brands of on-line teaching materials.

• Given the prevalence of English as a first or second language the potential customer base is clearly huge. Moreover, many countries will need to deal with similar post-covid educational issues to those we are facing here in the UK.

• This external business opportunity might be exploited to generate private sector investment in the development and provision of materials and other resources for use in UK schools.

ID: 1372-11 - Category: Volunteering
Harness computer games to further education
There is a challenge in encouraging children to engage with on-line learning whilst they are easily attracted to on-line games.

Use the technology and the structure of the games to facilitate learning.

An example might be to include in the "football team management" game the need to understand fractions, percentages and probabilities in choosing player purchases as a means to progress through the competency levels.

Teachers could be asked for suggestions for such components and independent educational auditors could provide reviews to parents on the degree to which a particular game fulfills this goal.

Anecdotal -

This idea came to me when I was training in a comprehensive and a pupil was too tired to do the classwork. He explained that he'd been playing football late at night - meaning the simulation game.

If he'd had to tackle some simple maths to progress he'd be highly motivated.

Later, teaching A level maths in a sixth form college, I found a student playing simulation pool or billiards on the computer and realised that the problems solved by the game were similar (but far more advanced) to what we were teaching and we had nothing like the quality of visual presentation. Apparently professional snooker players claimed you could learn aspects of ballistics including spin etc that would allow you to improve in the real game.

I approached the games developers and they said we could have the obsolescent software as it stood, no support, and do what we liked with it in education. I had a friend who lectured in IT at the University and asked him if they could modify the software for teaching purposes. His suggestion was to make it a 3rd year project, for which they'd probably need funding for a research assistant to supervise it. The principal of the college I worked at was happy for us teachers to provide input. We had already done similar work for the Science Museum for their on-line educational material.

I was set up to present the idea to a government funding agency to get the money for the research assistant and some recompense to the teachers. They thought it was a "goer" and wanted to set up a company to develop and market it. I would run it, they would provide an accountant etc. They would assist until it started making money.

I explained we only wanted the funding to get it done and then we'd give it to all the institutions teaching A level mechanics. Their response was that if it was free no-one would value it.

I estimated the investment costs to develop and market it commercially and divided that by an estimate

of the number of establishments needing such a tool. Thinking further how difficult it was to get money from the maths department for such a purchase I decided it wasn't a good proposition.

I was encouraged to go to a presentation at Southampton University by a software company

that had taken these ideas even further and could simulate seriously complicated mechanical systems. In the after talk discussion I rattled on to the presenter about the opportunities for A Level mechanics. He was quite tolerant and agreed but explained that they were overwhelmed with commercial applications, some of which were in computer games !

ID: 2029-11 - Category: Volunteering

From Pandemic to Academic

The problem of rapidly increasing unemployment for those from lower socio-economic backgrounds and with reduced opportunities due to a lack of academic qualifications, is one of the key consequences of the COVID-19 Pandemic. "From Pandemic to Academic," would offer those who have lost their jobs due to the pandemic, access a short, intense Bridging Module which, if passed, would provide them with the opportunity to apply for degree courses. The 12 -week module would be taught by university tutors and offered onsite on university campuses. Participants would have access to university resources during the module, including libraries and 1:1 tutorials.with their university tutor. The content of the module would be shaped around the lived-experiences of participants which would then be used to develop critical thinking and academic writing skills. The module would be taught at the equivalent of Level 4 so that students would have a clear understanding of academic expectations and gain insight into the potentially transformational impact of education. The fact that it would be taught in universities would mean that participants who had never considered Higher Education as an option, would be able to visualise themselves as students. The course would consist of lectures, discussions and academic writing activities. The course would be academically assessed on completion of 2 written assignments. Passing the course would be perceived as non-traditional access to higher education and allow participants to apply for degree courses. This would help to breakdown the "ivory- towered," image of higher education institutions and to develop self-belief and self-esteem in the students involved. If students did not choose to apply for university after the course, they would still have gained an academic level qualification which could be added to their CV., enhancing employment opportunities. The groups on this module would need to be small (maximum 10 participants) to ensure that individual support can be provided and and a positive relationships built between participants. . Intelligence and education are not synonymous , yet these two concepts are often confused in UK society and this creates barriers to social mobility. The newly unemployed often lose a sense of identity and self-worth but they have time to study and learn something new. "From Pandemic to Academic," would provide them with the opportunity to capitalise on the free time that they are currently experiencing and potentially re-shape their future. (This project has been developed successfully on a very small scale with those who have experienced homelessness and addiction).

ID: 2015-11 - Category: Volunteering

Ignite English in the classroom

The teaching of English at secondary school has a content problem: students think they speak it well enough on arrival and, nowadays, don't bother reading it much because there is always a screen around. Writing by hand is a drag. If we teachers don't beef up our offer then some demagogue is going to take us all giggling to hell. We need to rethink the substance: what is going to separate our students (65% of whom will work in jobs which don't exist yet) from the robots currently gobbling up manual jobs and already snapping at office work? English must use its pre-eminence in the curriculum to take the lead in fostering human-centric, non-cognitive skills to suit the innovation-economy and instil a love of lifelong learning. This century will see workers reskilled and upskilled several times but they need pre-skilling at school not skewered with off-the-peg PowerPoints and dry assessments designed to satisfy data managers, senior managers and school inspectors. First, we teachers, who should be trying to spot their students' spark, must retain our own against the deskilling effect of being told what to deliver in the classroom, teaching to the next assessment and recommending reductionist revision materials from Pearson and co, designed to strong-arm our students through to the ultimate goal, GCSE. In the face of such joyless pressures, most schools are unable to provide meaningful Continuing Professional Development for us teachers because that directed time is now monopolised by data-tracking of underperforming exam candidates, safeguarding updates and behaviour management systems. There is no time for reflective discussion of our subject-specific pedagogy which we can only get at teacher training college unless, as is now the norm, it is somehow to be absorbed on the job with some twilight tuition (more PowerPoints!). What are we English teachers educating children to become? Units of economic activity, filled with facts, ticked off with high-stakes summative testing or (here's hoping) creative, resilient beings who can adapt to the massive change already rolling in? Just as the Silicon Valley bosses discourage their own children from early-life tech, just as Chinese yuppies are eschewing the arid Communist educational offer in favour of Steiner and Montessori, just as the Forest School movement offers an alternative to toxic childhood in the UK, so the mainstream needs to think outside the bog standard maintained sector box. Only then will we English teachers stop sending so many students off who see no further point in our subject, turned off forever and offered up to the snake-oil persuaders and the fake news merchants. Oracy is vital in this cause but it cannot be inspired by technology. Flat screens make flat lessons. Discussion, debate and effective presentation have to be taught, much more creatively, in English classrooms where students must consciously develop their talk – and their listening – especially post-COVID which has spawned such anxiety and diffidence. We need to facilitate oracy, not with our own talk from the front but by creatively pushing students to speak and listen to each other. Phil Beadle, the super-teacher who sees literacy as 'the road to human progress', declares oracy to be 'the most

fundamental and important skill' while former English teacher Geoff Barton, now representing 20,000 school leaders, describes the 'intangible richness of the way speaking and listening underpins and enables learning in the classrooms of great teachers. It's not something we see often enough.' Because, in our schools, we all know oracy remains stifled and undervalued by both students and staff. Of course there is class discussion but we are encouraged to manage it through questioning which only engages the hands-up minority (probably those same students who did the worksheets spewed out in the first lockdown) and allows others to rest up, attracting no attention (or learning) towards themselves, just like the overwhelming number of online lurkers in this last lockdown. Even if we are allowed to engender aerosolic discussion again, it may still be no more than gossipy larking because even the most obliging students do not truly care about this stuff: in the end, they know speaking and listening will bring them no marks at GCSE although they still have to submit some oracy evidence – the ultimate lip service. Interpersonal skills which will sharpen the remaining human edge (presenting, collaborating, reasoning, critically thinking, persuading, negotiating, and empathising), these need to be what we ignite. Curiosity about communication styles and the words they employ can be set alight with explicit teaching of vocabulary (especially to reluctant readers) and playfulness with language can be planted with everything from etymology to palindromes, through anagrams, jargon-busting and cliché-spotting all the way to Victorian word-games and that ear-ringed playwright. If our wordy students can be led to enjoy manipulating language, they are much less likely to be manipulated. And in their own writing our students must be given the chance for an audience beyond exercise books which are insufficiently reflected upon before being thrown away. Here technology can provide personalised support according to need, building writing skills and technical accuracy. But then they must be allowed to flex their words (preferably in much longer form without unwriterly time constraints) and see their impact far and wide through creative publishing and social media. As readers they must be guided through the brilliant YA fiction now available – and yet not often advertised in schools effectively. In addition to the classic diet, they need to be tipped much more into this contemporary literature and poetry which reflects their experience to build empathy, diversity and cultural awareness. Students who say they don't read must be found the right book by skilful and well-informed librarians who are valued as central to the school. English classrooms and the spaces around them have to become creative cauldrons bubbling with a very different teaching magic. We must reward our students with a reformed approach towards a progressive GCSE so students are ready for and excited about going on with their more effectively communicated lives.

ID: 524-11 - Category: Volunteering

Daily Communal Restaurants can bring communities back together, stronger than ever, improving lives, ending poverty

ABSTRACT: A network of autonomous Daily Communal Restaurants (DCRs) serving bulk-cooked, affordable, nutritious food would cultivate deep community spirit and generate far-reaching benefits.

2020 brought us widespread isolation, atomisation and disunity. To capitalise on a common urge to make up for lost time and repair wounds, DCRs can bring people together by recreating long-lost community spirit around delicious food -- arming against future viruses not just nutritionally, but also through expanded support networks.

It sounds far too good to be true: simply by relieving people of the daily need to cook dinner, they would get significant extra free time to improve their circumstances and relationships. Consistently nutritious food can also guard against illness and promote healthy habits. Serving the food in a communal area leads to many further positives. Deprived communities stand to gain the most, and the potential benefits seem endless.

This proposal requires no extraordinary investment or talent. The first and most important daily task would be to cook and serve one giant pot of food, so perhaps three cooks and a cleaner/porter working a 5-hour shift in a fairly basic kitchen. Anything beyond those basics can come later, as the enterprise becomes sustainable via various income streams.

Imagine if, on any evening of the week, you could briefly stroll to a friendly, comfortable eatery and pay an incredibly reasonable price for a wholesome dinner. For new parents, the daily grind would be much relieved. For pensioners living alone, there would be daily socialising. For those on low incomes, it could reduce a range of expenses. Anyone lacking time to cook wouldn't have to survive on junk food.

The impact such a scheme could have on the average family is profound. If instead of cooking dinner at home, they spent 1-3 hours every evening in a DCR, home utility bills would go down.

Since each member of the family could get excellent nutrition at least once a day, lunches could be simpler. Not having to tediously plan, prepare, and clean up after dinner would free up many hours a week for housework, projects, reading, play or exercise.

A city with many DCRs frequented by thousands of people could see less crime, fewer traffic accidents, better school performance, and reduced strain on GPs. Children would be better adjusted after eating beside a variety of older people. From higher birth rates to lower divorce rates and more disposable income, these benefits could multiply across private and public life.

How could tens of thousands of DCRs become a reality and operate in practice? The impetus of the state and cooperation of local councils could ensure pilot DCRs are properly managed, then branched outwards to areas of high demand or deprivation. A gradual national roll-out could begin after a comprehensive strategy is agreed, and suitable premises have been identified.

DCRs could potentially be self-sustaining, democratic and fully independent. With fairly minimal resources required to initially equip each kitchen and seating area, networks of regional DCRs could spring up in support of each other, in constant communication via social media and experimenting with recipes, suppliers and organisational structures.

Each DCR would enjoy a steady stream of volunteers, donations and income from vending machines in addition to revenue from selling food to eat in or take away, at fixed or pay-as-you-feel prices. If necessary, main spaces could be hired out for events and groups before doors are opened for dinner. Favourable rent agreements and deals with local food suppliers would further increase viability.

Once a good dinner service has been achieved, a second meal option, or lunch/breakfast service would be a logical next step. When not serving food, the dining area could be open to anyone wanting company, drinks, snacks or warmth. Larger DCRs could have a play area for

children. Every DCR should have a selection of books and magazines, and a hot water dispenser with free tea bags. Leftover food could be available to take away.

Popularity would depend primarily on the quality of cuisine, and the aim should be to establish a settled (but gradually evolving) routine of favourite dishes, each of which would feature around 2-4 times per month. The first recipes could take inspiration from anywhere, and would ideally be possible to cook in a single giant pot or pan. Cost of ingredients, local nutritional priorities, feedback from diners, and ease of preparation/serving would be evaluated over time.

Cooking should be light on meat and gluten, big on vegetables, herbs and olive oil. Dessert could be a small piece of reduced-sugar chocolate. A weekly meal plan would be available online and in a front window, showing which days are gluten free, vegetarian or vegan. Recipes could also be posted online, and the highest-rated dishes entered into contests judged by celebrity chefs.

The beauty of the concept is that each DCR could innovate and evolve in different ways, perhaps opening additional services and workshops, collaborating with neighbouring DCRs, or becoming centres of grassroots organisation in support of multiple causes. Such is the importance of ensuring each DCR is first sustainable, then independent, then preferably democratic. They should belong entirely to the people they serve.

A DCR focused on lifting residents out of poverty could offer free meals to holders of special passes, including free leftovers. A wardrobe could be used for donated clothes, free for anyone to take. A notice board could advertise items or services being donated, sought or bartered. Counsellors, financial planners, trade unionists, solicitors, career advisors and language teachers could be invited to give presentations and take questions.

This proposal must be ambitious and bold in the face of inevitable opposition from corners of

privilege and power. The least it deserves is a properly-funded pilot scheme in places where people are loudly calling for it, organised by people whose background makes them obvious choices. The Heywood Foundation should launch a publicity campaign, involving MPs, trade unions, activists and public figures (maybe a Man United striker?)

Let's do it!

ID: 491-11 - Category: Volunteering

How to build a register of 'qualified' volunteers to help tutor with homeschooling.
As identified in section 1, there is a great opportunity to capitalise on the willingness of individuals to help the community. This would be achieved by utilising the vast pool of knowledge and experience held by recently retired teachers to help tutor children in home-schooling, whilst they are in isolation at home, when their schools are closed.

However, the missing aspect of utilising this resource is a system whereby the willingness of an individual to help is captured, and how the skills that they are offering can be matched to the need for home tutoring for a particular child.

The solution to providing the above is a relatively simple solution to build. Using the internet to provide a platform (website), it would be possible for volunteers to register their willingness to provide support to children and for parents to 'search' for an individual that is willing to provide support for that child.

The platform would allow a volunteer to register their experience, specific areas (subjects) that they are able to provide support for and the number of hours support that they are willing to provide. Parents would be able to search and match suitably qualified tutors, for their children.

On going, retiring teachers could be encouraged to register on the site and details on how to do this could be included as part of the retirement packs that may be provided to teachers or even included as part of any 'retirement training' should it exist for teachers. However, a campaign to launch the scheme would be needed by the Government, similar to the campaign to recruit retired nurses, so that the scheme can gain some impetus.

As well as providing the capability to register one's willingness to volunteer, it would be possible to store supporting materials on the same platform, such as teaching materials, so that

tutors could plan and deliver education, in the same way that they might have done in their careers. The platform could also incorporate the means of delivering such lessons using such applications as 'Microsoft Teams' or 'Zoom'. Of course this would need to be subject to the agreement of those companies, but they might be willing to provide those services 'free of charge' for such a worthwhile objective.

The solution proposed has the beauty of being scalable. It can be provided merely on an informal basis where it is merely a 'meeting forum' to bring Ex-Teachers and parents together. It can be expanded to provide supporting materials that can be shared across the platform or it can have a more formal structure where there is a degree of external management and control.

Whatever level of formality is built into the system, the IT awareness that would be needed by volunteers is likely to be a skill that they already possess from their teaching careers, whilst a by product of the pandemic has meant that parents (and even grand parents) are now much better educated in IT matters.

Of course, volunteering does not need to be constrained to retired teachers. There is scope for university language students to provide support to GCSE and A-Level students, having the added advantage of tutors supporting their peers. There is even scope to build such volunteering into the courses of university language students or even as part of teacher training courses.

There is probably one major objection to the above solution, which involves the matter of the safeguarding of children. Any person teaching or providing classroom assistance in school must pass an 'Enhanced DBS check'. Whilst there is no legal obligation for a private tutor to undergo a DBS check, there have been calls for this to be made a legal requirement of a private tutor.

Although it may be possible to launch the above solution on an 'informal basis' and address the matter of 'safeguarding children' by including a 'No liability statement', it is felt that some degree of protection should be built into the site by only allowing tutors to register if they provide or apply for an enhanced DBS check, if they do not possess such a certificate. The tutor's details would not be 'visible' to parents on the site until their DBS approval had been confirmed or that their DBS application had been approved.

Certainly, if the solution was adopted by the government or by any commercial organisation, then DBS approval would be insisted upon. However, it would not be a major issue to build in an application and approval process as part of the process of registering as a volunteer.

A barrier to the success of the scheme might be the availability of laptops for those children

where such support is most needed i.e. for children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. Whilst not part of this submission, it is felt that there is a further untapped opportunity where there a large number of old laptops in the community that are gathering dust but which could be refurbished and distributed at relatively low costs. Similarly, businesses frequently upgrade their laptops and could be encouraged to donate old laptops to such a charity.

There are, of course, commercial spin off's that might result from the launch of such a platform. Such a platform would be a prime site to sell advertising space, particularly for companies involved in the supply of educational material. Care would need to be taken to ensure that the presence of advertising does not degrade the usage of the site but is mentioned as it does begin to address the issue of 'funding' for such a site.

To conclude, the suggestion contained here does not need to be utilised only during pandemic times. It could also be used alongside the delivery of normal education, in 'normal' times. It would help to emphasis the message that it is good to give back to the community, not just during pandemics but at all times.

ID: 1599-11 - Category: Volunteering

A QUICK WIN: ONE MILLION VOLUNTEERS TO TEACH ONE MILLION ADULT ILLITERATES TO READ.

It has been estimated that there are some 2.4 million adult illiterates in the UK. Many of them are within the ranks of the unemployed or are convicted criminals. These are people who have been let down by the education system not equipping them with a fundamental life skill. We can correct this.

First, we would have the Department for Education (DfE) produce standard teaching materials for one-to-one teaching either in person or over the internet. This would include attainment testing allowing a participant to track their progress and, in particular, to be certified at various grades of literacy.

Second, the DfE would be charged with recruiting both volunteer teachers and students to join the programme. There is nothing magic about the number 1 million, but it is galvanising as a target.

There is very little administration required for this scheme. There must be a process under which both teachers and students are able to terminate an arrangement and start with someone new. There ought to be a feedback process to allow continual improvement.

There are several illiteracy charities, and it would be wise to involve them in this project both for their expertise and to be able to bolster and use their infrastructure.

A spin off from this project could be techniques to identify and help children with poor literacy while still at school. We should not accept that large numbers of kids leave school unable to read or write.

This is a project which could be mobilised within a year.

ID: 1888-11 - Category: Volunteering

The UK education system and how it is failing students and society

Whether it's transport, medicine or leisure, the modern world would be almost unrecognisable to a Victorian. However, there is one exception- education. If a Victorian were to walk into a modern classroom they would notice very little change. How is it that the key cog in society that prepares the next generation for adulthood and determines whether a country will prosper or falter has gone unchanged for a century? Instead we have a high-pressure environment that forces teens into depression, fails to provide the skills required for working life and enough key workers and reinforces inequality. This failure to innovate education is one of the country's greatest issues, yet it could be easily fixed. One of the greatest problems facing the UK is obesity. According to the UN ¼ of British adults are obese (with many more being deemed overweight) and obesity levels in the UK have more than trebled in the last 30 years and more than half the population could be obese by 2050. One of the contributing factors is a reduction in sport participation. It's a school's responsibility to ensure the wellbeing of its pupils, including their physical health. Therefore, I suggest that sport should feature far more prominently in

education. Teenagers should be doing at least 10 hours of sport a week. Not only does it make them happier and healthier but it's been scientifically proven to enhance their education. Furthermore, more needs to be done to encourage younger children to start sports early and not to drop them in their teens as this is the root cause of the fall in participation. Arguably the greatest issue facing children is their deteriorating mental health. The proportion of children experiencing a mental disorder has increased from one in nine in 2017 to one in six in July 2020. That is ridiculously high. Whilst increased sport participation would do a lot to reduce these numbers it wouldn't eradicate mental health issues. The pressures placed on children by school contribute massively to these issues. For instance, A level students often exceed the legal working hours. It is therefore no wonder we have a mental health crisis. What the government needs to do is reduce time wasted studying old plays and instead focus on ensuring every child leaves school with the skills required to live in the adult world. For example, every child should leave school with a full understanding of sexual health, taxes, voting, survival skills, etc. Without these key life skills many children make mistakes that have serious repercussions such as teenage pregnancy or falling into debt. These issues have a knock on effect all across society and reinforce poverty and inequality. Therefore, the introduction of a life skills subject would be invaluable. It would lead to more rounded children who are better equipped to succeed in the adult world. Furthermore, the requirement for children to learn Shakespeare and Pythagoras when it provides no benefit for them outside of better grades is archaic and a serious waste of money and time. Very few adults outside of engineering or architecture have ever used Pythagoras. Why not reform the whole curriculum so that it's better geared to producing useful workers, rather than textbook worshippers. This would go a long way towards fixing the UK's productivity puzzle which leads to lower wages and longer working hours. If this problem was rectified people would be happier and richer. Examples of potential reforms include focusing on: reading and professional writing skills, not memorising Shakespeare, making Stem subjects appropriate for engineers and doctors (they should be optional for those not wishing to go into STEM work), climate change and where Solihull is, not the rock cycle. Furthermore, art, music and DT should be optional for pupils who have no interest but for those that are should be encouraged to continue the subjects all the way through their education rather than dropping them at GCSE because they are tedious and excessively difficult. These measures would lead to a diversification of the curriculum and far better participation, as work would be more meaningful and engaging. It would also lead to more creativity and innovation which would benefit the country massively as both the economy and culture would flourish. Unfortunately, schools reinforce inequality due to massive variations in the quality of education, leading to some of the country's brightest students languishing in poverty ridden schools with few passionate teachers. However, there are some very easy fixes. The government should run one exam board, remove higher and lower papers to stop the capping of talented students and no class should go untaught (especially those taking exams). However, the most necessary reform

is the improvement in the quality of teaching. For instance, in Finland almost every teacher has a Master's degree and they are expected to provide high quality teaching because they are paid a fair wage for the amount of work they do and their importance in preparing the next generation. Therefore, the government must raise teacher's salaries in order to attract the best candidates. However, teachers should be closely monitored, with those failing to meet standards being sacked. This shouldn't be done by analysing league tables but by asking children whether their education has been enriched and tracking progression. Moreover, teachers teaching less able students should be especially commended for improving students, even if they don't achieve top grades. The government should set high standards for everyone and should refuse to allow pupil to be left behind. If these reforms were implemented, not only would inequality be reduced but every pupil would benefit and society would be provided with capable workers who are able to work in more challenging and financially rewarding sectors. Whilst the current education system is in a dire state, this could be easily be rectified with a few simple tweaks. They would benefit society massively and provide a platform to rebound from lockdown and rebuild the economy as a centre for innovation at the forefront of technology and science, rather than a backwater.

ID: 1767-11 - Category: Volunteering

How best to combine information currently held and make it accessible for public use

By providing ready access to the metadata from all the various information databases that the U.K. currently holds on its citizens and using it to its fullest potential there will be a substantial improvement in the value for money provided to taxpayers. Combining this ready access to the metadata (access to individual personal information would still need proper authorisation - based solely on its value to the citizen) with AI will enable those parts of government responsible for allocating publicly funded resources to satisfy health, social and (maybe in time) business needs. Once allocated the public value of the output from the targeted usage of those resources can be measured the lessons from its success (and even more failure) learned and applied in the next iteration of that and other policies and resource allocations. This is intended to enable the rapid exchange of best practice, and resource allocation, across all departments. The control and management of the various database/s, access to them and, not least, the quality of the interpretation of any analyses of metadata should be the responsibility of an independent OBR style team given the freedom to source the very best talent from both within and outside the civil service. This structure is intended to keep the quality and relentless focus of the resource away from short term political influence in much the same way as the OBR is enabled to stand outside government control and report on its performance. Once this accessible information resource is properly understood and controlled then limited access to customized analyses of metadata could be offered to approved third parties for mutual benefit

at full commercial value. Equally the expertise developed in extracting full operational and commercial value from the mass of government held information could be offered to other countries/institutions once again at full commercial value and for mutual benefit.

ID: 1645-11 - Category: Volunteering
Solving The Big Issue - Using Recycling to End Homelessness
Summary:

 A scheme to end homelessness and improve the recycling and re-use of coffee cups and plastic bottles through the introduction of a 10p levy, which is recovered via a network of recycling bins administered by a homeless organisation; something akin to a waste recycling version of the Big Issue.

 Policy:

 According to Crisis, there are over 200,00 households affected by homelessness in the UK each year, with the largest percentage in Greater London. Crisis estimates the cost of ending homelessness at £1 billion per year for 10 years, in a study carried out by PWC.

 At the same time, 2.5 billion single use coffee cups are used in the UK each year according to figures from The Guardian newspaper, and 13 billion plastic bottles are sold annually, of which only 7.5 billion are recycled, according to the UK parliament website.

 I propose a policy to solve both problems simultaneously, with a 10p levy placed on all coffee cups and plastic bottles sold in the UK and the creation of a network of bins managed by a homeless organisation.

The organisation would empty the bins, take them to recycling centres, and reclaim the levy to fund programmes to end homelessness.

The recycling network would operate somewhat like the Big Issue, with certified homeless people employed in waste recovery teams to empty the bins. This would create employment, as per selling the Big Issue, helping people develop skills and experience to return to the wider, conventional workplace. And the revenue generated from recovering the bottle and cup levies would be used to finance projects to end homelessness.

At current rates, the levy would generate £1.55 billion per year; even with the costs of recovering the bottles and cups, the money leftover would go a long way to the £1 billion a year needed to end homelessness.

To incentivise recycling, only bottles and cups recovered would fund homelessness programmes. From a behaviour science or 'nudge' perspective, any monies not recovered should be donated to a wildly unpopular project so as to motivate recycling, however this may be deemed politically unacceptable; if so, monies from bottles and cups not recovered should be donated into a national sustainability fund.

While the logistics of such a policy pose some problems, these are not insurmountable.

In cities, extra bins can be provided on streets and offices can manage their own systems to maximise recycling. In more rural areas, recycling bins placed outside supermarkets, for example, would enable people to recycle each time they shopped.

The key is to create hubs to minimise the cost of waste recovery and therefore maximise donations to end homelessness.

The scheme also opens the way for new innovations in waste recycling; since the bottles and coffee cups would have a value, creative ways to recover them from general waste or hard-to-reach areas could be devised, which could in turn help to develop solutions to recover and recycle more waste, such as minerals in mobile phones. Indeed, this same scheme could be applied to electronics equipment, but with a £10 levy instead of 10p, for example.

A benefit from this proposal is the elasticity of demand for bottled products and hot takeaway drinks; an extra 10p on the price will make little difference to people's spending habits but could make a massive difference to improving recycling rates and ending homelessness.

Begging is not the solution to end homelessness, and anyway in an increasingly cashless society is becoming increasingly difficult; offering consumers a way to use their everyday purchases to end homelessness like this is a great way of enabling people to be agents of change with minimal effort required on their part.

So, instead of the usual approach of dropping a few coins into a beggar's cup, people would end homelessness by dropping a cup into a homeless organisation's bin; a new innovation on an age-old activity.

ID: 1639-11 - Category: Volunteering
Digital poverty and education inequality solutions: technology credits and an AI teaching assistant
It needs to be accepted that access to technology is fast becoming a human right. For this reason I propose a two part solution to the digital divide.

Firstly, the long term and ever-increasing technological inequalities must be addressed as soon as possible. The more the world moves to online solutions and services, the further behind those that are already disadvantaged are left. My proposed solution to this is 'UK technology credits'. This can be means tested, and/or vouchered so there are clear limits on what such funds can be used for, and so those who don't need this support aren't wasting funds. But it should be of utmost priority of the Government to ensure every UK household has access to the internet (the credit should include funds for data allowance), a laptop and phone. Or even the ability to rent or loan technology - e.g from a library. There should also be a central government scheme (see the UK Crowd-resource platform submission) for donating old technology so that this can be redistributed, reducing the costs of such an initiative, and a waiting list for such technologies in the same way people register for housing.

Such a scheme would pay for itself as the growing number of online free education, jobs boards, etc. would allow disadvantaged groups rapid and wide access to resources.

Once this occurs, then the possibilities to rapidly solve so many of society's problems and challenges grows exponentially. It also means there are endless possibilities for the UK Government to lead the way globally and technologically innovate!

One such example and the second part to this solution is to create an AI teaching assistant. Note, the first part in ensuring everyone has technology access is required, so this doesn't become a tool that grows the divide and helps those who already have the most whilst leaving those who don't have further behind. This AI teaching assistant can level out the inequalities caused by differences that exist in school quality, or availability of adult support for children. It also means that instead of mentoring and tutors being accessed only by those children whose families can afford it, those who aren't further disadvantaged by this educational divide and instead will have access to technology and innovation to supplement their education.

It is relatively straightforward to create an AI-powered chat bot, and this is a technology already trusted, used and advised by the national services (e.g. online therapy courses, or apps e.g. Wysa). The national curriculum and the wide range of open-source teaching and online course tools and data can be used to develop an app. Students can build a profile and complete quizzes to determine their current level of ability and then AI recommendations on courses, videos, resources to work on. This data could be shared with schools so they get a picture of where students are at and tailor classes and teaching to meet the needs of the class they are teaching (e.g. if the data shows the majority are struggling with fractions, then they can know to focus on this in a revision lesson). This aggregate data can be used by the government to make improvements to the national curriculum and lead data driven decision making for education. The app can also be used to provide additional skills lessons and information, e.g. budgeting for kids. The content can be provided by the many charities that exist in this space. The government could run challenges from the app to encourage creativity and engagement amongst children. The app can have animated videos, quizzes, games, with the wealth of online tools aimed at improving the quality and style of education to increase engagement with children.

The app can then have AI powered problem/answer ability - for children who need further help and walk-throughs with a specific topic, making this interactive and providing questions throughout. The search can be limited to ensure the information is child-friendly. Users can link with friends to see profiles and challenge each other to quizzes or educational games and encourage each other's progress. This should really supplement and support the traditional teaching experience and ensure a child always has a place to ask a question and find help with their education needs.

Reminders for homework can be scheduled and AI recommendations provided for resources to help, as well as regularly updating the skill and ability profile so parents can see where their children might need extra support. This can be primarily aimed at children, but even widened to adults e.g. college courses, national skills courses etc.

Such technology can also then be applied to other areas, for example, an AI personal training or health and wellbeing assistant - using existing videos from various sources e.g. exercise videos linked on the NHS website, nutrition guides etc. Users can input goals and have the app remind

them, as well as be able to chat with the AI bot to record difficulties, amend the programme, get encouragement and motivation, and as a search tool to find guidance and information. Examples include: finding a local free exercise class, finding a local park with outdoor gym equipment, finding a guide to different food sources, linking to mental health apps and meditation videos and allow routines and reminders to be scheduled to encourage people to commit to these activities on a daily basis. This could be rolled into the NHS app and contain symptom tracking, so users have one place for health and wellbeing support. A public app such as this would lead the way for governments using technology to improve citizen wellbeing and society.

ID: 1034-11 - Category: Volunteering
Continued mobilisation of volunteers
The background for my response to this part of the question is in question 1b and focuses on the use of volunteers in our society.

There have been many studies carried out that support the proposition that most successful public initiatives are as a result of grass roots initiatives rather than government instigated policies and programmes. As the current volunteering mindset has its beginnings in a desire by the public to help both their own communities and other broader parts of society, the current climate presents an excellent opportunity to continue to grow this aspect of good citizenship.

I think a system whereby volunteers who are currently working in roles to assist the NHS to deliver specific services (such as transporting people to vaccination centres for example) should be created. This could be something as simple as creating a Community Support Coordinator for each town or part of a city. This person would be responsible for making contact with people who are currently volunteering and asking them if they would like to continue volunteering in some capacity once the task they originally volunteered for has been completed. In the example of volunteers driving people to vaccination appointments, these volunteers could be asked if they would like to continue doing other volunteer driving such as Meals on Wheels or transporting elderly or disabled people to day centres which have specific activities for them.

I think the key to the success of a volunteer programme is to keep it simple. I am suggesting focussing on current volunteers continuing to work in some capacity or other is a good way to start as they are already minded to volunteer. In addition, the best promotion of anything is through word of mouth. I would hope that exiting volunteers continue to carry out volunteer work and tell their family and friends about what they are doing, how much they enjoy it and how worthwhile their work is, which in turn creates interest from others.

For this to be successful, the following features will need to be present:

1. Contact with existing volunteers needs to be by way of a conversation, not a text message or email. This will enable the Community Support Coordinator to tease out whether the current volunteer would like to continue to do some sort of volunteering work and what they are able to do/where their interest lies

2. Volunteering needs to be made as easy as possible for the volunteer with red tape removed as much as possible. If checks such as a DBS needs to be carried out, this should be paid for by the local government authority (or indeed costs waived for volunteers) and volunteers need to be sent links to the relevant online sites where information is inputted to make it easy to gain their DBS

3. The Community Support Coordinator needs to be someone who is able to 'join up the dots' and who is personable. This role could easily become a tick box exercise so it is vital that the person who holds this position is passionate about helping their communities, is proactive and who can think outside the box. Please don't give the recruitment of these positions to the HR department of a public sector organisation!

4. As well as building on existing volunteers, the Community Support Coordinator needs to join up with organisations such as Lions Clubs, Scout and Girl Guides (start them young!) as these

organisations tend to consist of people who are already community minded.

5. The media needs to be involved to ensure as much exposure for volunteering activities as possible - perhaps the BBC could become more involved as they have with providing online lessons for children during the pandemic.

6. Involving a senior member of the Royal family in a nationwide focus on volunteering would also be a positive thing to do if possible - perhaps the Prince's Trust would be a good place to start.

7. I think politicians need to keep a low profile in any scheme such as this as people may be inclined not to get involved if they feel a particular political party is promoting it if they are not supporters of that political party. This is why I am suggesting that the NHS's current volunteering scheme be the foundation on which to build other volunteering programmes as people are generally supportive of the NHS.

In summary, volunteers have such a valuable contribution to make to their communities and promoting volunteering is a win, win situation - the person volunteering enjoys their work, the person receiving the service from the volunteer benefits, it is likely that Local Authorities can potentially save some money through using volunteers and society generally is better because people are interacting with each other.

The pandemic has shown all of us the importance of human contact and a well-organised volunteering programme can help facilitate positive human interaction.

ID: 1827-11 - Category: Volunteering
Challenge: Getting the economy back on its feet faster.

Proposal: Replace inheritance tax for those eligible to pay it, with a life legacy tax to be paid at age 70.

Benefits Huge one off contribution to Treasury for all current folk liable for inheritance tax over age 70 Cash ring fenced for economic, green agendas.

A contribution thereafter for folk who subsequently turn 70.

I would hope folk would be more inclined to pay (to leave a legacy) and take an interest in a particular project perhaps related to their working life skills. They may even want to pay more or could volunteer to top up their life legacy tax in some cases - instead of putting effort into reducing inheritance tax.

Examples of what a life legacy tax would be used for: Small Scale: Loads of small projects - pay for installation of local church ground source heat pumps (with percentage heating savings perhaps going to treasury for a specified period of time) Medium Scale instead of just replacing unsafe cladding with safety cladding on affected buildings, extra cash from life legacy could be put into more expensive cladding (solar panelling cladding) - reducing the carbon footprint or electricity costs for residents (if the latter Treasury may want to take a small percentage of the property when sold). Large Scale Swansea Tidal Lagoon

How would it work and who would pay upfront cost as inheritance tax is mostly tied to property etc: Folk who turn 70 and wish to pay and can afford to.

Pension Funds

Special Government bond

Special long term saving plans (ISA, equity release style plans)

When person dies estate pays the life legacy bill back to the pension funds etc.

ID: 1518-11 - Category: Volunteering
Introduce finance into mainstream education
Currently Maths GCSE, as I understand it, does not include basic finance (e.g mortgages, credit cards, loans etc), however it does include subjects that most people are unlikely to need (e.g quadratic equations).

My proposal is that we split Maths into two subjects so we have

1) "basic" maths which would be mandatory and includes the basic elements of the current maths curriculum, removes the more "exotic" material which is only really needed if you wanted to progress in maths, science, engineering..., but now includes material relating to (personal) finance

2) "additional" maths which would be optional and would contain the more "exotic" material required for those who want to progress in maths, science, engineering. This could now contain more of this type of material than currently in the maths curriculum.

This split is perhaps similar to that currently in English where English language is mandatory and English literature is optional.

The above would provide all children with a level of education in finance.

The "basic" maths would be more relevant to the children taking it perhaps making them more engaged with that subject.

The "additional" maths should be able to provide more education in the slightly more"exotic" areas of maths which would make those pupils better prepared for the maths in the related

subjects. And as only pupils wanting this subject would take it, there might be an improved level of engagement in those lessons.

ID: 968-11 - Category: Volunteering
21st Century Conscription
A Caring Conscription - as in National Service. Give young adults a start in life with plenty of choice to ensure that they are all contributing to society. Give them responsibilities that they can be proud of.

After school or University, unemployment should not be an option. If young adults haven't something tangible to move on to, they should be enlisted for National Service and learn key skills.

For the 21st Century, Conscription should provide them with a choice.

The NHS could gain a whole workforce to train up. As could our social services.

We should include the option of our Army, Navy and Air Force. We can look to English Heritage, the National Trust and Farming to have more people conserve, preserve and plant trees.

We could even revamp the BBC and turn it into a world-class youth-focussed media covering local journalism and helping provide resources to local newspapers. Change it to a training organisation that feeds talent into the commercial world. It can become the University of drama, film-making, journalism and online skills.

I am seeing young adults as an asset to society that should not be wasted on the dole. Instead, they can learn from their time in National Service and contribute to society. Just like others going to University, it should be a rewarding experience for them and a benefit to Britain.

Let's take time to think through our needs and join some dots!

ID: 196-11 - Category: Volunteering

Teaching teachers to teach children how to learn and increase confidence together.

You will have to recognise that no country has had to deal this problem before, and that there is very little value in depending on past practice that has left millions of our youngsters, more millions in other countries, utterly unable to help themselves. Provide me with support and a video studio and I can make a series of short programmes explaining to all those millions how to learn for life. US Professor Shaughnessy, once titled his interview with me: ' A prophet ignored in his own a land', having discovered, from the Upton Sinclair award above, that my approach has been taught to student mathematics teachers in the University of Mercer in Georgia for the nearly twenty years, and they are now proving amongst the longest tenured school teachers in the United States. "You remember what you've been telling us," the eleven-year-old told me one day, or rather whispered, after asking to speak to me alone. A little nervously, I agreed that he could. "about reading aloud; then asking ourselves, 'What does this mean?'" I admitted that I did. "Well," his voice now trembled, as he was imparting the secret of World Peace, as, indeed, it might be, "I've discovered, it works with other subjects!" * "You taught me how to learn for just one year, but I honestly think it was the most influential and formative teaching experience I ever had. You were the first - and possibly only, actually - teacher to make me feel like it was totally fine not to understand something, and in fact to treat it more as your failing than mine if I didn't. I remember one time I was trying to explain (completely unselfconsciously) something mathematical I didn't understand, and you were trying to explain it to me - and eventually you said 'It's extraordinary. It's like there's a glass wall between us and I can see you but can't get through to you.' What was really extraordinary, though, was that because of the ethos you'd built in class, your kind, thoughtful, un-patronising manner, it didn't even occur to me to take offence. Usually inclined to beat myself up for 'not getting' things, my level of trust in you was such that I just treated it as interesting, rather than something to worry about. I wish more teachers were like you. Josie. * Towards the end of my final year, the classroom door opened during a lesson, and two tall young men stood there. The darker of the two wore black, with a gold chain at the neck. The taller, dressed less dramatically, was a blond colossus. I had known them as boys. "Come back in twenty minutes, lads", I told them, and they left. They were back

in twenty minutes and I invited them to address the class: starting with their names. "Right" began the dark one. "My name is William Anastasiadis. I'll spell that for you: "A-N-A-S-T-A-S-I-A-D-I-S!" The class sat as if petrified. "And this," he turned to point at me, "is the best teacher we ever had." His silent companion nodded solemnly. Then they left. * "Keep writing to us, Mr H. The life, the strength, the harshness, the hope and the fear all comes through." Antonella. * "Your words always provoke thought to the point where one could almost reach for painkillers. You are far too clever. You really do have superhuman intelligence." Julie *"Throughout my life I was always the new kid, the bad kid, or in some cases, the dumb kid. But in a few people's eyes, I was just a kid that needed a bit of extra support. Your efforts and kind nature had a great impact on me at a young age and, while I never did become any good at mathematics, it is deeply appreciated." Romain. * When I returned some weeks later to collect my precious bottle of Phlogiston from the classroom cupboard, I found that some of the juniors, judged by their writing, had left their reward on the patch of exposed plaster beside my old classroom door. Mr Hannaford Walking Dictionary of Kindness. * 'Paulo Freire wrote: "Education will not change the world; it will change the people who will change the world". We teachers have the power to change the world because we change lives. The wonderful experience you had is exceptional because only a few have the privilege. You decided to change your life from soldier to teacher. Among all possibilities you chose the most difficult and also the one that would allow you to help change the world in a real way. Why did you choose to be a teacher? Did you choose it or were you chosen? I began my journey through in the field of education at the age of 17 and I have always heard "we must train critical and reflective, supportive, intelligent citizens" but you were the only one who told me HOW to do it and also from the discipline that has always meant discrimination and individualism. It is extraordinary! How many students have you had? How many lives have you changed? You have taught them to think and live together, to be better people and better citizens and this implies that they did not only improve themselves but also their closer contexts. You taught them to be better human beings through conscious, deliberate and individual evolution. You did not just change your students' lives; you have continued changing lives because you cared about writing and spreading your ideas. Only this year there are 130 new teachers who know how maths must be worked to train better citizens because of YOU, even if they have never heard or seen you, you taught them how to change the world. Each of those 130 people will teach hundreds of children throughout their lives; do you realise the multiplier effect? You have no idea how much we all owe you. Professor V.A.Q. Batallanos, U. Malaga, Espagne.

ID: 87-11 - Category: Volunteering

A possible way forwards for the curriculum in schools?

Examine each subject and look at what is really needed - for example Mathematics. It is deemed

a gold standard qualification and a measure of ability - it is SO dependent upon the quality of the classroom teacher - too many students have been completely turned off the subject and fail because of poor maths teaching - I have seen it too many times as a Secondary Headteacher. So decide that not everyone needs Maths as a qualification and make it an optional subject. However, make Arithmetic compulsory for all - so we can all calculate roughly how much flooring we might need or whether a special offer is indeed that. Make it practical and fun. Be brave and allow some youngsters to leave school at 14 - support them with day release courses to raise their skill levels. That might keep more teachers in the classroom because dealing with the disaffected is an increasing problem and impacts upon those students in the same class who really want to learn. Offer equivalence for practical qualifications or courses - for example Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme - bronze is worth 2 GCSE, Silver is 3 and Gold is 5. Offer the D of E now - as something for students to start during this current lockdown. Get 16 year olds involved in Community Service - again accredit. Value the courses that enable young people to develop - to work as a team, to care for others, to understand that with rights come responsibilities. Give them information but teach them how to use it - to question what they are reading - apply it to new situations - we won't find the real thinkers we need for the future if we continue to force every child to be shaped by the past!

ID: 1376-11 - Category: Volunteering

A shift in education

So, how do we protect ourselves from those who rely on for such a large part of our lives? Paradoxical, isn't it? Well, as a pupil myself I propose a simple yet effective change in the school curriculum. Allow me to explain: I am coming towards the end of my time at school, and writing this has made me realise the fact that I have never seriously been taught about the caution that we should exercise when using any media. That's insane! Most schools in the United Kingdom operate PSHE schemes of some degree. I appreciate that for schools in different circumstances this may vary, but to my understanding it is written in law that schools have to provide some form of education regarding the wider world. There is an opportunity flashing at us right here and this is our opportunity to fight back against the bureaucracy. Here's what I propose; The UK government should team up with organisations who specialise in fact checking, ensuring free speech and other critical parts of the media. This 'task force' as you like would work together to produce a PSHE media education scheme. This could be a 4 hour course comprised of 4 30-minute modules which look to tackle the 4 key areas of media awareness: Module 1 - what is media manipulation and how it affects you more than you realise Module 2 - censorship, facts and mass communication Module 3 - how you can look out for media manipulation Module 4 - how you can report media manipulation (big issue here, I'll come onto it!) So, what would each module contain? Well, the general principle is that the first 10-15 minutes would be a video

produced by the government and the last 15-20 minutes would be a discussion, exercise, or whatever medium of teaching feels appropriate. Module 1 - this is the most important module. Students need to be made aware of the threat they face when using any form of media online. I don't want to spend ages diving into stats, but it's clear that a large proportion of children in the United Kingdom use social media on a daily basis. The government could create an animated film talking about the media and the caution that young people should exercise. There are great stories here that teachers could use; one that springs to mind the story of Edward Bernays and his bacon company. I won't use my word count on this story, but it's a great read and says a lot about media and its potential. Module 2 - this module I think would prove to be the most interesting. I think a lot of people jump on the 'freedom of speech' boat at any opportunity they can find. I would love to see a programme put together showing examples of mass censorship in the past or even the present (cough cough, American leaders, cough cough, Indian farmers). It worries me immensely that the media can terminate accounts as quickly as they can create them. I think this would worry a lot of young people too, losing all of their materialistic likes and followers in a heartbeat at the will of one person. Facts too! Politicians often aim their campaigns at winning the younger generations, but whether they are on the left or right, they are human and are prone to the odd lie. Reading this you probably think I'm defending the old American president but 20,000+ lies later, it's understandable. I think this would prove to be a great debate amongst younger people. Is it ethical to censor for the greater good? Module 3 - this module proves to be worth the most in educational value and is the whole point of the programme. Children need to be aware of when they're being manipulated. Again, this is as simple as knowing which websites to trust, how to verify true information, etc. These are all teachable skills. These are necessary skills. Module 4 - this module is the most important to me. Recently, it has become a common occurrence for footballers to be subject to racism via social media. Now, how is this linked to media control? Well, if the media truly took this problem seriously, they would make it 'high-risk, low-reward' to be racist online. I think this will eventually happen. Creating an account on social media should be a rigorous process where there are serious consequences for poor behaviour. Now, whether this change happens or not is up to the media, but what we can do is educate. Children need to be taught that they can't hide behind social media accounts and that there will always be serious consequences. This will help root out racism in our society as well. Two birds with one stone! Ok, to summarise. The UK government needs to take this issue seriously, and this pandemic has certainly made me take it more seriously. A simple 4 hour PSHE course could be introduced which would provide educational benefit not just about media, but about many other walks of life too. It should be professional, politically neutral and engaging. The government would need to work with educators (as they are with the A Levels currently) to find out what would be best. I was about to hit submit. But I need to add this: Writing this has me ask myself a bigger question. We need to ask ourselves as citizens of the UK, does the government actually favour media manipulation.

Even if this is a great idea, maybe it wouldn't make it to the desk of a senior politician because it would be at their detriment for society to realise the power they have through media. Makes me wonder. Want to end with a quote from Tacitus which sums up this thought, "if you would know who controls you, see who you may not criticise." It's funny because this also affects my chances of winning this competition, the power of the person reading this.

ID: 1199-11 - Category: Volunteering
ONE SERVICE, THE CIVIL SERVICE
There is one civil service in the United Kingdom, with diverse government ministerial organisations and parastatals. As a civil service, some organisations are interlinked or collaborate in their services to customers. For example, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) is linked to Department for Works and Pensions (DWP), HMRC with the National Crime Agency (NCA), etc.

There is a problem of inter government communication in dealing with customer enquiries and in most instances, customers are advised to approach individual organisations to access a service and return the information to the requesting organisation e.g. UK Visas & Immigration (UKVI) with HMRC. This is a merry go round process which is inefficient and adds to the civil service government user service work load. It is also extremely worrying that these government departments though interlinked may not necessarily talk to each other.

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought these inadequacies to the forefront because the service levels are not the same across board. Whereas some departments like HMRC have thrived in the circumstances, some others are playing catch up on their systems or working with outdated technology.

The desired result will be for digital successes all round both for our customers and colleagues with reduced referrals as vital information is received promptly. The pathway to this should be for a secured interconnectivity platform to access customer records across organisations with necessary safe guarding measures on data protection.

An established scenario is this, a customer (may be a UK citizen or someone with rights to reside in the UK) has been living and working abroad for several years. They have not had any contact with the UK government systems over the years. Due to the global pandemic they decide to return to the UK. They approach the DWP for benefits as a result of seeking work in the interim, DWP refers them to HMRC. HMRC advises them to make contributions on the records which will go to their pension and possible benefits for the time they were abroad. They contact HMRC for help, who in turn requests for a written application with copies of identity documents. This information is received by paper correspondence and waits to be dealt with. Meanwhile the customer is waiting in limbo as employers (wrongly) will not employ them without a letter from HMRC or DWP showing NINO, the DWP will not pay any benefits until all the systems are updated. The issue lingers. The identity information can be verified from the HM Passport Office (HMPO) if HMRC had access. DWP should have access to HMRC to verify customer records etc.

To deal with this problem, a superuser highway network should be established between government departments to access customer records and communicate faster. The reality is that the potential risk to customer records and private information is outweighed by the need to be efficient and harness the latest technologies. The private sector has evolved to meet customer demands using technology advancements e.g. the banks, while the public sector is behind the times. The skill set for future civil servants – Generation Y+ may not wait around for obsolete approach to government business. The first steps are to open the flood gates of communication using the technology available.

ID: 1828-11 - Category: Volunteering

Sharing our energy saving knowledge for existing buildings.

Having designed and carried out all the practical work on eco/energy refurbishment of my own house I have realised that what most people want are both local examples of what can be done and easily accessible technical information which relates to their building. Across the country now are a growing number of low to zero energy conversions of existing buildings but the how to do it is not readily accessible to most people because it sits on the hard drives of architects, surveyors, and services engineers. The solution is to set up a website loaded with real examples from such experts arranged as a 3-D spreadsheet with house type along one axis and house age on another. When you find a house of very similar age and type to your own you can then drill

down into the detail of the scheme, perhaps paying a little more for each stage. A proportion of the income would go back to the contributing experts. The different professional bodies would need to be on board with setting this up.

ID: 1642-11 - Category: Volunteering

Legal measures, civil service training and long-term capability development can all help fix public procurement

It is first important to realise that public procurement cannot be wished away. Since the 1980s, the state's ability to handle problems directly has declined, and the issues it faces have grown more specialist in nature. Public procurement is a reasonable response to this state of affairs and taking difficult topics back in-house cannot be seen as a panacea: see, for example, the government's eventual retreat from developing alternatives to Google's and Apple's software for its COVID-19 track-and-trace app. Additionally, despite high-profile failures, public procurement can also claim some clear successes, such as in domestic waste collection, or in the introduction of private cleaning services in some NHS trusts.

There have also already been attempts to improve the public procurement process, notably under the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 and additional regulations which came into force in 2015. However, these have not been sufficient to bind the government to good practice: in 2018, only 39% of public tenders were published on Contracts Finder (as stipulated by the 2015 regulations). This leads to uncompetitive tenders, which academic research strongly suggests leads to increased costs and other issues. The pandemic has encouraged poor behaviour. Of the £17.3bn in new contracts awarded by the government from the start of the pandemic to July 2020, only 1% were through competitive tenders.

Well-meant reforms can also set up perverse incentives: for example, requirements that the government prefer the most cost-effective project have frustrated attempts to address ecological damage or regional inequality, while encouraging bidders to set a nominal price as low as possible, safe in the political evaluation that cost overruns and further public expenditure will likely come penalty-free. Once the government has committed to a supplier for a large project, the political necessity of completion often makes the supplier into a monopoly-provider of its services, with the potential for abuse that can entail.

As the scale of public procurement – nearly £300bn in 2017-2018 – is so enormous, no one solution can be sufficient. However, separate measures can be introduced to improve the process of public sector procurement over the short, medium and long term. Throughout, the state should be guided by the principles that there should be meaningful alternatives wherever possible, that contracts negotiated should contain enforceable responsibilities to perform to quantifiable standards, and that civil servants negotiating contracts should be equipped and incentivised to negotiate at the same level as their commercial counterparts.

In the short term, the government should introduce legislation which would automatically append clauses containing severe and escalating penalties in tendered contracts over a certain value which went on to exceed budget, overrun their schedule or underachieve targets by a fixed proportion (e.g., 25%). Doing this at the political level is blunt but necessary, as imposing these kinds of punitive clauses is rarely in the interests of commercially-outgunned civil servants, many of whom will move on from their role before the project is completed. Introducing this principle at the legislative level would also help stimulate parliament's role in the oversight of large public sector projects, which is important in re-addressing the balance towards a higher-spend, higher-outcome universe away from today's pay-later-and-regret-it position.

The government could also introduce a policy where, should a project outperform targets or come in under budget, some small-but-meaningful share of the proportional benefit is awarded as bonus payments to the civil servants who negotiated and administered the contract, regardless of whether they have since moved on. This would act as a strong individual incentive to run procurement contracts well. As it is, low pay and the government's reliance on external consultancy for strategy roles means that talented civil servant's strongest career incentive is to take their skills private and use their knowledge to negotiate against the public purse.

In the medium term, the government should pursue many of the much-discussed avenues for civil service reform. Specialists – both in the field of the contract being commissioned, and in the art of negotiation itself – are rare. IT, commercial, project management and statistical skills

are all key areas for improvement. Civil servants are also encouraged to move between roles on a regular basis by a pay structure that rewards frequent shifts over developing a specialism. Lower churn would increase personal accountability and stimulate long-term skills development.

Last, successive governments should work to rebuild the capacity of the civil service to perform some projects entirely in house. This is and should not be seen as a fundamentally statist project – only a recognition that the principal benefits of private procurement occur when competition is fierce, and so in some cases, the state may need to act as a "competitor of last resort". This is particularly important in sectors where high start-up costs deter competition (e.g., defence) or where the outcome is so politically important as to put pressure on Whitehall to conclude contracts quickly (e.g., health).

Building up this capability is more than a question of skills-acquisition, however: governments will need to make the apparently difficult argument that the people who administer the now-more than £1 trillion of government spending deserve similar (or in some cases, superior) career prospects, pay and prestige to their private sector counterparts. Currently there is little to celebrate: Downing Street has often preferred an external corporate pedigree over relevant experience in its selection of consultants for the development of its response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

While there are numerous short-term measures that can encourage this change – such as raising senior salaries and fewer attempts by Downing Street to do-down Whitehall – this effort would likely have to take place over multiple political generations and therefore more outlandish ideas – such as the formation of a British Sciences-Po or a Crown Consultancy Service – deserve full consideration. Failure to resolve these issues may mean following an American path, where the public's view of even electoral integrity itself can come to hinge on the reputation of a corporate provider (in this case, of voting machines) almost entirely outside the government's control.

ID: 344-11 - Category: Volunteering

RADICAL TAX REFORM TO DEVOLVE MORE POWER TO LOCAL COUNCILS
RADICAL RECONSTRUCTION TO ENABLE LOCAL COUNCILS TO BECOME SELF-FINANCING (while adjusting liabilities of taxpayers) BY INTRODUCING A RESIDENTIAL/RETAIL PROPETRY TAX (to replace Council Tax and Business Rates on Retail Properties)

 This new property tax is designed to enable local councils to be self-financing with the right to vary the centrally set Property tax rate (eventually, say, between ½ and 1 % of Band value minimum) by up to 50% either way. Introduction would be phased in during fiscal year 2021/2022 when the value of the previous Council Tax band classification would be updated by 25% and 4 higher bands (up to about £5 million with £60,000 minimum on band A) and Retail added to the band classification(using 5% rental yield basis for valuation on current leases). Registered owners liable for this tax would no longer include shorthold (leases under 21 years) tenants: consequently landlords would have the automatic right to increase rents from April 2021 by any amount of Council Tax previously paid by or on behalf of the tenant. The new Band Classification into which each property falls would in due course be entered on to the Land Register(where or whenever last sale information indicates higher or lower classification revise entry accordingly). Thus the Land Register will become the data base for the new Residential/Retail Property Tax, naming as Registered Owners the freeholder(s) or in the case of long leases (original lease 21 years or more) the leaseholder(s). During 2021/2022 the valuation of all properties effective April 2022 would be required by auto-certification (signed off by a recognised Estate Agent) for entry on to the Land Register on the basis that if on a subsequent official valuation (to be conducted over 3 years) the valuation is found to be one band below a back-dated payment difference plus 5% simple interest will be charged, and for any entry more than one band below 10% compound interest would apply. Severe penalties would apply to interference with or deliberate misuse of information supplied to the Land Register. Any taxpayer who has paid Property Tax in the previous fiscal year (Certificate similar to P61 showing amount paid to be issued by Local Council) will be eligible for Personal Allowance extension in his Tax Return i.e. if Property Tax paid = £1,500, Personal Allowance of £12,500 will be extended to £14,000. The Personal Allowance restriction to Nil for those earning over £100,000 should be abolished and replaced by a Temporary Surcharge levied as follows: 5% on total tax assessed £100,000 up to £200,000 10% on total tax assessed over £200,000 Registered owners would be responsible for paying Property Tax, with unpaid tax having an automatic lien on the property and from the beginning of the next fiscal year and loss of eligibility for Personal Allowance extension. Central Government will provide an Equalisation Funding for any Local Council which has to increase the centrally set Property Tax rate (1/2% assumed) by matching the extra tax so raised with an equal amount (no other subsidy from Central Government which has to bear the cost of Personal Allowance extension). Consequential Proposals Householders (owners of freehold or long leasehold property) who cannot afford the new Property Tax may

apply to Local Councils to transfer title to the property to the Council in exchange for a statutory 20-year lease of the same property at an annual peppercorn rent with Property Tax being paid by the Council. The Council may decline the application in the case of badly maintained properties or where the title to the property has been manipulated (e.g. recent transfers), or is inadequate (e.g. lease remainder too short). Householders wishing to apply to transfer title to their property to the Local Council who have mortgages to repay may be granted a Mortgage Loan for the purpose, if approved, on similar interest and repayment terms to the Student Loan scheme. The short leasehold received in exchange may be sold or bequeathed, but at the end of the 20 year period continuation of tenure will follow usual Local Council rules with the new lease attracting prevailing Council rent rates. In appropriate cases the Local Council may sell the property. An exception in the case of the original property owner still being in occupation would allow him/her to renew the lease for a second 20-year term on the same conditions (or buy back the property with the applicable Local Council discount). Such transfers to Local Councils should be exempt from Stamp Duty. This property tax will raise significant revenue (taxing wealth but with income-tax offsets) while allowing the less wealthy to transfer to affordable housing and renters to escape from Council Tax. Local employment, particularly in property departments, will boom. The proposal would be hugely beneficial to the economy and, once at the same time (better than a pay freeze) and other taxation/welfare understood likely to be welcomed. Significant revenue enhancement could be achieved by reducing the Personal Allowance amount to, say, £10,000 proposals could be added e.g. Personal Allowance amount to become Universal Tax Credit replacing Basic State Pension, Graduated Pensions, Xmas Bonus, Winter Fuel payments and all Tax Credits, Job seekers Allowance etc. (thus welfare beneficiaries would pay tax immediately on any other income). No tax returns should be required for those with incomes under x2 the Personal Allowance amount except for the purpose of obtaining relief on Property Tax i.e. no collection of tax not deducted at source.

ID: 2283-11 - Category: Volunteering

Creating a re-skilling scheme will help Britain build back faster and better (UK Skills Programme).

The pandemic has reinforced that a 'job for life' may not be a possibility and we need to be flexible to adapt to the changing landscape - there is an opportunity for workers to train in skills for new jobs. As millions of people across the UK are on furlough, or have been made redundant, creating a tailored job re-skilling scheme would be a solution to tap into the resource pool of individuals that are at home and struggling to find work and support them - a UK Skills Programme.

The UK Skills Programme would require the government to find as many of the pool of people affected by unemployment and create a central register of this pool. The government can use information from local councils and utility companies to find the businesses that have been shut down and those employees affected from unemployment, to create this central register of people who are eligible to be re-trained. Using this data, the UK Skills Programme would set up a training scheme for those who are unemployed or on furlough, to learn new skills in growth industries, such as in robotics, and technology (data science, AI) as an example. This opportunity presents a potential for having a large pool of people eligible and ready for retraining at the same time.

This skills programme could be set up as a new unit as part of the Department of Work and Pensions under 'Retraining/Reskilling Unit' focused on promoting Britain post-Brexit and ensuring that the talent and pool of resources is fully used to the benefit of the whole country.

A central online forum can be set up where profiles of the retained pool of talent are advertised and make it easier for companies to know that these people are retrained and seeking employment. To finance this scheme, the government can use state funds, instead of paying employers to subside their employees' salaries on the furlough scheme. The most cost-efficient model for the scheme will have to be researched.

The programme would be run by industry/business leaders who can work with companies to design the courses. The government can pay universities and colleges to run the courses. The training would be a mix of online training and physical in-person training (when the situation allows it in), and the training would be split into different specialist streams to segment those according to their qualifications and aptitude. In order to apply to the scheme, individuals would have to take an aptitude and interest test to work out how best their skills can be used, and is not based on any prior academic background or university degrees. Individuals would be paid a universal amount to retrain and help them get jobs. The government would give the necessary subsidies to them, like an apprenticeship until an individual is ready to find a new job. For those who have a specific interest in continuing working in a job sector or industry or have prior experience working in it, there will be an option to gain an enhanced skill training in that

sector, so that they can improve their skills and qualifications.

This skills scheme would be like employment schemes introduced in Singapore, providing skills support to the employees that have been hard hit by the pandemic. Benefits for trainees would include a monthly training allowance for the duration of the programme (up to 6,8 and 12 weeks, depending on the nature of the workstream/skill set), flexibility to leave the programme should trainees gain employment before the end of the programme and a fully paid course fee with the materials provided for them. This scheme would be eligible for all British residents who have the rights to work in the UK, over 16 and are seeking employment. Benefits for companies to incentivise them to hire trainees from the UK Skills Programme would include for ages 40 and below can receive 20% salary support for 6 months. Employers who hire trainees age 40 and over can receive 40% salary support for 6 months, as an example.

Upon completion of the programme, individuals will achieve a government accredited certification which is nationally recognised by employers: 'UK Skills Programme Diploma'. In order to ensure that individuals complete the course, there will be stop gaps put in place, such as requiring a short test/presentation reviews on the module, which has to be completed in order to progress further in the course and training sessions.

Mass-training has the potential opportunity for individuals to have a skills refresh, undergo enhanced training and support Britain's 'build back better' initiative. In the same way that the COVID-19 vaccine movement was rolled out at an increased speed, academia, government and the business sector should collaborate and work together to come up with the best plan to structure this scheme, that is designed to fulfil jobs in a centralised system. When creating the scheme, the government should talk to employers, individuals and research the growing and emerging industries (fintech, robotics, Artificial Intelligence) to see what skills are needed and where the gaps in resource are, to appropriately design training to fill these gaps.

The scheme aims to expand job, traineeship, and skills training opportunities to support workers in Britain affected by the economic impact of COVID-19. This idea can be a better way

of getting the economy back on its feet faster and reducing the social and economic impact of job redundancy by utilising the resource pool of millions of people across the UK who are available and looking for jobs.

As the Prime Minister said in his speech on the anniversary of the first national lockdown "education is the biggest priority for the country." The chance to learn and gain new skills could open doors to opportunities, for those who have been affected by job losses and economic hardship. The future depends on education and retraining a workforce that has the right skills to enable Britain to be a business hub and trading partner in a post-pandemic world.

ID: 1801-11 - Category: Volunteering
Reforming Higher Education
Summary:

A two-part proposal for the overhaul of higher education. The first part seeks to create highly prestigious 1-year undergraduate courses to improve the quality and relevance of undergraduate education while reducing the time and cost of a degree. The second part is a new way to fund degrees in key sectors in which the UK needs more trained people, such as engineering and nursing, by offering to write-off a percentage of student debt for each year a graduate works in that key sector.

Policy:

Efforts to date, from creating distance learning courses to private universities offering shorter courses, have failed to overhaul the behemoth that is the higher education sector.

Undergraduates, especially those in the 'soft' subjects such as humanities and social sciences,

still spend three years on their course, often receiving only 10 teaching hours a week, learning things that are often largely irrelevant for the world of work.

The UK government has raised fees up to £10,000 per year, yet it has made little difference to the quality or variety of education on offer.

The problem remains that a degree is not valuable for what you learn on the course, but for the status of the university you attended and how the course you were on is perceived. So, a 2.1 from LSE is always likely to have more cachet than any degree from Nottingham Trent university, for example, however good Nottingham's course.

Therefore, overhauling higher education is all about status, so I propose government works with a pilot university to create an incredibly tough, one-year course, which only the very top students in the country would be able to attend. Anyone who didn't meet the requirements of the course at any stage would be kicked off it, so people would know if you graduated you were an impressive individual.

The course itself would combine a conventional academic degree alongside a whole host of employability skills, such as coding, report writing, and presentations, developed in partnership with leading employers to ensure it was highly relevant.

Because the course would be so well-designed and so tough, graduating would be a huge status symbol and demonstration of utility in the workplace, far more than a conventional degree. Therefore, and to further entice people onto the course, graduate employers would agree to guarantee a job to anyone who graduated.

So, you would have a phenomenally high-status degree, with a guaranteed job, all of which can be completed in one year; military academies such as Sandhurst have been doing this for decades, so it is eminently achievable.

And students would also leave with lower debt, and instead of spending another two years at university earning nothing, would have an extra two years of salaried employment.

Assuming a standard 3-year graduate leaves with debts of around £100,000, the one-year student would only have debt of £50,000 (it would be more expensive on a per year basis as it is more prestigious), but would have earned £70,000 in the two years after they graduated, making them £120,000 better off overall.

The launch of such a degree could quickly shift student demand away from traditional 3-year degrees, creating demand for a rapid roll-out of single year degrees in the same mould.

As the course would be high-status, it could be delivered by any institution, creating real competition in the higher education sector and forcing universities to respond quickly. It could therefore rapidly change the nature of undergraduate education, all by realising that the value of a degree is not what you learn, but the prestige that comes with it.

The second part of the proposal is to help fix key sectoral skill shortages in the UK, such as engineering and nursing, by establishing a new funding model where students borrow to fund their course as usual, but for every year they work in the sector they were trained in, some of the debt is written off.

It's better than funding degrees outright, since in that case students could complete the free

course and then leave their role soon after, wasting taxpayer resources.

With my proposed model, any student who did not go on to work in the role they were trained for would become liable to pay back the cost of their course to the state. However, unlike most such systems where an equal amount of debt is written off each year, this system would be exponential, with most of the debt paid off in the last two years.

For example, an engineering student gets a student loan for their course of £100,000 to cover all three years, with a contract that states if they work as an engineer for a decade the debt will be written off. In the first year, £3,000 is written off, by year 3 £10,000 is written off, by year 6 £25,000, year 8 £50,000, year 9 £75,000, and the final £25,000 is written off in the tenth year.

This creates a strong incentive for people to stay in their role to pay off their debt, and to do so for a full decade as most of the debt is paid off in the final 2 years. Students can still opt out of the scheme and pay off their loan as any other student does, maintaining choice, but it creates a strong incentive to work in the role.

By keeping people for a decade, they are likely to have moved up the ranks and be looking at starting a family, so are therefore more likely to continue to work in the sector for another decade due to their desire for job security and the cost of re-training for another sector.

To ensure legal compliance, any parental leave, maternity or paternity, would be acceptable within the scheme, but the individual would still have to return to work to pay off any remaining debt.

ID: 1551-11 - Category: Volunteering

Provision of high quality teaching online as a means for addressing educational and

social inequalities.

A good education enables a young person to acquire all the basic knowledge and skills they need for life, along with self-confidence, self-efficacy and the capability to contribute to society. There are many facets to this and classroom teaching is only one aspect, yet in a system that places the highest value on outcomes from public exams, classroom-based teaching is the pre-eminent component. In an ideal world this aspect of education at least would be a level playing field, but of course it is not. No two schools are the same, with variations in culture of staff and pupils, resources - and the quality of teaching. The schools that have gained the better reputations are better able to recruit the better teachers who themselves have built better reputations. The pupils of the better schools have an advantage, and those schools are often in wealthier neighbourhoods where children enjoy yet further advantage. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to widespread adoption of one intervention that could make a major contribution to addressing inequalities in educational opportunity: online teaching. If all children were to have on-demand access to quality-assured pre-recorded teaching materials this surely would be a major step forward. On-demand online teaching of good quality could be deployed to: • assist schools that are struggling with provision, who have staff shortages or where poor teaching practice has been identified; • enhance the educational experience of children who miss a lot of school due to illness; • augment home-schooling; • be an asset to any child who finds access to online teaching materials helpful; • supplement the schooling of children who arrive in the UK from other countries, as members of migrant families or as refugees, providing a valuable 'back-catalogue' that would make it easier for them to catch up and integrate into our education system. Most online teaching during the pandemic has been ad hoc, with schools asking their teachers to do what they can, with variable degrees of success, some of which is determined by variable IT support. So much more is possible, as has already been demonstrated by the Oak National Academy www.thenational.academy. To make the most of this opportunity several issues have to be addressed: • a means for determining what constitutes the best teaching practice and how to identify those best placed to provide it; • how best to organise production, including where there should be competitive teaching platforms or competition to be part of one offering; • whether there should be just be one set of materials for each subject in each year group, or a diversity of material to meet diverse needs, and if so which diverse needs (something that of course isn't available at the moment); • how best to integrate online teaching with existing teaching practice, so it supplements and augments current teaching rather than undermines it; • how to ensure on-demand online teaching strengthens the teaching profession. It may be useful to consider the recent history of the medical profession, a profession that has had to cope with an incredible amount of change over the past fifty years, due to rapid technological change. In their case a Royal College structure has provided oversight of developments, with a focus on optimising quality of care through peer-review and a system of higher examinations. A similar structure is needed by the teaching profession, with each

subject working within a College structure to develop best practice. Teachers currently work single-handedly most of the time. For online teaching to develop to achieve its full potential, a national effort would be needed that promotes team-working, collaboration and sharing, within schools and between schools. Recognition and rewards will be needed to incentivize this cultural shift in the profession. For example, funding provided so that creators of material would receive payment each time their material is used. This flow of money would stimulate entrepreneurial teachers and others to form creative teams, bringing in resources that would enhance the quality of what is produced: more engaging, more popular, more successful, more effective. Online teaching resources should not be used as a substitute for teachers in classrooms. What they should be used for is to underpin the educational experience of children who might otherwise no have access to good teaching – and augment what is currently available. It could release some teacher time to provide enhance the supported pupils receive as individual learners. Some teachers might be able to move to become more tutor or coach than teacher, with other perhaps switching to do expand the offer of extra-curricular activities available: a major source of inequality between schools. As well as helping to address educational inequalities online teaching resources should, in any case, be developed and used to address some other issues: • when a school cannot offer a full range of subjects; • when a school cannot provide teaching, for example when a teacher is ill, involved in an accident, on compassionate leave, or suspended; • when children are unable to attend school, for example due to poor weather, illness, parental choice or – dread to think – further pandemics; There are adults who would like to prepare themselves for public exams, or address deficits in learning that are holding them back. On-demand online learning would be great for this. One group to benefit would be prisoners, many of whom excluded from mainstream society due to poor educational attainment. COVID 19 has exposed the fragility of depending on physical delivery of education. It has also forced schools to make embrace online teaching. This is one clear example where we can 'Build Back Better': it is a fantastic opportunity to address one aspect of inequalities in educational provision, but also a welcome a catalyst for innovation, with the potential for many improvements in the way that teaching is delivered.

ID: 1065-11 - Category: Volunteering

Exercising mind and body with hands-on education of countryside biodiversity.

We are all familiar with the yellow arrows indicating the general direction of a footpath across a field. What we don't know is what we are likely to encounter as we cross that area of land. If we are not sure where the true path runs do we walk around the perimeter or walk the quickest route across the middle? Are livestock grazing? Are the grass-like fronds a crop or are they weeds on fallow land? Should we care? After all, it's not our land, but we have a right of way through it.

Yes, we should care. Our success as a species is inextricably linked with all others. The more diverse an ecosystem, the more chance we will have of adapting to climate change and all the challenges it brings.

COVID-19 is impacting us all, but especially parents who are learning, perhaps for the first time, how their children acquire knowledge through play and hands-on experience. By educating and engaging with their children, parents also seek to become better informed themselves. Let us use this opportunity of increased family activity outdoors to instil respect and wonderment of the countryside and all organisms that live within it whilst adhering to the country code to reduce negative effects on crops and livestock.

At each entrance gate/stile of a footpath a small information sign will inform the public what is being grown or grazed in the field. The route should also be named, or referenced by map references eg TQ 663 446 'River Walk'.

Placing upright wooden marker posts at strategic, visual points approximately 250 metres apart along the footpath will help direct walkers. If constructed within the path itself they shouldn't impact on the farmer's management of crops, but could be removed if/when necessary. Each post shall have its own unique reference or QR code.

On each of the post's four sides, laminated inserts can be attached containing basic facts pertaining to the area around the post. For example:

Side 1 - WILDLIFE - Look for Grey wagtail (shallows), mink (under river banks). Observe birds circling in the sky and note tail shape - buzzard/ red kite. Watch for deer on woodland edges - roe/fallow deer.

Side 2 - BIOLOGY - Observe holes in sandy soil by path - home for mining wasps. Listen for buzz of bee fly. Find flowering plants - comfrey - observe small holes at base of flower made by short-tongued bees to access nectar. Observe which trees are flowering and look for pollinating insects. Listen and identify birdsong eg chiffchaff and blackcap. Feel the bark on the trees - which is rougher, ash or oak?

Side 3 - GEOGRAPHY - State longitude/ latitude and altitude. Name the geographical features observed eg meanders and soil type found

Side 4 - ENVIRONMENTAL - State ecosystem services of the nearest tree (Treezilla has an interactive website) - eg, this oak tree removes 57kg per year of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere by photosynthesis and intercepts 7 cubic metres of water through its roots.

All factual statements will have a link to enable further studies. A website would be created that could eventually be connected to all regions of the UK. The information shown should be chosen at student level from primary through to GCSE and A-Level students.

It would be hoped that when out walking, information on the posts would be read and the posts reference number logged. Some parents would have prepared ahead to have information to hand, but the majority of families are likely to record the post number and explore what was found on their return home. For instance, a large bee fly - triangular in appearance, may have been observed by a mining bee's entrance hole. Exploring the web page later that day would explain the action of the bee fly 'kicking' its eggs into the mining bee's home. The next time the family go for a walk, their children will already be looking for more 'cool' insects!

Another example could be if a large bird was seen circling overhead. Observational skills will help identify it - a fork tail = red kite, rounded wings and tail = common buzzard, same size as buzzard but with a distinctive call in flight and black = raven. Checking on the website will indicate if any of those species have been logged at that location previously.

Using map references on the posts at each end of the field will also help with map reading skills, as the location can be verified if compass skills were used rather than just following the

posts!

Schools could encourage pupils of all ages to become involved, through wildlife/environmental biodiversity clubs or utilising skills needed for exams in a number of subjects including IT, biology, geology and geography. Duke of Edinburgh and Scouts/Guides skills of compass and map -reading would also be covered!

All of these laminated information tabs can be replaced depending on the interest of those monitoring the posts. 'Eco-warriors' could decide what information to place on the posts. If other wildlife is observed, updates can be added to the website too.

Farmers will benefit as walkers will stick to the footpaths, especially if keen to see the information on the next post. The visitors will gain a greater understanding of nature and of its interconnections with farming practices eg pollination of crops and fertilization of soil. Children will learn through use of all their senses, expanding their horizons beyond their smart phones. Walking with mum and dad will be more fun and will instil confidence if they can educate their parents with the information they have gleaned about the bugs and plants they find on their walk. Greater knowledge of the countryside around them will create a desire to protect and preserve the natural environment promoting continued enjoyment of the local footpaths for years to come, knowing it is the responsibility of us all to maintain biodiversity and preserve the countryside by taking home only memories, not mementoes.

ID: 120-11 - Category: Volunteering

The Great British Community

Britain has always been a byword for community spirit with millions of people coming together in times of crisis to support each other and make life better for everyone. However, as Covid comes to an end, we run the risk that this amazing outpouring of community spirit is either forgotten or shelved, or that local communities continue to struggle for the foreseeable future with minimum support and resources. The UK has a unique window of opportunity now to bring these people together in a way which has never happened before, to bring every community and voluntary group together into one cohesive and impactful national support network, known

as: "The Great British Community". Instead of a fragmented, under-funded and over-stretched mishmash of voluntary and charitable support services working in isolation, now is the time to bring together both people and organisations to create one streamlined, government-funded, comprehensive and easily accessible community support service. Imagine being able to access, via one centralized source (for example, a website or portal), a link to all the community services available in your own local area. At the moment there is no central place for people to find out what is happening in their local community. Information is found by accident or sometimes not at all. Instead of word of mouth, referrals from local councils, searching the internet, reading a noticeboard in a church, imagine the benefits of having a central point of reference where everyone can have access to and be able to offer (or receive) help. Imagine being able to easily find out, and access, the myriad projects happening in our local communities: mother and toddler groups, environmental projects, cycle clubs, mental health support groups, book clubs, green gyms, walking groups, cooking clubs, women's groups, painting classes, mentoring schemes, community green space projects … the list is endless. It should not be necessary in this day and age to have to look for each of these projects individually (and that's if we even know about them to begin with!). Imagine being able to combat the loneliness epidemic by enabling people of all ages to easily find out about and link up with organisations already offering a wide-ranging selection of social activities, for example, the Women's Institute, u3a, Rotary Club, Prince's Trust, UK Men's Sheds Association, Royal Voluntary Service, Girlguiding and the Scouting Association, Groundwork, Saga, etc. By highlighting the positive work already going on in our communities, we could bring them together into one place, promote the many organisations designed to appeal to different age groups, categorize them by interest or topic and make it easier for people to contact them. By creating an environment where these isolated people or groups can come together to catalyze and spark from each other, we can make it easier for people to offer their time and expertise to the organisations and people who need them most. Imagine if funding were to be provided centrally by government to: "The Great British Community". Imagine how many people would benefit across the UK, how many new jobs could be created if a national network of sustainable community projects came together, how many small businesses could start up. Think how many young people could learn new skills, run, manage or volunteer in these vitally-needed community and environmental projects. Imagine having access to a database (in one place) of links to accessible funding, knowledge and expertise from national and private funders, e.g. National Lottery, UK Sport, Tesco, Community Foundation, etc. Rather than duplicating existing services already provided via local government, "The Great British Community" is about the work that goes on behind the scenes, separate from and different to, projects funded by councils. This voluntary donation of time, effort and expertise by British people could be brought together in a structured way to highlight, celebrate and draw attention to the excellent work being done currently by so many groups, signposting people to local community projects

which most interest them or meet their needs, and promoting life-long volunteering as a way of life, rather than a one-off during a pandemic. "The Great British Community" would have the additional benefit of being of great interest around the world, a focus for good-news stories in the media as a celebration of the best human nature has to offer. Perhaps Prince William and Kate Middleton could be persuaded to lead the project? Perhaps the rich and famous could support "The Great British Community" both with their donations and their talent for attracting media attention? Perhaps the initiative could be linked into the citizenship aspect of the national curriculum as a practical stepping stone to a lifetime of volunteering? Perhaps thousands of people will be able to build new and closer links to their local community, the lonely will find new friends and hobbies, children will learn a sense of responsibility to their community and environment, organisations will develop better social and corporate responsibility practices, perhaps we will be able to properly focus on, and support, the real heroes of our local communities? Instead of the current scattergun approach of each small community operating entirely in ignorance of what is happening locally, regionally or nationally, struggling for funding and sometimes even to continue to exist, it's time for "The Great British Community" to be recognised as the National Treasure that it is and to be given the support it deserves. Whether it's done via a website, creation of a completely new organisation, a partnership or union of existing organisations, or embedded as a vital element into every strand of Government policy, this rare opportunity should not be missed. Although "The Great British Community" will continue to thrive regardless of (or perhaps because of) Covid, just think how much better life would be if all the positive community spirit demonstrated during 2020 could be harnessed and brought together into one initiative, fully recognised and supported. "There is no power for change greater than a community discovering what it cares about." (Margaret J. Wheatley).

ID: 2001-11 - Category: Volunteering
Meeting the needs of children through a changed school year
My first proposal was for a radical re-think of the Welfare State. I have ideas for all the areas covered by the 5 giants, but my part 2 focuses on ideas for improvements in meeting the needs of children and their carers, helping to tackle at least 3 of the 5 giants in the process.

Support should be offered from birth to 18, so that children can always have somewhere to be when parents/carers are not available. This could happen in existing schools, nurseries, in separate children's centres, and/or through more formal networking of childcare providers. Libraries, museums and shopping centres would also have a role to play.

Between them, these children's places should be available all year round for long daytime

hours e.g. 6 a.m.- 8 p.m., including weekends and even Bank Holidays.

Academic education should be provided, as now, mainly by qualified teachers, with a separate team (Team B) providing care, activities and entertainment outside the academic timetable. This team would include a wide spectrum of people with all sorts of skills and interests, including craftspeople, artists, musicians, and many could be students.

The main academic curriculum should be covered in the autumn and spring terms, stopping at the summer half term. The summer months, June July and August would be very different from now.

"Team B" would take over and would offer:

1. a wide range of optional activities outdoors and indoors, including exercise, sport, forest school, gardening, arts, crafts, music, plus fun and games.

2. catch-up sessions for children who have missed school or fallen behind for any reason

3. opportunities for online learning on or off the premises

4. opportunities for travel for children to experience town or country - whichever is not their normal.

During the summer, school attendance would not be compulsory except perhaps for any catch-up sessions recommended by teachers. Otherwise, attendance would be expected for part of the summer programme, but negotiable.

I consider these changes go a long way to tackle a specific problem highlighted by Covid lockdowns: the need that children of all ages have for daily access to space for physical activity, whatever the weather. This is crucial to their mental health. More facilities will need to be provided.

This approach to meeting the needs of children would have benefits for others, including:

1. providing reliable part-time income for a whole range of self-employed people

2. bringing life back to town centres, so that families can take part in satisfying activities along with shopping and business.

3. massively reducing stress on working parents

4. extending the holiday season for families nationally, making it more manageable for all concerned.

This competition does not require me to explain how all this would be paid for.

It might not be as expensive as it seems, and some of it could be paid for by those who can afford it.

ID: 2267-11 - Category: Volunteering

How can public policy react to a digital divide exposed by the coronavirus pandemic?

Tackling the emerging discrimination resulting from the digital divide, an issue exacerbated by COVID-19, is paramount to reducing social inequalities impacting a variety of socioeconomic groups. The regeneration and modernisation of public libraries could facilitate universal internet provision, endorse and further the trend of working from home and promote community engagement.

Public library use has steadily been falling year by year, polling by Statista (2020) shows that since 2005 there has been at least a 20% drop in respondents who had visited a public library. Coates (2018) attributed this decline in library use to poor stocks that are badly organised, short unpredictable opening hours and buildings being poorly maintained and lacking decoration. Furthermore, Coates (2018) highlights that libraries are digitally outdated compared to alternatives, with Amazon dwarfing their capability of offering multiple means of accessing texts and even going as far as providing book recommendations. Separate from the libraries, however, this decline in use can be attributed to funding cuts to libraries as a consequence of austerity measures. Despite the criticisms and the under utilisation of libraries, public support for libraries remains overwhelming, a poll commissioned by Money Saving Expert (2015) found

that 90% of respondents felt their local library service should be protected.

Libraries are becoming somewhat outdated seeing as the incentive to fund them is steadily decreasing. Modernising libraries could solve two significant issues caused and/or accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Modernising them would provide incentives to continue funding them to preserve them and would also solve the digital divide created by the pandemic, which is putting those without technology and internet access at a disadvantage. Modernising them would entail changing their overall structure. In other words, existing libraries would be divided into two different sections; the first section would be the traditional library meant for reading books and studying in a quiet environment whereas the second section would be meant for free access to the internet and technology. Furthermore, it can provide students with an alternative study space where they can socialise.

This proposal would provide significant benefits to disadvantaged young people. The first section detailed the fact that even before covid there was a large gap in the attainment of disadvantaged young people compared to their peers. A 2017 study found that there is a gap of half a grade in every GCSE subject taken (Education Policy Institute, 2017:np). The Sutton Trust (Lally and Bermingham, 2020) also found that 15% of teachers reported that they believed that not all their students had access to a device at home on which to do online work. Seeing as a multitude of online learning and revision resources are available freely, providing a device and internet connection will benefit those who cannot afford paper textbooks. The quiet working environment will also benefit low-income students by providing a quiet space to work, which many are likely to have lacked during the lockdowns. More details can be found above, but by situating these rejuvenated libraries within residential communities and targeting the places with the largest gaps in attainment, we can avoid people being excluded due to travel costs as most will be able to walk from their home to a library.

A policy agenda tackling the growing divisions resulting from the digital divide would also benefit the UK adult population. The Office for National Statistics' 2019 report on the digital divide promulgated that only 51% of households with annual earnings of £6000-£10,000 had home internet access. Comparatively, 99% of households with an income of more than £40,001 could use the internet at home. Such digital exclusion exacerbates difficulties for individuals

already living in poverty. Job applications, budgeting, accessing health and social services, and applying for Universal Credit are all made more challenging as services are continuously shifting to the digital sphere. Community internet provisions are imperative in reintegrating the digitally excluded members into society. Locating internet hubs within communal spaces not only encourages social interaction amongst communities but also enables those without home access to vital online services. However, providing internet access as a policy in isolation may not be sufficient. The Lloyds Bank Consumer Digital Index report 2019 further affirms that 22% of the population lack basic digital skills. Although the primary aim of our proposal is universal internet access, integration of computer/internet training may be integral in increasing the inclusivity of digital services.

Furthermore, digital inclusion is a critical social justice issue that is not widely attributed to its effects on ethnic minorities in the UK. However, the most recent data in 2019 from the ONS represent disparities in internet usage for different ethnicities. It found that disparities had narrowed for minority groups and were less significant than income (ONS, 2019). Elahi (2020) argues that this does negate ethnicity as a factor, it is vital to consider intersectionality as ethnicity and socio-economic factors work together to create digital exclusion. Gypsy and Traveller communities (no reference to this group in ONS 2019 dataset) face digital exclusion and are both an ethnic minority and affected by socio-economic factors. In the 2011 consensus, Gypsies and Travellers experienced the lowest employment rates, highest levels of economic inactivity (Comarty, 2019). Factors such as low literacy rates and environmentally daunting classroom environments could make it more difficult for members from these communities to benefit from digital technology (Scadding and Sweeney, 2018). In 2018-2019, pupils from the White Gypsy and Roma ethnic group had the lowest GCSE attainment (ONS, 2020). Libraries could be a great alternative by providing a comfortable environment and providing digital services that support low literacy levels.

ID: 2130-11 - Category: Volunteering
Use of UN SDGs and targets as a template for recovery
Using the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can provide an existing internationally agreed framework on which to base a sustainable recovery plan which supports sustainable development for people and planet.

"We need to turn the [covid] recovery into a real opportunity to do things right for the future."
– UN Secretary-General António Guterres

The UN SDGs provide a template of goals and targets for Covid Recovery. In addressing the 17 Goals and influencing the daily decisions and behaviors of individuals organizations and states, Covid and future similar issues will be addressed. However the SDGs are often thought to be global issues and are often seen as relating to 'other countries'. To support the use of the SDGs in the UK, they need to be broken downto identify how each applies in all contexts of daily life and work of individuals. It will be by changed behaviors of individuals as consumers, producers and citizens that a post Covid sustainable recovery and all 17 UN 2030 SDG's will be achieved.

Submitted on behalf of the Greater Lincolnshire UN Association

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ID: 2050-11 - Category: Volunteering

OCCUPATION FOR SCHOOL LEAVERS

Loss of confidence in the adequacy of the education supplied during prolonged lockdowns, together with social isolation, has led to confusion among school leavers about what the next step should be.

SOLUTION:

The introduction of Universal National Service to suit a wide variety of circumstance could equally be described as UNIVERSAL SOCIAL SERVICE which will be designed to fill the gap between basic secondary schooling and the next stage of life. The Service would provide a minimum of two different assignments during one year, with the option of a second year. A wide choice of assignments including apprenticeships will be designed for all young people in the age range of 15-20 years. This New Universal National Service will echo the successful National Service that was designed for young men in the armed services after the Second World War.

Examples of socially useful occupations including apprenticeships would include any of the Armed Services, The Police, The Fire Brigade, Refuse Disposal, Safety Inspectorates, Care Homes for young and old, and work on the land.

All these services would be of benefit to the community where labour is in short supply.

Training should include basic remedial skills where required. Tutoring should be included in the choice of National Service.

Universal Social Service will bring young persons from every kind of background together in a common endeavour.

This identified employment of young people will be valued by both the individual and society.

REWARDS

A basic living wage (means-tested) - the hourly rate would be paid the same, regardless of occupation. Less tangible benefits would include a passport to self-fulfilment. The requirement of useful work for everyone narrows the worsening gap between privilege and deprivation. Society will benefit from improved mutual understanding and unpopular tasks will be shared around more evenly.

ID: 1959-11 - Category: Volunteering

Introduce a minimum competence requirement for entry to public office

Summary: Require public officials, starting with Government Ministers, to demonstrate effective decision-making Competencies at the level defined in the Civil Service's published Framework prior to taking up office. Ministers lacking graduate level education in a logic-based subject such as maths, science or engineering are likely to require a period of training to reach this level of competence.

Rationale:

I am happy to report that the Civil Service have already done the underpinning legwork here in developing their excellent competency framework. Particularly pertinent to the above challenge is the 'Setting direction: Making effective decisions' section which tells us that

'People who are effective are likely to:

• Navigate and balance a range of political, national and international pressures

• Involve the right stakeholders and partners in making recommendations or decisions early on and continue to engage them

• Identify and evaluate risks and options and develop strategies to manage and mitigate

• Make unpopular decisions and defend them at the highest level when required'.

The document goes on to specific some features of 'People who are less effective' which resonates remarkably with particular failings evidenced amongst English politicians during the Covid crisis:

• Struggle to provide clarity of thinking when faced with complex and ambiguous data, constantly call for more information rather than make decisions

• Provide recommendations or decisions without full and proper consultation

• Provide advice without full evaluation of risk, scenarios and options

• Constantly change decisions based on new opinions, information or challenge.

The scientific method is defined as 'making conjectures (hypotheses), deriving predictions from them as logical consequences, and then carrying out experiments or empirical observations based on those predictions'. Whilst no one expect all public servants to be competent scientists, an understanding of the principles of logic and risk assessment are intrinsic to the high-level decision making required by those in leadership. Yet they may have absolutely no training in such principles in any part of their education- indeed, no education at all is required to enter public office. Many professions have developed workplace-based competency assessment as a core entry requirement in recent years, in recognition of the critical remits undertaken in that profession and, consequently, the critical impact of substandard practice. Requiring a minimum benchmark means practitioners with sub-optimal competencies are excluded from entry and this protects the public. These competencies need to be demonstrable live 'in practice', not just from a written test- i.e. similar to a driving test.

For example, in the Royal College of GP's curriculum, competence in decision making is defined via 'word pictures' to allow assessors to identify and evidence emerging/evident competencies. By the final year of training the doctor must be able to demonstrate overall competence in each field while working with real patients. This is assessed by a highly trained (PGCE level) GP 'trainer' in the workplace, based on observation of genuine consultations in joint surgeries

and/or videoed consultations, and case discussions (cross-reference with written records and other tools such as audit and multi-source feedback). It is further benchmarked by the College in a live simulated surgery where each patient's care is assessed by an independent examiner against specific thresholds of competence, alongside written assessments. Below are examples of decision-making competencies that would be equally relevant to MPs, and arguably should be 'excellent' in Government Ministers:

-Excellent- No longer relies on rules or protocols but is able to use and justify discretionary judgement in situations of uncertainty or complexity

-Competent- Thinks flexibly around problems, generating functional solutions and taking ownership; keeps an open mind and is able to adjust and revise decisions in the light of relevant new information -Not yet sufficiently competent- Makes decisions by applying rules, plans or protocols.

Further relevant competencies can be found within the 'managing medical complexity' part of curriculum as shown below- the word 'patient' has been changed to 'public' to demonstrate relevance to Government ministers:

#Excellent- Anticipates and employs a variety of strategies for managing uncertainty; uses the public perception of risk to enhance the management plan

#Competent- Is able to manage uncertainty, including that experienced by the public; communicates risk effectively and involves public in its management to the appropriate degree.

For public officials, it would seem feasible that new entrants could be asked to pass a 'simulated' assessment of their decision making which could include formats such as:

• Chairing a simulated meeting which includes decision making on complex and conflicting statistical data (with appropriate statisticians/experts in the room to advise)

• A written prioritisation scenario- which could be based on a disease outbreak, for example!

Such an entry assessment could then be coupled with a probationary period, during which key competencies would need to be demonstrated 'on the job', for example during:

• Interaction with the public (in MP surgeries)

• Interaction with colleagues

• Written communications e.g. with the press

• Management of risk scenarios.

It is my assertion that had such an assessment been undertaken on the Covid Cabinet prior to their appointment, many would not have been in post. A more suitably skilled cohort could have avoided much of the weak decision making- and deaths- that ensued. Can we really afford to put people's lives at risk by entrusting these crucial decisions to individuals selected on basis of popularity, without reference to competence? Covid has shone a light on a critical gap to address and the tools are readily available - all that is required is the political will.

ID: 1900-11 - Category: Volunteering

How to reverse the UK teacher retention crisis - a personal research and development budget

Teacher retention has been an ongoing crisis in the UK, with around 1/3 of teachers leaving the profession within five years of qualification. The negative consequences of this are manifold: a loss of talent to a profession that needs a motivated and incentivised workforce; a waste of resources devoted to training; disruption to pupil learning arising from unnecessary staff turnover; and demoralisation for those remaining in the profession.

While issues such as pay and working hours are highly complex, with implications for public finances, there are other responses that relate to re-enforcing teachers' ownership of their professional journey and identity.

This proposal argues for an English-wide scheme (which could also be adopted by devolved authorities) for free access for teachers into a broad range of libraries, museums, galleries, learned societies, cultural institutions and subject-based associations. Each teacher would have an annual credit of up to £250 (in effect a personal research budget) to utilise for individual access to these institutions and the services that they provide, including membership fees, resources, and attendance to ad hoc events. The participating institutions would admit the teacher for free, on presentation of an individual photo card and supporting ID. The institution would then be reimbursed by the government on a charge-back basis for the costs incurred. The benefit would be non-taxable, the credit would not be transferable and would not roll-over to the following year.

The anticipated benefits would be as follows: (i) teachers would be able to gain access to specific knowledge and professional learning that would connect them pedagogically and philosophically with research developments across a range of disciplines; (ii) it would also be a countervailing effect against teacher perceptions of limitations to their professional independence which can sometimes arise from the prevalence of data-driven targets; (iii) it would enhance teacher professional status by crediting the individual with the capacity to map out their own professional learning; (iv) it would benefit the participating institutions (all of which have been closed during the COVID-19 crisis) by incentivising visitor footfall and by opening up a source of revenue; (v) it would enhance subject-knowledge for the individual teacher, with expected benefits for pupil learning and attainment.

While one intervention alone will not solve the retention crisis, the distinctive nature of this proposal is its emphasis on personal professional agency, and the individual stewardship of a resource. Enhancing professional autonomy and ownership can be expected to yield benefits for individual performance and outcomes for pupils, while also developing and enhancing connections between schools and research/cultural institutions. While the scheme would entail cost, this should be considered against the waste of talent and loss of investment when teachers leave the profession.

ID: 1222-11 - Category: Volunteering

Re-thinking housing for the elderly as an alternative to care homes and to reduce

loneliness

The Covid-19 epidemic has highlighted the social isolation of the elderly in particular and while the epidemic has certainly exacerbated the issue, it was an issue long before Covid-19 challenges emerged. During the pandemic, however, the elderly have lost confidence in the care home sector and whilst care homes will always needed for those with nursing needs, now is perhaps an opportunity to take stock and re-think how older people live and interact in the community. There may be alternatives to care home places and warden assisted flats which would encourage the older generation to 'downsize' leaving larger properties available for families, whilst improving their social interaction resulting in well-known health benefits Most elderly people live in households of just one or two. They frequently live in larger properties as there is little incentive to downsize at present and this presents issues of underutilised housing and also loneliness. A single elderly person in a large home with families all around may well be lonely, without peers or those with similar interests to interact with them. In addition, the burden of maintaining large homes is challenging, but the alternatives of warden assisted flats or care homes are not always attractive, and there are few alternatives. I would like to see government taking a new look at housing and how it can better serve our elderly population. I have often seen large plots of land and new build developments in our area that take little or no account of potential single occupancy needs or the elderly population. Many are flats or large houses, not suitable for the elderly, and bungalows are rarely built. I have often remarked on seeing a smallish plot of land that then has one large house placed on it, that it could have been better developed in an alternative way to support the elderly in the community. I would like to see more development of groups of ground level small 1-bedroom properties around a central quad. The idea is that you could accommodate 5-6 single (or couple) accommodations with a central garden square; each having an open plan kitchen, diner, lounge and one bedroom, with an upstairs bedroom suite for use by visiting friends/relatives. The older person would have the independent living often wanted, together with the social interaction of others in similar circumstances, and being in the local community allows interaction with other age groups. Thus, the small plot that would have accommodated one 5-bedroom house, now accommodates 5-6 couples, or 5-6 singles. It could even be expanded to include a multi-occupancy house in the small group, in the same way as those in their 20s often share houses with others. It is curious as to why older people do not tend to live in multi-occupancy houses. For the older person without significant care needs, this seems like a good solution to housing challenges and would also provide company. Perhaps we need to encourage people to think more about this sort of option and to include houses designed with this in mind in developments. Each room would need an en-suite bathroom and the kitchen would need sufficient space to allow everyone to cook. In parallel, I would like to see the government re-consider the development of dementia villages. Working successfully in other countries, there have been rumours of such villages in the UK, but I have not heard of any in practice. The communities are closed, so cause little concern

to neighbouring villages but can provide such huge benefits. We should be pushing ahead with alternatives to care homes which have lost a lot of trust during the pandemic, but also should be looked at with new eyes for alternative ways to live which maximises housing availability but also enhances the lives of the elderly.

ID: 977-11 - Category: Volunteering

Enforcement could reduce unemployment, generate revenue AND improve our shared green spaces

We need a long term shift in behaviour, but this does not necessarily need long term investment. At the moment, unemployment is on the rise. In London Litter and Waste Enforcement Officers can earn in excess of £27k, and have the authority to issue Fixed Penalty Notices for littering. Enforcement Officers can generate revenue by issuing FPNs, or better still their presence may be a deterrent to littering and flytipping, thus vastly reducing the cost of cleaning up and restoring damaged spaces.

These Enforcement Officers could also play a role in educating our children not to litter, and to care for their environment and community, The Keep Britain Tidy Campaign of my childhood in the 80s had a big impact on me, and we have an army of citizens who've put their hand up to help during Covid who could be minded to volunteer to go into schools (when that's possible) to educate our children, who can in turn educate their parents and family members to take better care.

At the moment the system seems geared to be reactive (responding to reports of flytipping) rather than proactive (i.e. preventing the crime through positive 'nudges' including more and better warning signage, and FPN deterrents).

Faced with many more months of disruption due to Covid, and many more unemployed, what a marvellous opportunity to kill two birds with one stone. Create jobs which are carried out in the safe outdoors, and which have the capacity improve our environment in the short and long term.

To protect employees from the more negative aspects of working from home or the potential opportunities they miss, the Government could set up local work-desks. These would essentially be offices that the Government provides with available work space campuses for people to book out.

This would first and foremost assist people who don't have the ability to work from home and are as such excluded from the job market. They would be provided with desk space to work as well as adequate facilities like computers, webcams, printers, telephones, etc. These are already all available with standard local libraries, but these would just be an extension to boost the work of working individuals.

These spaces may also solve the lack of social interaction with remote working by allowing people to still engage and meet other people at their workplace and could be crucial in solving the problems or loneliness and mental wellbeing. Furthermore, with a variety of different people working in the office with different companies and different industries, we could perhaps see greater collaboration among these different firms and industries. Simply by talking to each other at the coffee machines, individuals who may have never otherwise come into contact with each other may end up realising how the polar opposite things they are respectively working on, can instead be linked together to create the next world-changing idea. If not a revolution in ideas, the spaces could simply boost productivity for the individual working there, with an environment in which they can thoroughly focus, properly attend virtual meetings and have the equipment to do their work. It would make it easier for someone to ask someone else for help with a certain blockage or for someone to copy someone else's work style that they think is particularly effective. These would all help to boost productivity within British businesses which have been on the back foot since the 2008 recession and have been hampered further by the COVID crisis.

The office spaces themselves could also be tailored to different individuals and their working styles. While some are fans of the modern, open plan office spaces with furniture lying around

to promote interaction and pool tables and table tennis tables to allow for cooldowns when working. Others, may prefer the more traditional office space, with well allocated and neatly aligned desk space or designated individual cabins. The office space the government sets up could have a variety of these in each campus so that people can chose which they prefer and which they think they would be more effective in. This prevents the culture clash seen in many offices today where some prefer one to the other but there are wholesale changes to either side. If these office campuses are super-sized they could perhaps have these different layouts on different floors. Alternatively, there could be different offices at different locations with different layouts. For example, a campus based in Shoreditch could be of the more modern format, but a few miles away in Canary Wharf there could be a more traditional office. Perhaps, these campuses could come with healthcare arrangements or other services like gyms which are increasingly seen in offices, which would all help to make working more efficient.

These initiatives are already being championed by the private sector with companies like HubbleHQ, but the Government could step in to create a more inclusive job market to extend current support such as that provided by libraries already.

ID: 889-11 - Category: Volunteering

Transforming Libraries into Community Hubs & Safe Spaces to Socialise, Grow and Learn

Isolation and loneliness have been an issue during this pandemic, but also Community hubs have blossomed online, bringing out the best in people. We can't let that fade away, we need to carry that forward and bring people together in person once we are able, but we need a place to do this.

Public libraries could be re-invented and used to provide that space. This should be done in the spirit of creating a safe inter-generational, multi-cultural community space where people can learn, work, socialise, develop skills and crafts.

As a result of changing technologies and the last recession, many public libraries were shut or had their opening hours severely reduced. We need to re-think these spaces to meet society's current needs and maximise their potential. Each library could be looked at to meet the demographic and economic needs of their local community, employing some of the suggestions

listed below.

Old & Young Together:

I believe we could do more as a society to bring people together in a mutually beneficial way. For example, the issue of loneliness is a particular problem for the elderly, whereas the young are adept at using all social platforms to communicate. Local sixth form centres and secondary schools could be approached so that teenagers who are adept with modern technology, and who want work experience or to volunteer through the community or do Duke of Edinburgh, could volunteer to share their skills, and in turn, learn themselves from the experience of helping others. If more is needed to support an elderly population, group audio book sessions or scrabble clubs could be set up.

Children's Book Clubs:

Some children need access to more books and also could do with being encouraged to read in a relaxed, sociable and enjoyable environment. Libraries could provide the space for these book clubs to take place with local volunteers. A pilot was set up in Northcote Library and the children called their club "Chatterbooks". It was very well received. For many children this would not only help their literacy, but enable friendships and maybe even provide a critical safe space.

Teaching English as a Foreign Language:

Language can be a barrier and lead to isolation. We need to do all we can as a society to integrate and help people to develop the language skills they need to feel like a valued member of the community and also to maximise employment opportunities.

Craft Groups:

There has been a boom in crafts during the pandemic, be it knitting, crochet, painting, sewing. Libraries could provide a space for people to come together and develop their skills. These could range from free social gatherings to paid for classes. It could even result in some products being sold and the creation of new businesses. These activities are very beneficial for mental well being.

Using the wall space to support local artists:

Many libraries have blank, empty wall space. Inviting local artists in to display their art would help make libraries more interesting and inviting spaces. This would be mutually beneficial as the artist could sell their work on display and the library could take a commission. Our local borough runs "Artist Open House" days, but this would take it to another and more permanent level.

Homework Clubs:

Depending on the local demographic, which may range from deprived, where there is a dire need to support children after school, to very affluent (in some areas parents pay £50 - £70 hour for their child to be tutored). Either way, the library could provide extra support. This could be subsidised, charged for, or part of a scheme where mentors and volunteers help.

Office Space & meeting rooms:

Many libraries have smaller rooms that remain unused for most of the time. Depending on the size, these spaces could be advertised as available as meeting rooms / lecture spaces / office space / Wellbeing & Mindfulness space. If the room is there, it should be used. They could provide an essential support to new and struggling businesses. Schemes could be run where they are available rent free for a while, then the business would be charged once it is up and running. Libraries can help as a practical spring-board for new businesses.

Cafes:

Bookshops have seen how having a cafe can support trade and encourage people to stay longer. Not only would the introduction of cafes make the library more welcoming, but it could be a source of income. This could be done in conjunction with already established coffee shops.

Practical Implementation:

The Government could provide Library consultants who look at each library and assess the building and demographics and needs of the community, suggestions could come from the local community and the library could be used to its maximum potential, depending on the layout, space and rooms it has to offer. The buildings exist 24 hours a day, it's a waste not to maximise use of them. Some libraries do already run children's reading sessions, baby song times and computer classes, but so much more could be done to breathe new life in them and to provide a space for some of the groups that have set up virtually as a result of Covid-19.

These initiatives do not have to be a burden on the taxpayer, some could be subsidised by the state, and others could generate an income in their own right or be carried out with the co-operation of private enterprise. With the internet and downloading books online, libraries as they existed do not have much of a future. They have to evolve or die. In the past they have provided much more than just a place to study quietly or to lend books. They provided a safe space and a community hub. We need that more than ever now.

ID: 860-11 - Category: Volunteering

A scheme for National Youth Service

Some years ago I visited Cuba and at that time all young people at age 16 years were required to do military service, two years for boys, one year for girls. After that they pursued higher education or employment. I propose a scheme whereby young people aged between 16 and 18 years are required to complete a year of community service before moving on to further training or career. One of the differences between teenagers from affluent homes to those from less advantaged backgrounds is the former often on completing education have a "gap year" when they seek experience, often abroad, to widen their life experience before settling into further study. The National Youth Service would require all young people to experience something on an equal footing. It would provide a measure of discipline and self discipline, and would mix people from all backgrounds together, something which I hope would encourage

understanding and tolerance of others at an age when young minds are open. For some it would give them experience outside of their geographic and cultural environment, and perhaps give them role models outside of their usual daily experience. I also hope it would encourage more of them to envisage a career in the NHS or similar organisation so that we fill the vacant posts with local people rather than recruiting them from less developed countries where their skills are needed in the country that trained them.

My proposal for the year would see it divided into four parts of three months. The first part would follow a syllabus looking at physical and mental health. It would include a visit of at least a week to an outward bound centre. There would be some classroom sessions examining diet, cooking, physical education and psychological preparation for adulthood., this could be undertaken at a local further education college. The second part would be a period devoted to improving the level of educational achievement, and for this private schools could be encouraged to input tutoring. A third part would be spent within the NHS, care or charity sector, learning the rewards of making a contribution to the health of the community. The final part might be an "internship" within public or private sector giving each young person an opportunity to experience the world of work but maybe not what they previously envisioned, and could include science and engineering, agriculture, or even the arts. That would require all parts of our society to make a contribution to the development of our young people, and perhaps discover or develop talents that our society needs, as well as those our economy needs. At the end of the year the young person would receive a certificate and I rather hope there would be a "passing out parade" at which family and friends could celebrate their achievement.

I would expect there to be some flexibility in the scheme but overall would hope that young people of all physical and mental abilities could be offered a version of the scheme adapted to their needs. By offering this opportunity at age 16 years I hope it would mean the young people had enough maturity to make the most of it but before they lost aspiration. For those already keen to follow a particular path in work or career it would give them a period of broader experience, whereas those who at sixteen still felt a bit young to commit to a certain path it's a chance to envisage a different future.

Some of this idea comes from the experiences in my own life which I felt influenced my choices, and some from hearing men from a previous generation talking about doing National Military Service in Britain after the second world war, where a good many discovered talents and had their eyes opened in a way that had not been possible in civilian life. I'm aware that there have been voluntary schemes which covered some aspects of this, eg Duke of Edinburgh Awards, Scouting Movement, Boys and Girls Brigades, St John Ambulance, various services Cadet

schemes but my proposal of a National Scheme would ensure it includes everybody.

ID: 757-11 - Category: Volunteering
A solution to 'bed blocking' in our geriatric wards
Build an NHS nursing home which is run by the hospital, on the site of every hospital with a geriatric ward. Enabling elderly people who are ready to leave hospital but have no one to care for them and cannot go to their own home without care, can be moved to release beds for new patients.

The homes would be a halfway house for these people. There would be Coordinators whose job is to find permanent homes for them, who liaise with GPs, families, care givers, councils and private care homes to carry out financial, ability and needs assessments to ensure that the elderly people are rehomed in the correct type of home to suit their needs or have the correct care package in place.

The places in the NHS nursing homes can be paid for in the same way as other nursing homes are paid for now. So if a person has enough capital they'd pay for their care and accommodation, etc and if they do not have capital then it would come out of the social care budget in the same way that it would for any home having the person.

The length of stay would be a maximum of 4 weeks during which time it is the job of the Coordinator to carry out the assessments and find alternative care and/or homing for the person.

ID: 751-11 - Category: Volunteering
HELPING TO FIX CARE HOME CARE
PLEASE NOTE

I submitted the entry below on 6 or 7 January. However, I did not receive an acknowledgement. Also, my entry does not appear when I browse the entries. There are only four entries listed for

Question 1 and two for Question 2. I should be grateful if you could acknowledge my entry. Thank you.

Elderly residents of care homes have been casualties of the pandemic often through no fault of the care homes themselves. However, some care homes have clearly failed their residents which is a reminder that there are serious endemic problems that should be addressed. All too often, incidents are reported which have occurred in homes that have received recent good inspection reviews. Many failings can be covered up during inspections such as issues of the attitudes and behaviour of staff. Residents and their relatives are either unable to articulate such issues or are afraid to do so.

A positive feature of the pandemic has been the overwhelming concern shown by so many people for those who are suffering because of their poverty, age, loneliness or other circumstances. Many people, including retired medical professionals, have volunteered to help in a plethora of ways. One challenge, when the pandemic is over, will be to maintain the enthusiasm of such people to volunteer their services.

Whilst occasional visitors to care homes do sometimes notice unacceptable situations, they may not feel confident to address them. Ideally, there would be designated visitors who, whilst visiting at random times, would have a formal role to observe critically and to report regularly to inspectors as well as to managers. Retired professionals from the medical profession and also from other professions such as education, law and public service may be suitable for this role. They would have worked in situations where they were subject to similar regulations and would have the confidence to address unacceptable issues. Unlike inspectors, they would visit at random times and talk to residents in a more relaxed environment, so they could learn more about how the organisation's regime impacts on them as people.

Care homes for the elderly are not the only institutions that could benefit from this approach. The memory of the Winterbourne View hospital abuse scandal nearly a decade ago is still raw and few people would be confident that such situations are not still happening somewhere in

the care sector.

The momentum of genuine concern that has been generated during the pandemic must not be dissipated at its end. There is, perhaps, a once in a lifetime chance to match a major resource with a pressing need.

ID: 706-11 - Category: Volunteering

Create an army of Covid 19 testers and immunisers, mobilise the teenagers & young adults.

My proposal offers a creative solution to a number of very significant challenges associated with the current Covid 19 crisis.

The challenges:

1) A lack of operatives available to carry out essential mass-testing.

2) A lack of trained operatives to carry out the mass-immunisation programme.

3) A potential lost generation of young people whose education, exam prospects and timely admission to university that has been adversely affect by the crisis.

4) The very significant threat of transmission within households and the wider community disproportionately represented by the teenage demographic.

5) A lack of trained doctors and nurses in the UK.

6) A need to recruit a workforce dedicated to the expansion of what must represent a massive new or expanding economic sector in the UK: health, epidemiology, immunology, pharmacology and related sectors.

The solutions, as I see them:

 I propose that teenagers and young adults whose education is currently on hold: sixth-form students whose A-levels have been essentially cancelled and who will not be able to attend university in the autumn, and students of universities who currently can't resume their studies, should be offered the opportunity to engage in a fast-track training programme to qualify them to test members of the community for Covid 19, and/or administer the vaccine.

 I would suggest that candidates be recruited, with the aid of the advice of their educational institutions, from courses such as chemistry, biology and physics in the case of the A-Level students, and in the case of university students, pharmacology, nursing, medicine and other hard science based subjects, although not necessarily exclusively. Cast the net wide.

 It has been demonstrated in recent studies that individuals from this demographic are more likely than those from other demographics to suffer the virus asymptomatically, making them of particular risk to their own households and to the wider community. They're young, bored, they want to mix with their friends and to 'party'. I suggest they're offered the opportunity to do so in, for instance, currently unused hotels where they could also be trained to do this important work while distanced from more vulnerable members of the community.

 This programme could represent a considerable economic asset for the country: the Covid 19 virus is mutating, it's likely that epidemiology and pharmacology will continue to be disciplines that require significant investment and development into the future, and will therefore represent valuable exports for the UK. Recruitment into these sectors are likely, therefore, to secure significant dividends. My proposal may well secure the necessary work-force for this essential and lucrative expansion, but also provide kudos in other areas of expertise in science for those candidates who engage in the programme. It could also inspire those involved to change direction and train as nurses and doctors in the future: the UK has a considerable deficit of trained medical staff, as I write this there are currently 46,000 healthcare professionals either

incapacitated with Covid 19, or self-isolating.

 These measures, if implemented, will create a new 'Heroic Generation' of those who are currently described as 'Generation Z', measurably increasing their life chances and employment prospects into the future.

ID: 668-11 - Category: Volunteering

Supplementary Schools

A feature of our post-Covid times will be the educational inequalities that will be present, particularly affecting our hard-pressed neighbourhoods. I propose that we use a tried and trusted model of delivery to address this. For a long time, BAME communities have operated Supplementary Schools to support migrant children achieve educational attainment.

 The government should set up a programme of Supplementary Schools, starting in the next academic year, to address inequalities that exist and support educational attainment. This should operate in all areas, but priority should be given to our most deprived neighbourhoods. This could help our school children to overcome any educational gaps created by Co-vid.

 For over 20 years, I worked in inner-London managing community projects and programmes and, during that time, I saw many Supplementary Schools operating in our poorest neighbourhoods which were, generally, successful. Initially, many Supplementary Schools were set up to improve literacy and numeracy but, over time, became more focused on cultural issues and were often characterised by charismatic leadership and motivated children.

 Supplementary Schools should be part of local schools and under the leadership of the headteacher. Not only, will they operate then on the same premises each Saturday during term time, utilising these community buildings, but also be at the heart of the school. Supplementary Schools would be sure then to meet good governance standards but also achieve the priorities set by the local school and the curriculum. For example, the exam years of 11 and 13 may be considered a national priority because of Co-vid, but also the 'transition years' of six and seven might also be a priority. However, head teachers should be empowered to decide the priorities for their area.

 Supplementary Schools should be led by qualified teachers but also be open to new teacher graduates. Both should be paid the standard rate for this teaching work. This will ensure

children get taught to the highest teaching professional standards and recent teacher graduates will get valuable experience.

The Supplementary School curriculum should be built around literacy and numeracy, but also include an element of play or creative skills so we can be confident that mental well-being of our children is maintained.

A programme of Supplementary Schools would create an investment environment where, in the future, the outcome will be a better qualified and more effective workforce. The government, as stewards of the economy, would see a return on their investment.

ENDS

ID: 629-11 - Category: Volunteering

The training of community volunteers in "safe talk" and intervention skills for those at risk.

Prior to lock down I had been involved training local volunteers in skills to recognize those at risk of suicide and self-harm in an area of deprivation and high suicide rates. I believe that the potential is there to train people at local level and advertise it in the same way as "Neighbourhood Watch" schemes operate.

Local posters small stickers in windows and a sense to get the community talking openly about the subject. The volunteers are not trained as therapists but given basic skills in recognizing the vocabulary of those in distress and responding in "safe talk " and confidence. I as a professional and accredited Psychotherapist would be willing to volunteer my time as I know others would. Local people would know who they could talk too safely and confidentially as each trained volunteer would have been vetted and approved by authorities. Such as scheme would generate community well being and bring mental health issues out into the dialogue of communities. It would help alleviate pressure on Mental Health Practitioners by early intervention and i know from experience it would save lives. It is a simple solution and not a panacea .It is also an educational tool for self help in relation to mental health and gives communities the opportunity to help each other in a sense of pride and achievement. Such a scheme could work in conjunction with statutory agencies just as" Neighbouhood Watch" works with the police

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ID: 533-11 - Category: Volunteering

Building a world class learning resource for British schoolchildren

There is an opportunity to enable and facilitate a reservoir of online learning content for schoolchildren that will, over time, cover the needs of all age groups across the full spectrum of subjects. Competition between contributors will drive up the quality of materials to build a world class resource that will improve the efficacy and efficiency of the UK education sector.

How could this work?

• Organisations such as Exam Boards and Ofsted would act only as facilitators, the private sector and individuals collectively will deliver actual content;

• Organisations such as the Exam Boards would be tasked with producing detailed syllabi for each subject and each year group, and to break these down into lesson sized sub-syllabi;

• Contributors would submit content to the relevant Exam Board for approval and inclusion in a master list of approved content. It could be expected that there would be a choice of content for most lessons;

• Content could be hosted on YouTube, Vimeo, iPlayer or any other platform that was accessible to all; a syllabus might be met by drawing on content from a mixture of platforms and contributors;

• Contributors might be individual teachers, schools, school trusts or TV production companies. Material from the BBC could be integrated. Contributors might simply wish to promote a particular school or trust, they might earn revenue from advertising on a platform such as YouTube. It could be expected that private schools would be keen to promote themselves by

being major contributors.

• Competition between contributors could be expected to drive up quality, so that individual 'lessons' could be far more engaging, diverse and authoritative than material that an individual teacher could produce for traditional classroom based teaching;

• Teachers would be free to draw on this content as they saw fit. It would allow pupils to go over lessons a second time, or even to view alternative lessons on a particular topic;

• Content could be viewed on mobile phones as well as computers and tablets, significantly widening access. A survey by Childwise in early 2020 recorded that mobile phone ownership was 'almost universal' by the time pupils were in secondary school; charities and schools could work together to fill the remaining gap;

• The overall approach is in step with the lives of modern children and the way they want to learn; • Ofsted could provide overall quality control on syllabi, sub-syllabi and approved content;

• Over time, content could include self-assessment questionnaires which would be designed to be available to teachers to monitor pupils' progress and achievement;

• Similarly content could evolve to recognise that different pupils learn in different ways, with some finding it easier to absorb material with a problem based lesson approach which schools find difficult to deliver at present;

• Finally the role of teachers might evolve to allow them more time to support individual pupils, particularly those needing more individual attention. This can only help level up the education system in the years ahead.

ID: 147-11 - Category: Volunteering

Optional Taxes that people will actively choose to pay.

Most people and businesses don't like paying tax but still appreciate the need to do so and are keen to see the money raised in an equitable manner and see it spent wisely. My proposal is for the government to sell a range of tax vouchers which can be redeemed against future tax liabilities. They would be encouraged to buy them by either offering a discount (in effect an early payment discount) or by providing a shelter against known or anticipated tax increases in future years. Eg. vouchers could be purchased for use against future Capital Gains Tax obligations, either to hedge against future increases in the tax rate or to create certainty in advance of an anticipated sale of shares, property or other taxable assets in the future. Businesses and individuals could choose to buy vouchers when they have had a "good year" as a protection against a poorer year or to guard against future increases in tax rates. I suggest that these different types of voucher be freely tradable so that they could be sold on to someone else if they were unexpectedly not needed, thereby removing one of the more obvious risks of buying a voucher.

Given the very low rates of interest available for cash deposits, buying these vouchers with only a small discount should be attractive, especially as they could be traded on the open market. Unlike gilts, the vouchers could be treated as tax revenue or the proceeds of a "sale" rather than as government borrowing. They might even attract the interest of hedge funds who might buy future tax vouchers as a hedge against tax rises, knowing that they are both redeemable and tradable and are also Sovereign Risk.

Some might argue that there is no benefit to the country's finances as it will reduce the revenue stream from the tax take in future years. Not so! If the scheme is maintained in the future then the massive first year benefit does not reduce future tax takes as each year will see more vouchers sold to replace those that have been redeemed. The Treasury can finesse the scheme from year to year by tweaking the discount rates and encouraging sales by announcing

future tax increases that can be avoided by buying vouchers etc.

They could even levy a tax on the sale of some vouchers from one party to another. Eg. they could single out CGT vouchers to be taxed on sale when they introduced a significant increase in the rate which might result in a significant increase in the value of vouchers that had been issued in previous years which increased their value when traded. So if CGT increased from, say, 28% to 38% then the vouchers would be worth over 30% more on sale. That gain could be taxed but not so much as to destroy all the benefit to the parties. Ie. the concept of holding vouchers must always be perceived as advantageous. Simply deploying the vouchers by the purchasing party to cover their own tax liabilities would not attract any additional tax.

Last year's UK tax take was around £635Bn. If vouchers could be priced competitively then maybe around £150Bn could be raised, bearing in mind that you would be selling vouchers for use over a number of years in the future, not just the next year. That might be an underestimate or maybe a gross overestimate, but what Chancellor would turn down this idea if it "only" raised £15Bn!

ID: 3062-11 - Category: Volunteering

Lurning Stix

Abstract

The Covid pandemic of 2020/21 has laid bare, the deficiencies in the education system. Our current system is heavily dependent upon the physical interface between teachers and pupils and is, therefore, very labour intensive as well as being expensive. The deficiencies in the system, when pupils were required to stay at home, were brought into sharp focus as there was no established back-up system. Whilst new technology provided some relief, it soon became evident that it would not be sufficient to keep things in order. Building on this experience, it is proposed that, using established new technology, we could revolutionise education to make it fit-for-purpose in the twenty first century. Systems would be developed to support existing teaching methods which would provide alternatives ways of rolling out learning material in a form which would be adaptable and extendable for many years to come.

Introduction

Our current methods of teaching are expensive and labour intensive. The shortcomings of our reliance on the physical interface between teacher and pupil has been brought into sharp focus

as a result of the schools being shut down for significant periods during the Covid-19 pandemic. History has (or should have) taught us that where labour-intensive industries are concerned that, sooner or later, new ways will be found to improve efficiency. Mining, shipbuilding, the docks and construction industries have all demonstrated what happens when an industry fails to move with the times. Due to its place in society, education has resisted change resulting in its teacher/pupil ration remaining largely unchanged for a century. Recent 'advances' can only be described as tinkering with the system without acknowledging that fundamental change is long overdue. Despite the advances in new technology and the curriculum, teaching remains largely as it was a hundred years ago.

New technology has given us the opportunity to provide information almost instantly. Only fifty years ago, Encyclopedia Britannica cost over £500 but now all of that information, and much more, is available on Wikipedia for free if you have access to the internet. But this is only available in a passive format – you have to go and search it out in order to benefit from it. However, on YouTube, we can find a video explaining how to change the oil filter on our cars and, on television, we watch a program telling us all about the Battle of Hastings. Some advances have been made with such initiatives as the BBC's 'Bitesize' but this is ,at present, quite limited as well as inefficient and relies on a reliable internet connection.

Whilst enormous progress has been made during the lockdown, it has lacked structure and has been patchy when those without computers or broadband are considered. The proposal which follows seeks to address all of these issues and bring about a revolution in the field of education which will rival the creation of the Open University.

Proposal

What would be the objective of such an undertaking? We propose:

"The development of a new, cost-effective, parallel system of learning which would be freely available to all irrespective of their background or level of affluence, using currently available technology as a base for further development as time goes by."

Whilst its main purpose is to address the problems caused by the pandemic shut-down of schools, we see the new system providing:

• A backup for use in time of school shut-down

• A basic system for home schooling

• A cost-effective support system where conventional teaching has failed to achieve desired outcomes

• An addition resource for those who desire to progress more quickly than that allowed in school

This can be achieved relatively quickly by building on that which is already available using memory sticks, or flash drives as they are also called, with educational material embedded on

them thus making them independent of an internet connection. The government already has a program to provide computers to all pupils so having one should not be a problem. Obviously this is fundamental.

The 'stix' would contain information in a similar form to that taught in schools and already featured on 'Bitesize' but would also have repeatable tests built in to confirm whether the lesson has been absorbed. Material could be presented in more than one form involving a teacher or without, just using text of voice-over. Absorption is improved by repetition in differing formats. The amount of data storage on memory sticks is increasing exponentially so, whilst initial developments might be restricted to simple tutorials, later versions could include video. The trick is not to move too quickly - Rome wasn't built in a day.

Structure

The data contained on the sticks would aim to mimic the conventional lessons given by teachers in their classrooms. You can see examples in 'Bitesize' but first steps would not need to include video – that could come later. The initial lessons would be simple text based explanations with worked examples showing how things work. They would be supported by tests to confirm whether the lesson has been understood.

It could be useful to include guidance notes within each stick for parents. Whilst advice could be given on timing, it would be up to each pupil to work at their own pace.

Content

The main priority is to address the backlog in English and maths. If you can't read then it's difficult to study other subjects as your intake is limited. If you can't add and subtract, or know your tables, then maths will difficult.

Concentrating first on primary education, the core subjects of the national syllabus would follow: history; geography; biology; chemistry and physics followed by modern languages. Later developments, when secondary education is added would include: social sciences; religion; Latin and Greek. Practical subjects such as carpentry and metalwork could be added when video is part of the system.

There is, at present, a growing pool of content but this would need to be extended. The obvious place to look for new content is to enrol retired teachers to provide it. They have experience and are conversant with the requirements of the national curriculum which has to form the basis of the system. A call would be made for volunteers and a pool appointed on agreed conditions and with a system of remuneration based on results. The development of subjects could run in parallel but would focus, initially, on one year and then progress year by year.

The basic lessons could be backed up with educational games as the UK already has a massive investment in the gaming industry.

Development

It is arguable whether to target the group most affected by the pandemic shut-down of schools or start at the bottom and work up. It would probably be best to start with the group which had the most suitable material available or target the group with the most to lose overall. This would be years six and seven as they need the basic skills to enable them to move on to secondary education.

At this stage it would be useful to introduce targets, so initial coverage could concentrate on:

1. Year 7 maths and English followed by year 6
2. Years 4 and 5 maths and English
3. Years 2 and 3 maths and English
4. Year 1 basics
5. Years 6 and 7 core subjects
6. Etc….

Priority 1 should be complete within six months and the first four within a year.

Organisation

We have already mentioned the use of retired teachers for the provision of content but the project will require inputs from others and a small body to control the processes. Considering the history of botched government initiatives, especially concerning IT projects, it would not be advisable to leave the project in the hands of the Department for Education but to bring in a wide range of commercial interests under the control of a small group.

Based on the experience of the two world wars where Churchill was Minister for Munitions and Beaverbrook for Aircraft Production, we would propose the appointment of a high profile individual to lead the project. Our opinion (and it is no more than that) is that Professor Brian Cox would be the ideal candidate. He would need a small team to provide direction but all development work would be handled by existing commercial entities who would be invited to participate on a pro bono or non-profit basis. The intention would be to mimic the fast-track procedure and timescale employed to develop the Covid vaccines.

Roles, which would develop would include:
• The Department for Education for funding
• Microsoft for the software
• A manufacturer for the flash drives
• Currys/PC World for warehousing
• Amazon for distribution and Royal Mail for collection
• Schools to arrange for distribution and administration

It is envisaged that the stix would be made available through a number of routes. Obviously Currys/PC World could make them available on a commercial basis and this might be the preferred route for the private schools. They could also preload modules onto Chrome Books which are sold by them. For the state sector there needs to be a robust system for distribution

and recovery which does not involve cost to the beneficiary. It is envisaged that schools would arrange to control the distribution of the stix using Amazon and, after use, they would be recovered using Royal Mail. To aid this, return envelopes would be distributed with the stix. Schools would keep tabs on who has what and the progress of students.

Once established, the system could be gradually rolled out across the world by incorporating others into the fold:

• The British Council for liaison with the Commonwealth

• YouTube for demonstration of use

• The Gates Trust for international adaptation

• The Heywood Foundation to advise the steering group

• Books2 Africa for advice on use in developing countries

The purpose of this would be to build on the UK's reputation for providing the foundation for state education in many countries, especially those using the English Language as their mother tongue.

Conclusion

Comus: A Mask Presented at Ludlow Castle, 1634 by John Milton

Was I deceived, or did a sable cloud

Turn forth her silver lining on the night?

I did not err; there does a sable cloud

Turn forth her silver lining on the night,

And casts a gleam over this tufted grove.

Or as we say - "Every cloud has a silver lining."

The Covid pandemic has cast a cloud over our education system and demonstrated its frailty. But this presents us with the opportunity to make use of the new tools that are available to us now; to update our systems and make them more appropriate to the current day, and more robust as we move into the future.

ID: 3066-11 - Category: Volunteering

There are lots of devices in the UK which are not currently in use, which could be redistributed to students in need of a suitable device for remote learning.

As a long-term solution, we propose a partnership between Freegle, MyGreenPod, ComputerAid and Citrix, to operate in the following way:

• Freegle as collection points for donated hardware, and to promote the message to its ~2.8m members

• MyGreenPod (sustainability supplement of The Guardian) to promote and market the message

• ComputerAid to deal with the remote wiping, rebuilding and onward distribution to schools
• Creation of a DfE funded "Citrix schools platform" managed by a Systems Integrator which schools can buy into and base their own Google Classroom or Microsoft Teams environment on (more details below). This would have the following advantages:
o More hardware could be brought back into service as lower spec devices can be used
o Schools and students don't have to worry about anti-virus or malware on the devices
o Management overhead is taken by the Systems Integrator – this is especially important for Primary Schools which are generally not set up with their own IT infrastructure due to their size, unless they are part of academy chains
o Kids in deprived areas don't have the worry of expensive devices which could attract the wrong attention
o Less Waste Electronic and Electrical Equipment (WEEE) goes into landfill

3. Proposed "Citrix schools' platform".

The proposed "Citrix schools' platform" will be a fully managed, centralised digital learning platform built using Citrix Workspace technologies in collaboration with selected partners and vendor solutions. The platform will be cloud-delivered from sustainable datacentres which eliminate any need for on-premises hardware, reducing management complexity and overhead. The platform also benefits from cloud elasticity and cloud presence which ensure excellent levels of service delivery with the ability to scale on demand.

Students and staff will have simple, secure and reliable access to digital learning materials from any device, from any location using the Citrix Workspace App. Low-powered, low-maintenance endpoint devices can be provided for a relatively low cost and students are no longer constrained to a traditional endpoint device in a classroom, giving the pupil the freedom to learn wherever they feel comfortable, using a device that they prefer. Regardless of the device used, the student is guaranteed a seamless, secure and consistent user experience.

The platform also supports the full range of IT peripherals – from headsets to printers – so learning is guaranteed to be a hassle-free experience and by reducing the cost of the endpoint device, in combination with using High Definition Experience (HDX)X technologies to optimise network connectivity, the platform directly addresses digital poverty concerns.

The platform will provide staff and students with single sign-on, and secure access using Time Based One Time Password (TOTP) Multi Factor Authentication (MFA) to all learning resources. This includes all learning material, applications and collaboration tool entitlements, including

popular Virtual Learning Environments (VLE), teaching software and collaboration tools.

 Data and applications will be centralised in the datacentre, protected using state of the art security controls. The platform provides identity- and context-aware, zero trust access as well as additional security functions for all applications accessed through Citrix Workspace. This includes powerful Data Governance functionality such as Watermarking, Cut-Copy-Paste protection and Enabling/Disabling Printing as well as App Protection functionality including Anti-Keylogging and Anti-Screen Capture along with secure internet access protection such as Malware protection, Sandbox, Firewall, CASB, DLP, SWG and SSL Inspection. This level of security is essential when protecting both student and institution.

 The platform will deliver all the capabilities of the secure digital workspace, while also enhancing the student experience by guiding work and providing time-saving workflows. Workspace intelligent features give students and staff a single unified experience to all apps and data no matter where they reside, while incorporating machine-learning micro-apps and workflows to guide and enhance productivity, and offering universal search to quickly find data no matter where it's stored. Analytics and automated intelligence make it possible to customise the experience for individual users using a personalised intelligent feed. The platform's intelligent feed ensures students and staff see only what they need, and from here they can review reports, submit coursework, approve submissions and access files all with a single click, designed to address specific common problems and use cases quickly and easily, adding to increased user productivity. All of this is on the same single, streamlined screen. The platform can also push event-driven micro-apps and notify users of something that requires their attention (for example approval of a report, or new course available for registration).

 With both of these solutions we believe that we could offer a streamlined digital solution which takes the IT overhead out of the hands of schools, giving them the benefit of cloud technologies whilst allowing them to concentrate on their core competence of being places of education. The recycling of devices will allow for an ongoing solution to a problem which has been growing but which was brought into sharp focus by Covid. Thankyou for reviewing our proposal.

ID: 1107-11 - Category: Volunteering

Mis-information

The minorities in the UK, the BAME community, are not getting the UK government's messages. From personal experience living amongst these communities, the majority are still, to an extent going about their daily business as normal. Even during lockdown. The reason for this, is because your messages are not getting to them. The TV channels they watch are not showing

your press conferences nor your Mr Whitty ads. These people are getting their news from whats app, youtube, facebook, which as we all know is false. This is the reason you will also not have many Asians take up the vaccine. It is that simple. The solution to this, is you need to get your press conferences on their channels with their language, interpretation above it. You need to get people from their communities discussing the issue. You need to be where they are. With the right information and understanding you will get people adhering as well as uptake in the vaccine. You can go to as many mosques and temples as you like, maybe a few will trickle in for the vaccine, being forced by their children because they themselves do not understand. The best way to do it, is simply get on their channels. Be present. The British government is way to relaxed, and scared of taking decisive action when it is needed the most.

ID: 2191-11 - Category: Volunteering

Survey the landscape, scale up existing programmes, start new initiatives, appoint a leader, set goals

The problem identified is the lack of British citizens who speak Chinese - referred to here as such, putting aside distinctions between Putonghua, Cantonese, Taiwanese Mandarin, etc. No solution can credibly be proposed without a brief description of the current state of Chinese language education in the UK.

 The last comprehensive report specific to Chinese, commissioned by the British Council, was published in 2014 as the UK government began its "golden era" policies. No such survey has been conducted since. The survey concluded with three key recommendations. First, to "adopt a strategic and collaborative approach to the development of Chinese and ensure that investment and resources are focused on achieving shared aims. Establish a coordinating group to guide and develop the strategy." Second, to "provide an increasing number of teacher training places for teachers of Chinese, with incentives to schools and other providers if necessary." Third, to "develop a body of expertise and shared professional understanding in the teaching of Chinese language and culture in a UK context"

 Since then, the British Council's annual 'Language Trends' survey has not consistently contained analysis of Chinese learning. Besides, it only relates to teaching at primary and secondary schools. The 2020 iteration of this survey states that Chinese was taught "in less than 3% of the schools in our sample," whilst the number of pupils that took a Chinese GCSE decreased from

2018 to 2019. The Council's 'Languages for the Future' report is another useful resource, which contains much more Chinese-specific information. However, its most recent iteration was in 2017. Furthermore, this report lacks data, admitting, for example, that "it is difficult to find reliable data on how many students" learn Chinese at university.

The 2014 report's recommendations have mainly been carried out via a secondary-school Chinese teaching initiative, the Mandarin Excellence Programme. This is a partnership between the DfE, the British Council, and the UCL Institute of Education, whose Confucius Institute for Schools delivers the programme. The MEP produces an independently evaluated annual report, according to which 5000 pupils are "on track to fluency." This represents the MEP hitting the target it set in 2016. The MEP is hoping to double this number by 2023. That would be excellent. The MEP is clearly part of the solution to the problem of a dearth of Mandarin speakers; it should be scaled up.

The MEP's annual reports highlight the main barrier to Chinese teaching: the lack of teachers. This demands further government intervention beyond any scaling up of the MEP. Such intervention would also enable more independence from the China International Chinese Language Education Foundation (CICLEF), a PRC agency that runs the Confucius Institutes upon which much Chinese teaching, including the MEP, relies. Language teaching is key, however, it must be and is inevitably accompanied by historical and cultural education. Regarding the role of CICLEF in this aspect of 'China literacy', credible concerns have been raised worldwide by serious commentators. It is essential, therefore, that the MEP's expansion be balanced with efforts to reduce the UK's overall dependence on CICLEF. The government should consider working further with Taiwan and the British Chinese community (see below) in order to build up teaching capacity.

More independent teaching capacity would empower the government more effectively to introduce additional initiatives. These should bring together business, academia, and the Civil Service, enabling a "strategic and collaborative approach to the development of Chinese", in line with the 2014 report. Regarding business, the government might offer China-facing enterprises grants for employees or apprentices to learn Chinese. Regarding the Civil Service, it might broaden language programmes for civil servants. Were new or expanded programmes to

contain additional elements of historic, economic or political teaching, this could provide the benefit of supporting a more coordinated and consistent 'approach to China' across government departments, in line with the UK's strategic aims. Regarding academia, the government might offer learning grants and resources to university and think-tank academics whose work already relates to China, or could benefit from being made to. In order to conduct these initiatives, the government might appoint a 'China education tsar' who would be expressly responsible for their coordination, transparency and success.

In this scenario, the government should also take into account the situation of UK citizens of Chinese descent. According to the 2011 Census, there are well over 400,000 people of Chinese ancestry living in the UK. This community accounted for most of the UK's 140,000 or so Chinese speakers. Research suggests that there is considerable demand from British citizens of Chinese descent - often younger people encouraged by parents - for Chinese language teaching. The British Chinese community is, unsurprisingly, a key source of Chinese language teachers. Finally, and critically, in the past year or so, UK citizens of Chinese descent have faced growing racist abuse, including despicable physical assaults in public. The holistic approach to China education advocated here calls for the British government to build trust with the British Chinese community, to work with it and civil society organisations to combat Sinophobia through education, including language teaching, and to incentivise members of the community to become language teachers in order to respond both to the community's own and society's general demand for the provision of Chinese language teaching.

The Covid-19 crisis has put China in the spotlight. There is a burgeoning interest in the culture and the country, whose rise presents an array of risks and opportunities for Britain and its citizens. There has long been a consensus that we need more Chinese teachers, more Chinese speakers, and more engagement with the British Chinese community. This consensus has never been broader. Now is the time for an ambitious, government-backed programme of China education, focussed on language teaching. Such a programme would support the UK's long-term strategic aims. It would provide substantial benefits to British business, British academics and researchers, the Civil Service and government, the British Chinese community, and society at large.

ID: 2190-11 - Category: Volunteering

Global Britain: how to 'level up' when re-negotiating trade deals

The opportunity we have in front of us requires us to maintain 'business as usual', in terms of businesses allowing remote work to continue, where it is possible. The benefit will come in terms of international relations, and allowing the policy to make immigration laws more flexible. Capitalising on this opportunity may involve governments negotiating tax and immigration law through bilateral free trade agreements (FTAs), or it could mean offering visa exemption for remote working, as we've seen from Barbados and other Caribbean countries during Covid. Here in the UK, having recently left the European Union, we have a unique opportunity to redesign the rules of the game when drawing up our FTAs, and could make radical changes in terms of allowing UK citizens to work overseas for a defined period of time. Likewise, we have an opportunity to entice immigrants into our country, where there is a need or shortage. Obviously not all work is mobile. Moreover, we know that through the Brexit debate, many working class British people objected to freedom of movement as it undercut their wages. To acknowledge the issue of those essential workers who are not mobile, government should offer tax breaks and incentives to those who cannot perform their work elsewhere, such as key workers, as they bring a positive externality to a society. There should also monitor closely of the number of workers allowed into the UK to fill essential roles, to not put pressure on wages. When considering UK citizens travelling to other countries, this could have a benefit on local economics in terms of investment and consumption, for example, where tourism is no longer a viable industry. To attract labour to a third country, the host country could consider waving taxes and accept increased spending, investment and growth in their country as a substitute; and the country of origin could retain income tax, and continue to tax income at source (this could be re-considered where employees move to another location for more than one year). The main policy change would be to include visa exemptions within FTAs, and stipulate that workers would not need a visa to work in the host country, and agree that tax would be deducted at source where the period overseas is less than one year. This could also benefit those who are currently expats in the UK, and could also benefit their home countries. For example, this policy could mean that a country such as the Philippines, which suffers from brain drain, may be able to retain its workers, who could continue to work for a London based company and receive their salary in the Philippines. This illustrates how this policy may bring increased income into countries in the Global South, without having to 'Westernise' or invite Multinational companies in to grow their economies through Foreign Direct Investment. In the long run, there would also be several other implications which could 'level up' the global financial economy, such as the impact on currency, and Purchasing Power Parity. It should be acknowledged that this change should not be seen as radical, as the majority of the 'super rich' are already mobile. This policy would simply extend that luxury to the middle classes, who are not currently able move freely, as immigration laws often are linked to wealth. An example of this is in the Cayman Islands, where you may obtain citizenship if you own property on the

country. Therefore, this change could prove popular from a policy point of view, if the Government's agenda is to 'level up'. The policy should be attractive to employers who want to be able to attract top talent, from all over the world. From a government perspective, the policy allows for equality of opportunity in terms of the fact that we would no longer be limited and restricted to opportunities determined by accident of birth. Therefore, it would be important for governments and business to work together to mitigate the risks we currently see where workers work remotely overseas, related to privacy, data protection, legal and tax risk. Governments could offer tax incentives to businesses to allow such a policy for their employees. It could also ensure that employees are not impacted by double taxation or permanent establishment law, and businesses are made to ensure that employees continue to pay tax in the country of origin. From a societal point of view, by allowing some freedom of movement it would mean that people are brought closer to issues facing other countries, and more likely to do something about global issues. In terms of issues like climate change, which disproportionately affects the Global South, this can only be a positive thing. Often those with power, who live in the Global North, are not able to see the implications first hand. This policy would free up people in the Global North to relocate to other countries in the Global South, and even if it is just on a temporary basis for Winter, it may help to bring diversity of thought needed to solve some of the global problem we face. To incentivise third country governments to accept flexible immigration, some form of corporate social responsibility or 'citizenship' pro-bono work could be built into the agreement as a requirement, so that expats would bring a positive social benefit, as well as economic benefits with them. In summary, the opportunities we now have as a result of the pandemic should be retained, and opportunities seized by introducing subtle policy changes in terms of tax, trade and immigration law as we re-negotiate trade deals. The real opportunity now is to ensure that remote work continues - not just within the confines of your national borders, but absolutely anywhere. We have seen tech companies such as Spotify leading the way on this – Governments and business should incentivise others to follow, so that international remote work isn't confined to a privileged few. Coronavirus has exposed the dramatic inequalities in society, now is the time to solve this.

ID: 2179-11 - Category: Volunteering

Incentivise volunteering with community assets through the establishment of community funds

The pandemic has seen a significant increase in volunteering initiatives, most noticeably the NHS volunteering campaign that was launched during the first lockdown and more recently volunteering in support of the vaccination programme.

There is a huge opportunity to sustain this beyond the pandemic by keeping millions of volunteers active through a scheme to create engaging volunteering opportunities. This would benefit volunteers, for whom volunteering is a fulfilling activity, and the organisations they volunteer with, who can access varied resource by means of volunteers without significant outlay, alike.

Fostering volunteering over the longer term could also help develop a greater sense of community in our society. The pandemic has already started this process, as people have been forced to stay local and have relied on support from community assets including local advice charities, food banks and support networks. We should boost this now through incentivising volunteering with community assets. A greater sense of community is valuable not only to individuals engaging directly with community assets but to society at large: a strong sense of community enriches society.

This scheme can be achieved in combination with a change to council tax policy. Community assets should be rewarded for creating meaningful volunteering opportunities out of ring-fenced community funds established by local authorities using council tax.

Against this backdrop, my proposal is as follows:

(A) A portion of council tax generated by a local authority should be contributed to a new "community fund". This would not be dependent on council tax increasing, but if council tax does need to be increased, then part of the increase could be ear-marked to establish the community fund, and this may help with the messaging of the increase to the public.

(B) The community fund should be used by the local authority to provide funding to organisations designated as "community assets" by the local authority. These organisations

would include locally-focussed charities such as food banks and advice centres. Local authorities could also decide to designate other kinds of organisations as community assets, for example local sports clubs and community centres.

(C) Community assets would be eligible to receive payments from the community fund by reference to the number of volunteer hours they mobilise. Funding from the community fund would therefore be linked to a community asset's efforts to boost volunteering. To ensure a fair distribution of funding and a meaningful incentive to increase volunteering opportunities: (1) A community asset's entitlement could be calculated by reference to the number of volunteer hours mobilised in excess of, for example, 80% of the volunteer hours mobilised by the community asset in the preceding year. This would ensure that community assets starting from a lower base are able to access meaningful funding compared with organisations that already mobilise a large number of volunteer hours. (2) Maximum entitlements could be capped.

If managed well, the community fund should be an effective tool to boost community-based volunteering. Community assets would be required to self-assess eligibility for payments, with audits carried out by the local authority to check accurate reporting. Further safeguards exist for community assets which are charities, as these are subject to supervision by the Charities Commission and required to use any funding received in furtherance of their charitable objects.

The proposal has two significant incidental benefits:

(1) Incentivising community assets to mobilise volunteers may in the long term prove a highly efficient use of local authority funding, as volunteers are a low cost resource and, if used effectively, can reduce the need to pay staff salaries or external provider fees.

(2) It rewards volunteers for volunteering with community assets, as their actions will generate funding for the organisations they have chosen to support. Additionally, in the case of council

tax payers who are volunteers, they will in effect be channelling a portion of their own council tax contributions to these organisations, thereby converting this tax into donations to their chosen community assets.

ID: 1950-11 - Category: Volunteering

Understanding exam grades: contextualising the unlevel playing field.

The unfairness of our current exams system has been highlighted and exacerbated by Covid-19 pandemic. The GCSE and A'level results fiasco in 2020 led to anger and concern and the Government has announced that in 2021 grades will be awarded on the basis of teacher assessment, which has raised further concerns about grade inflation and a widening of the gap between disadvantaged students and those in better resourced settings. Sammy Wright, the Social Mobility Commissioner for Schools and Higher Education, put it succinctly in January 2021: "As such, qualifications for 2021 can never be an objective measure of performance in the way we are used to, no matter how much we might wish it."
https://www.gov.uk/government/news/2021-exams-a-bigger-disaster-than-last-year

This is a proposal to design a system for representing students' overall grades and taking into account their personal circumstances and the circumstances of their school. This will enable managers, HE and FE admissions officers and others responsible for making decisions about students' next steps, to make a fairer assessment of those students than simply their grades. This system could be extended to include students' grades at other points where they change organisations, for example, at transition from primary to secondary or after GCSEs when they may be moving to a college or different school or applying for an apprenticeship or a job.

This is similar to the information that Oxford University collects to contextualise applicants A'level grades.
(https://www.ox.ac.uk/admissions/undergraduate/applying-to-oxford/decisions/contextual-data#) While that is admirable, it is not a national system that is urgently needed.

The limitations of exams in assessing children have been well documented and it is clear that using the same test for all children does lead to inconsistencies and does not provide us with an

objective measure of what each child can and could do. An alternative to exams is teacher assessments but there are significant issues around bias and moderation.

As an example, let us start with Matt who is one of five children living in a 3-bedroomed social housing flat. His dad has a disability and his mum works as a cleaner in a hospital. He goes to his local comprehensive which has 64.5% (The data used in these example are from real schools but the names of the schools are not included. The data is from the governments database for 2018/19 https://www.compare-school-performance.service.gov.uk/?_ga=2.157336634.1889990133.161 3985343-514386259.1613985343) of children on Free School Meals (FSM). During the period between lockdowns when schools were open, he had to spend 18 days at home isolating because of contacts with positive cases. He shares a bedroom with his brother and they have an old laptop and one Chromebook for the whole family. They have basic internet connectivity and cannot afford to upgrade. Matt's school offered three live lessons a day – maths, English and science – but he cannot always access these. He goes to school once a week to collect worksheets and resources. Matt is studying for three A-levels and is predicted AAB. In Matt's school, the average A'level result is D.

Archie lives in a four-bedroomed privately owned house with his brother, mum and dad. Both his parents are in full time employment and have worked from home during lockdowns. He goes to a private school, with no children on FSMs. He did not have to isolate at home during the period between lockdowns. When schools were only open to key workers' children and vulnerable children, he accessed live lessons for the whole of the school day. Archie is studying for four A-levels and is predicted A*A*AA. The average A-level result in Archie's school is an A.

Imagine you are a university admissions officer or responsible for choosing apprenticeships for a law firm. How are you going to think about these children when the details you receive are simply Matt AAB and Archie A*A*AA?

And then there are many different possibilities in between – Sheila lives in a social housing and

shares a bedroom with her brother. She has her own laptop and plenty of data. She attends a school with 47.1% of children on FSMs. She's predicted AAB. The average A-level result at her school is a C.

Or Gilly, who lives at home with her sister and parents with space and technology. Her school is a grammar school and she had two periods of isolation at home during lockdown. She's predicted ABB. Her school has 6.3% on FSM and the average A-level result is an A.

If we create a table that includes this information as a way of contextualising the outcomes of exams which rather than assuming a level playing field between all school and home situations, will enable those making decisions about these students' futures to understand their achievements in context. So for our four example students, their data could be represented below:

Student Name Type of School % FSM Average A-level result Home environment (1 = very under resourced, 2= average, 3= well resourced) Exceptional circumstances Predicted results

Matt comprehensive 64.5% D 1 20% of school missed due to isolating AAB

Archie private 0% A 3 N/A A*A*AA

Sheila comprehensive 47.1% C 2 N/A AAB

Gilly grammar 6.%3 A 3 20% of school missed due to isolating ABB

The measure for the home environment and exceptional circumstances would have to be generated within a school and could easily be incorporated into, for example, a UCAS form. All the other data is existing data held by schools and the government This kind of representation

could also be used for GCSE results and admissions to Sixth Form Colleges and Further Education as well as to the end of KS2 results when children leave primary schools.

The aim is not to produce an index – as that would involve reducing the complex data too much to enable significant judgements. However, by simply presenting that extra information alongside the bare details of the exam grades, admissions tutors and others making decisions can do this on the basis of information that is more deeply rooted in the student's context.

ID: 1795-11 - Category: Volunteering

The University Students and Primary School Mentorship programme - overcoming educational inequalities and mental health

The University and Primary School Mentorship programme would approach two different groups - primary school children and university students - who have both experienced a challenge surrounding the changes to their education during the pandemic.This issue provides a great opportunity to link two groups that have experienced very specific problems within the pandemic, but two demographics that would gain from working together. It would work by partnering local primary schools and universities and pairing up one university student to a pupil specifically in need, that has been recognised by their school as having a particular disadvantage, whether due to their financial circumstances (being on FSM), having parents who are key workers, falling behind academically, or experiencing social isolation in class. The child would be paired with a university student who has volunteered to sign up to this exciting new opportunity. University students will likely be interested in this opportunity, especially given the levels of social isolation they have experienced during the pandemic. This would also be a great thing for careers departments in universities across the UK to encourage via their respective channels, as volunteering is a great thing to have on one's CV, and their commitment to this during a pandemic would also build a sense of collective purpose amongst university students. We have seen that communal aid and the pooling of resources has become even more essential during the pandemic, and projects such as this one ought to be rolled out at a national level in order to build links between those impacted negatively by the pandemic. This policy would be a mutually beneficial and participatory solution that utilises an opportunity for an intersectional solution to a practical problem. We know that collaborative work in the community is an essential grassroots tool, and by connecting university students with school children in this way, we could have an innovative solution for both parties. For school children, the opportunity to have someone to talk to for advice, guidance and assistance with either homework, classwork or simply for a space to chat with a positive role model. Currently, state schools do not have the

funding to fill gaps and hire private tutors and extra staff, so by making this initiative a voluntary program, this is a sustainable solution that is beneficial for both parties. This scheme would not require training, as a voluntary program whereby university students can choose which area they would like to sign up to assist with from the following options for primary school pupils - Maths, English, Science, Spelling and Grammar, General Mentoring and Coaching. They would then be paired with a child on the basis of that child's recognised support needs by their school, and they would do a 6 week programme of weekly mentoring with. This would follow with a Monitoring and Evaluation session with both student and child doing a survey, and if it is recognised there is still a need for continued support they would continue for another 6 weeks. Keeping the tutor and weekly time slot the same would be essential in giving the school child a clear and dependable routine where they can build a positive and genuine relationship with their mentor. As a former tutor for primary school children, teaching assistant and volunteer with International Citizen Service, I understand just how rewarding that working with children to address societal issues can be. The potential that young people have in having a positive influence on a child's development and wellbeing cannot be underestimated. In the UK, 28% of school children are classed as 'disadvantaged' and this sees them leave school on average 18 months behind. COVID has widened this gap by a drastic 75%, equating to them being 2.5 years behind. This scheme therefore, would be especially beneficial for those children who are unable to afford private tutoring. The scheme would also provide an opportunity for children of key workers to gain extra support and have someone to talk to, as many of these children might well be experiencing shared anxieties around the pandemic, and the impact this might have on their mental health has not been fully considered. Furthermore, as a university student myself, I understand just how difficult it has been to remain positive during the pandemic, with disrupted learning and the pressures to continue to excel academically. In a survey conducted by The Recovery Clinic, 76.8% of participating students across the UK admitted to dealing with anxiety and worries, and 74.6% responded that they had felt stressed or overwhelmed. I would argue that this opportunity would give university students something to look forward to but would also not be too much to take on - an hour of volunteering or community work weekly is completely doable and is something many students would have already been committed to prior to the pandemic. Having a purpose and commitments outside of academia is essential to keeping a positive mental wellbeing, and lockdown has made this more difficult. Therefore, the University and Primary School Mentorship programme would be an incredible solution to the respective needs of both of these groups.

ID: 1006-11 - Category: Volunteering

Open Learning Library

Education for many is hindered by three critical constraints that I believe can be resolved

through the use of a novel platform based on modern technology practices from the fourth industrial revolution.

The Three Constraints:

1. Great teachers and their lesson plans are monopolized by few institutions restricting the number of students who have access to the best learning techniques.

2. New teachers require years of practice to develop new lesson plans wasting countless hours reproducing the same information with every new cohort of teachers.

3. Teachers are forced to create lesson plans for a variety of students and therefore struggle to tailor their lessons around unique student learning styles leaving some students, who require more nuanced approaches, behind.

To resolve these three critical educational constraints and generate a disruptive boom in educational outcomes I propose the government pioneer the creation of a digital Open Learning Library where teachers could share, modify, and leverage lesson plans from other teachers who demonstrate the best outcomes. Students on the other hand could find lessons that are best suited to their learning styles for any subject.

To do this I propose the government treat lesson plans the same way a programmer treats code in an Open Source project. In what I'm calling an Open Learning Library - for free or a modest fee - anyone can create their own lesson or access and adapt a gifted teachers' version of a lesson plan to suit their learning needs and style based on the outcomes of other students who succeeded in leveraging a particular teaching method.

This democratisation of learning material would dramatically reduce the amount of time a teacher takes to prepare for lessons by providing greater access to the best lessons - freeing up valuable time for individual coaching and tailoring lessons around their class's needs - instead of

designing lesson plans from scratch. It would also encourage a race to the top educational standards by transparently giving teachers and students more visibility into how different lessons teaching the same subject impacted the scores of students who learned using a particular method over another.

ID: 438-11 - Category: Volunteering

Duty to Care

A proposed solution to the question of funding or at least a method of securing a significant contribution to the funding shortfall is by way of a tax specifically earmarked for this social purpose and payable without dilution or deduction. The UK has now effected Brexit and is committed to promote itself worldwide with its newly acquired trading position and sovereignty. Irrespective of the time necessary to grow the economy post Brexit and Covid the UK remains a tourist magnet attracting visitors from all corners of the world anxious to witness and partake of its history, culture, architecture, pageantry, performing arts, sporting activities, varied scenery and the rich variations of each individual country within the union. In 2019 there were 40.9 million visits to the UK. Those inboard visitors spent £28.4bn but this figure would not appear to cover internal tourism including hostels, B&Bs, and campers. There is therefore the opportunity to join the ever-growing group of countries who have already secured benefit from this established trade ie tourism. The introduction of a Tourist Tax is long overdue. A nominal levy incurred by UK travellers abroad for many years. Never sufficient to discourage travel and generally no more than an extra round at the bar or the tip left for room service. Edinburgh, Bath and London have already pursued discussion with regard to the introduction of a Tourist Tax designed to funnel money into the local economy but now is surely the time to effect implementation nationwide. Over 41 countries around the world charge a tourist tax. In Europe by example the following countries charge a tourist tax or equivalent : Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Spain, Switzerland and Venice. The list is not exhaustive. In France the tax (Taxe de Sejour) is levied on a per person, per night basis dependent on the quality and standard of accommodation from €0.50 to €4.00. Similar charges apply in Greece and Spain and in Italy rates of €4.50 apply to three star accommodation and €4.90 apply to four star accommodation and €5.00 for five star accommodation. On implementation children (say under 15) could be exempt. Charges could be levied on a per person, per night basis or on a room basis all dependent on the standard and quality of the accommodation. Collection could be made on a monthly or quarterly basis hotels and other accommodation units detailing the charge in their itemised bills and assigning the amount to their "tourist tax ledger" in a similar manner to VAT and accounting direct to the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) or any other newly created department designated for this specific purpose. The industry would

not baulk at the arrangement as the concept of a Tourist Tax was never intended to directly increase revenue for individual businesses and by benefitting a vulnerable section of the community it may enable current carers to enjoy more travel or respite thus indirectly benefitting those collecting the tax. With adequate funding high quality care for the elderly, as expected by society, could be achieved and greater recognition for those providing the services could be secured by improved training, qualifications, career and salary structure.

ID: 93-11 - Category: Volunteering

A nation of medics - part 2

There is a moment of opportunity post-COVID-19 to take the current healthcare professions and expand them into a leading employment and economic driver of the UK economy, and Britain's diplomatic approach in the wider world. • The current system of training is centred on too few institutions – so increase radically the number of medical schools. Put an end to élitest assumptions and the rejection of many highly-qualified applicants by establishing new medical schools throughout the UK regions, attached to hospital trusts who would welcome the teaching connection. • Young people's interest in medical careers is at an all-time high – so encourage an expectation that all young people with a relevant aptitude in science or social care should pursue a qualification through the expanded medical training routes, even if they subsequently choose to work outside the sector. Medical training takes longer than other higher education courses, with higher costs – so offer 'national medical service' bursaries dependent on students undertaking practical medical work during, or subsequent to, their training. • UK hospitals are grossly understaffed – so flood them with locally-qualified, plentiful qualified personnel. NHS staff feel unappreciated and unvalued – so show them the medical sector is one of the most prioritised UK economic sectors with global opportunities. The UK's NHS treatments and standards are already respected around the world – so build on existing international sharing of best practice, eg. COVID treatment protocols, and step up proudly as a global educator on healthcare. • UK-trained medical professionals are seen as world-class medics – so export them fearlessly, to countries where there is great need, to countries which seek to develop their medical sectors, to countries we would befriend. Cuba has shown how diplomacy can be developed effectively through medical outreach and assistance; there can be no greater global aid contribution than growing doctors and nurses for the world's population. COVID-19 has shown that disease respects no nation's border in our modern, interconnected world. Here is an opportunity for the UK's medics to similarly work without borders, winning us a global reputation as a nation synonymous with medicine and science, caring for our own, and working for all.

Flexible Work Policies

The time is ripe for the government to capitalise on the shift to flexible and remote work through strategic policy initiatives. The government can implement policies that enshrine mandatory flexible work policies and incentivize organisations to create permanent remote work options.

Rather than the current legislation that puts the onus on individual employees to break ranks to request flexible work arrangements from their employers, the government should enact new legislation that positions flexible hours as the norm in office work, and fixed hours as the exception. For example, a policy that prohibits employers from mandating a 9 to 5 work day. Employees would then be empowered with the freedom to fulfill their job responsibilities as they best fit into the many other facets of their lives. In addition, the government could reward employers that hire remote workers through tax benefits or hiring subsidies. In this manner, the UK would benefit form the plethora of advantages tied to a more equitably dispersed labour force and population - decentralisation of capital and economic stimulus and greater wealth distribution across communities, less carbon emissions tied to commuting, greater proportion of the population in the workforce, higher productivity, etc.

In implementing these innovative policies, the UK government would thus be recognising the complexities of modern work and modern families and uplifting the many members of the labour force that routinely struggle to balance other responsibilities with the narrow demands of the conventional work day, while at the same time enabling them to improve their quality of life. A flexible work policy would essentially end the limiting conception of work as 40 hours per week between the hours of 9 to 5 and instead advocate for an emphasis on work quality and fulfillment of responsibilities, rather than work measured through arbitrary time-keeping. On the other hand, remote work would enlarge the candidate pool for employers, increase their productivity due to higher employee satisfaction, improve their capital efficiency through savings on rent, and have net positive environmental and economic effects.

Because COVID-19 has already obligated employers to temporarily make many of these changes, the time is ripe for the UK government to enshrine them, or risk capitalising on the

progress already made. Moving forward with implementing a nation-wide flexible work policy and remote work incentives for employers would position the UK as the leading change-maker in the already-shifting landscape defining the new rules of accessible and humane work, as well as the leader in recognising the social and economic benefits attached to prioritising employee well-being. The time to act is now.

ID: 1374-11 - Category: Volunteering
Helpless babies with babies
Problem Statement

The COVID-19 pandemic has struck hard in most family's especially those from slums and very low-income families. With most of them working in the informal sector, the hard economic times have rendered most informal jobs to shut down therefore worsening the situation. The education sector that used to occupy the school-going adolescents and youths and ease the parents of the burden of basic commodities like food is closed and therefore putting even more pressure on the households. Due to this pressure, most of the school-going girls cannot afford most basic commodities such as food and sanitary towels which would otherwise be provided in school by the county government aid. It is for this reason and many others that they opt to sell sex in order to get food and contribute towards caring for their families. Because of this, the teenage pregnancy rates have gone 10 fold in the slums of coastal Kenya compared to the national prevalence prior to the pandemic. The pregnancy does not halt the sex work from taking place, many opt to secure abortions through crude and uncouth means that could be fatal and deadly; while those who opt to carry on with the pregnancy continue with the sex work even in pregnancy and after birth in order to get basic commodities for her baby and herself. Well, there's nothing we could do to stop the pregnancy, but we could do something to empower these young mothers to get the basic commodities such as clothing, soap and milk for their babies instead of having to sell sex to survive. With mothers as young as twelve years old, the only help she knows is her guardian who also lives from hand to mouth; and has to bear the burden of another extra mouth to feed; the girl only sees a single avenue for survival, Sex work.

Solution

A seed grant to empower the girls to invest in small scale money-generating business of worth $100 will have a great impact to the young vulnerable mothers. The businesses will occupy the girls as well as provide dimes for their day to day needs including a 250ml packet of milk costing $0.2 per day for the baby. In order to ensure the capital is put into good use, we will tag on it a minimal interest rate of 10 %(subject to discussion) for the loans given to start the businesses. We will then put them through a financial management mentorship programme on how to run the business and plough back profits and save. This will not only empower the girls but also enable them to yearn to transform their lives and if possible return back to school. The money ploughed back will then be used to reach more girls and enable transformation through economic empowerment.

ID: 1031-11 - Category: Volunteering

Creating a digital government to help us build back better.

Estonia is frequently recognised as the most digitally advanced society, with 99% of government services accessible online. This provides a level of accessibility and efficiency that countries with digital infrastructure like the UK can only dream of. It also helped their COVID response by allowing them to quickly deploy tools to match volunteers with people needing assistance in the crisis, help companies share the workforce that would otherwise remain idle, and allow people to manage sick leave. This is one factor that has contributed to their 72nd position in the list of countries with the highest COVID deaths per 100,000 people, significantly lower than neighbouring countries like Latvia and Lithuania, and second lowest in Europe, after Cyprus. Building a digital government that combines the advantages of systems such as Estonia's online services and Israel's digital healthcare system, and pairs them to the strong local and national government, and NHS that we currently have could make one recently overused phrase come true: the UK could be truly world beating.

To fix the problems of inefficient engagement between government and citizens/businesses, the government should create a digital portal as the focal point through which as most government services are accessed. The existing Gov.uk Verify service is a starting point but lacks almost all the services/data that are required to deal with an emergency such as a pandemic. Currently you can only access some tax services, vehicle/driver licensing, some pensions benefits, and a few local government services. A completely different attitude should be taken within government towards digital services to fix this.

Firstly, a unified digital strategy must be developed for the whole of government, including all civil service, NHS, and other governmental agency services. This should unify both front end channels, and back end systems & data. A single modular portal, accessible via mobile apps and web browsers ensures people can access all the resources they need in one place. It could help to reduce fake news spreading online by providing a single source of trustworthy information. A single ID and verification could provide people with an easy way to manage their data and opt into services. An important aspect is that to comply with data regulation individuals must be able to control how their data is used and opt into services.

Once a single application with secure login functionality is created, existing government services such as HMRC & DVLA online services could be migrated to it. However, the real benefits would only be realised when a much wider set of services/data were introduced. Firstly, it should integrate with an EMR system used across the whole NHS. This could give the person's GP, and A&E departments instant access to their medical records (vital during both a pandemic and normal times) whilst allowing the individual to consent to sharing the data with other providers to aid their treatment.

Integrating these services into a single app creates a foundation for the introduction of additional services, e.g. contact tracing could be released on the existing framework. This would speed up the release of new features in an emergency and allow individuals to opt-in to sharing data. This would solve the issue of people being told to isolate by the app not being eligible for financial support. If an individual opted-in to receive financial support, in the event of a close contact testing positive the app could check the individuals tax records to check eligibility for support, and send the application, resulting in an automated process with much less risk of fraudulent payments being made.

There is also the possibility of using a unified digital service to provide more robust checking for financial support such as the furlough schemes. A huge amount of money has been lost to fraudulent claims, but if individuals were asked to login online to a verified account in order to receive furlough payments, and these were then cross referenced with the applications from

employers, it would prevent some of the fraudulent claims made on behalf of fake companies or for fake employees. By creating business accounts for registered businesses in the same portal, HMRC would be able to manage the process much more efficiently.

An example of how this service could help in the event of a future pandemic or emergency shows how useful it could be. An individual could complete all the following actions in a single app:

1. Find out about restrictions in their area (central/local government)

2. Enable track and trace (central government)

3. Verify their employers furlough claim, or register for self employed financial support (HMRC)

4. Ensure their medical records are up to date and shared with the right NHS departments in case they are admitted to hospital (NHS) 5. Log any symptoms and receive digital GP appointments to try and prevent deterioration in their condition requiring hospitalisation (NHS)

6. Check that their MOT has been extended (DVLA)

7. Register for any additional benefits or isolation financial support they become eligible for (HMRC/DWP)

8. Apply for emergency financial support from local government or contact council housing teams if they end up in need of emergency housing (local councils)

9. Register to receive a vaccine (NHS)

In normal times the following benefits could also be realised:

1. Save businesses time and money due to easier access to government services e.g. tax and employment

2. Provide easier access 24/7 for individuals to access many government services, especially

beneficial to those working long hours or unavailable during working hours e.g. tax/benefits/update personal details etc.

3. Reduced cost of running government services due to increased digital self-serving by individuals and companies.

4. Provide people with more control how their data is used

5. Better use of existing data to guide government policy

6. The opportunity to identify and fill gaps in data gaps required for both operational and strategic policy use

7. More efficient control and use of patient medical records, especially when patients move between different areas

8. Better access to NHS services such as digital consultations.

ID: 2087-11 - Category: Volunteering

The use of university students to support tutoring of socially deprived children

I've outlined (in my answer to 1b) the acute impact of the loss of 1-to-1 teaching hours on children in socially deprived areas, who do not have the wealth, the physical environment or the family members to support their education through this difficult time. These families also lack the financial ability to make up this loss of teaching hours themselves, without the financial resources or social capital to access private tutoring. There is also a limited window to fix this before the educational impact on these children cannot be undone. The number of teaching hours required to enable these children to catch-up is huge, and the existing teaching and tutoring capacity in the public and private sectors to undertake this work is insufficient. Even if the work could be contracted out to firms, it would be more costly than my proposed approach below and would require an army of tutors to undertake this work. Fortunately however, there is a large number of university students who, by definition of being accepted onto university courses, have achieved a high degree of academic excellence already. Therefore, my proposed solution is to initiate a scheme to support university students to provide 1-1 tutoring to the most effected children whose learning has been impacted the most by this pandemic. The response is proposed to focus on those children from socially deprived areas, using the commonly recognised measure of whether a child receives free school meals as a proxy indicator of whether they should be eligible for this free tutoring programme and whether they

fall within the groups that should be targeted. Traditional tutoring remains in place and can be accessed, as it is now, by those who can afford it. There are additional benefits to this proposal. University students have also been impacted by this pandemic and will find themselves entering a job market impacted by Covid with a heavy debt burden which can delay individuals' ability to achieve aims in life which many take for granted, such as paying for weddings or purchasing their first home. I would not expect students to provide tutoring services for free but would expect tutoring would be flexible enough to fit around existing university commitments. While a specific tutoring 'curriculum' could be provided, students would be expected to be sufficiently proficient in the relevant subject matter to respond to individual children's needs. Should sufficient university students not be available, it should be possible to provide Group based tutoring although the potential benefit to children could decrease. While directly paying students for any tutoring they undertake is one possibility, an alternative measure of financing this would be by forgiving elements of student debt or by paying part of their university fees – potentially through the student loan mechanism. This would enable students, who will be entering the highly competitive post-Covid labour market, to do so with a lesser debt burden, freeing them up to contribute more spending in the post-Covid economy. An assessment could also be made on whether such payments should be taxable or whether the Treasury would be willing to forgive the tax on these payments to make the scheme more attractive. It's possible that these student tutors may also get a taste for teaching. While application for teaching training has rocketed at the current time, there is no guarantee that this will be maintained and that the difficulties recruiting teachers, particularly for STEM subjects, will not return. These tutoring assignments would also provide examples of work opportunities that the university student generation could utilise when entering the job market. They may be further benefits as well, which would assist social mobility. Should students from wealthier families tutor students, a benefit would be the possibility of students from socially deprived areas being granted access to social networks that these children previously would have no access to. This may provide future opportunities for social mobility to improve outcomes for children in this generation. By providing an early glimpse into what the world of work may expect of them, children may find it less difficult to 'fit in' to industries which predominantly recruit from other environs. Such a scheme would likely need either central or regional co-ordination – perhaps at a Council level – but could be promoted nationally, and through schools and universities themselves. I realise this proposal would require additional work to assess its viability but I firmly believe there are multiple potential benefits to this proposal which are worthy of further consideration.

ID: 1797-11 - Category: Volunteering

On The Creation Of An Online Site To Give Access To Books/ Articles For Free

In relation to poorer young people not having an easy access to books and reading material to

assist their education, I would like to see the creation of an online library of articles and PDF files that anybody in any part of the country can access without any charge. There are hundreds (if not thousands) of such reading materials available already on sites like Jstor but which are often difficult to sift through as they are targeted to higher-level academics. Not only that, but most students below 18 have little to no awareness of such sites existing at all. However, a specially designed website where access to appropriate and stimulating literature could be provided to those aged between 14-18 (for instance) would give students a great opportunity to advance their learning.

Not only would such a site be a great resource of free educational material, but there could be an incentives mechanism established on the site to further encourage students to learn. From a competitive leader board based on the hours of reading each student completes to monthly prizes for those most engaged with the site, such incentives would help motivate young people across the country to self-study and learn new things independently. Teachers could also set reading homework tasks alongside any other school work.

Over time, as the site expands its user base, courses and learning modules could be provided to assess the extent to which students have retained a strong grasp over what they have learned. As these assessments would be specially designed with high expertise, a small charge could be asked for in order to help keep up the maintenance of the site. Companies like Seneca Learning have already adopted elements of this in their work. Alternatively, if the site is modelled as a social enterprise, funding could be secured by philanthropists or external charities.

Regardless of if the expansion of the site is modelled entirely as a social enterprise or if it incorporates elements of monetisation, educational inequality would significantly be reduced across the country as access to the basic resource of academic information would be provided to all students for free. I believe that under the right management and with appropriate backing, an online site providing access to specific pieces of educational content for free (e.g. online PDFs/ articles) would be one step in the right direction to tackling inequality in our country. It would help young people have access to content that was relevant to what they are currently doing in lesson.

ID: 1782-11 - Category: Volunteering
A British Sovereign Wealth Fund - What a Relief!
Summary:

Change the way in which tax relief on pension contributions is made to create a sovereign wealth fund used to invest in UK start-ups, ethical businesses, and to enable the continued British ownership of key industries.

Policy:

According to The Guardian, pension tax relief costs the government almost £40 billion per year.

While the relief is useful to incentivise individuals to contribute to their pension funds, it is a significant loss of revenue for government.

I propose an alteration not to the relief itself, but instead the way in which it is provided.

Instead of the pension tax relief being contributed to individuals' pension funds, it should instead buy shares in a UK sovereign wealth fund.

Since pension funds are themselves investment funds, it would not make that great a change to pensions, however it could create significant benefits for government, which would have £40 billion per year to invest.

The aim of the sovereign wealth fund would be primarily, though not exclusively, to invest in British businesses; providing start-up capital for high growth businesses, ethical B-Corp and Social Enterprises, and creating a large investment vehicle which could purchase critical British businesses to ensure continued ownership of strategic organisations within the UK.

The fund would need to be manged independently of government to maximise political neutrality, but the Bank of England model shows how this could be done, as does the management of Norwegian's sovereign wealth fund.

The fund would invest both for growth and for dividend yields, to enable it to continue growing even while some investors reached pension age and therefore sought to cash-in their shares.

To better enable the fund to continue to grow with minimal withdrawals, shares in the fund would attract a lower rate of inheritance tax and would not count towards the tax-free inheritance allowance, encouraging parents and grandparents to retain their shares and pass them onto their offspring. Not only would that help the fund to grow, but it would also enable younger people to attain greater pension security.

Assuming similar annual contribution levels and some annual growth in the value of the fund, within a decade it would be worth around £500 billion, or roughly 25% of GDP.

Such a fund would provide finance for a range of investments, at no cost to the public purse, opening an opportunity to achieve significant social and commercial successes in the country. For example, the fund could create an ethical housing investment, building highly sustainable housing in key demand areas and providing subsidised rent to key workers, all while providing a

profitable return on investment.

The fund could also invest in future technologies, and in doing so attract a lot of the research, development and manufacturing for those technologies into the UK.

The need to provide a commercial return on investment to provide for people's pensions would help to ensure good discipline for the management of the fund, pushing for strong investments that provide benefits in the long term.

Most people seem largely unaware of the amount of tax relief they receive for their pensions, and because it is a contribution to their pension as opposed to a receipt of hard cash, there is less of an psychological attachment to the money. That provides a good opportunity for government to utilise the money more effectively in a UK sovereign wealth fund, rather than simply transferring it to massive pension funds to invest.

However, if there were criticisms of the shift from tax relief to shares in a sovereign wealth fund, the Nudge Unit could be brought on board, designing a system where relief automatically comes in the form of shares in the UK sovereign wealth fund unless an individual chooses instead to opt for cash into their private pension funds.

A nudge framework of auto-enrolment for pensions has been used over the past few years to increase pension savings, so extending it in the way proposed here to create a sovereign wealth fund should be eminently achievable.

Countries such as Norway and Israel demonstrate the value of sovereign wealth funds, this proposal would provide a way for the UK to join the club and invest in both the economic

growth of our nation and the pension prosperity of our citizens.

ID: 1738-11 - Category: Volunteering
Child-Impact Assessments
(In reference to the Impact of public policy on children and young people.) There are few public services or policy agencies whose work has no impact on children. Yet children and young people have little or no say in public policy. Successive Governments have clearly shown willingness to seek the voices of young people through initiatives such as the UK Youth Parliament and campaigns like Make Your Mark. However, there does not seem to be a systematic approach to listening to children and young people. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child monitors implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) on a five-year cycle and the UK is due shortly to report its work on the implementation of the UNCRC. Sadly, the UK is very likely to come up short.

A simple initiative to begin to address this deficit would be to place a duty on all government departments and local government to conduct a Child-Impact Assessment to assess whether policy proposals and/or legislation will safeguard and improve the wellbeing of children and young people. The hope would be that if a government department or agency involved children as a core stakeholder group then children would be valued both as consumers of services, but as citizens with rights to have their voices heard and their needs met.

This is neither a new nor an original idea. The Committee on the Rights of the Child has repeatedly promoted the use of children's rights impact assessments as a general measure of the implementation of children's rights. Several European countries as well as New Zealand, Australia and Canada, already use children's rights impact assessment tools to help ensure children are active rights holders rather than passive recipients of adult actions. Children's rights impact assessments are carried out when beginning policy development, so policymakers can identify and avoid where possible inadvertent negative consequences, and can increase the beneficial impacts. Evidence has shown that policymakers gain from access to young people's unique ideas, skills and perspectives and that engagement with young people results in more relevant and responsive policies, and better services.

As the experience of Covid-19 shows, decisions that negatively impact children and young people not only harm them but also result in high costs to society in the future. Such costs could be avoided by making decisions that avoid any inadvertent, negative consequences on children in the first place, or by mitigating potential negative effects on children.

To ensure that child-impact assessments were not simply yet another tick-box-exercise there would need to be effective feedback mechanisms that children could use easily, to allow children's perspectives of impacts on them. The structures to support such mechanisms already exist, such as school councils, the UK Youth Parliament, children's charities and the children's commissioners.

Despite having some common experiences of universal public services and policies, not all children are the same and policies will have different impacts on different individuals and groups. Any child-impact assessment tool could consider differential impacts on different groups of children such as differences among younger versus older children, special needs, ethnicities, socioeconomic groups, urban or rural regions, and family size or parental characteristics.

When they are provided opportunities to engage in decisions that affect them, children and young people develop a sense of inclusion, civic participation, and agency. Listening to young children and showing their views have been considered in decision-making makes them feel valued. It improves their self-esteem, confidence and capability to respond to enquiries and give constructive feedback on an on-going basis.

Children have the right to express their views freely and for their views to be given due weight; they should be provided opportunities to be heard in matters that affect them. Children should be at the heart of public policy to rebuild the country post-pandemic and there is much to be gained from their involvement and engagement.

Innovative teaching methods for effective student knowledge dissemination in education sector post COVID-19

1.Imparting education through online using virtual platform, non-existent of quality audiovisual content in dissemination of Knowledge, lack of internet to empower e-learning in rural areas were key concerns. COVID lockdown lead to closure of Schools, disrupted lesson plans, broke teacher child – parent interaction, lowered students Knowledge, increased failure in exams, impacted teacher's revenue. Crisis enabled me develop AVC- audiovisual course which serves as a cornerstone of many blended online courses as it offers effective educational tools, helps to reduce cognitive load, increases student engagement, enables active learning experience.

2. During Covid 19 students felt boredom while teaching few dry chemistry topics. AVC audiovisual content developed may be used in all blended courses/flipped learning courses .Using content specific technologies Role of innovative teaching methodology required.The main challenge arises in building a story board, using multi disciplinary sciences like Physics, biology etc Using introductory Defense Mechanism in Millipede Benzaldehyde is introduced. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=crQXa8_1xzE Ethanol is introduced by explaining real life example hangover experience caused due to alcohol consumption https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L9sG4COmKzY. Boron is introduced by a farmer raising tomato crop story https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zagWiMzWlgg, skydiving experience explains alkyl halides, popularizes science. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h6fgcx6TdMo 3. Creating curiosity among students is key concern.

Question Based Study What, Why, How is used. Pictorial representations of turbine motor shown to aid in understanding thermodynamics. In kinetic theory invisible atoms are visualized using small balls with animated movement, simulated highlights depicts collisions. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B0uxOH4Bm2M In solid liquid equilibrium, water is represented as the Space filling 3D model to provide exact positioning of 3 atoms in water H_2O. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=COrZ6OS-SqU https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ef3f3AWXMmk - In Photoelectric Effect electrons are shown as red balls, in depth inner atomic view explains concept.

4. Clearing basic to advanced level concepts to students is challenging, requires scientific approach. Experimental audiovisuals designed using scientific methodology. In Rutherford's experiment, to explain how alpha rays deviate at 120 & 180 degrees, in depth animation with positively charged alpha particles shown as balls, undergoes repulsion aids in conclusion atoms has condensed atomic nucleus https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iWIfz1JSe70 In-depth

animation on Oil Drop experiment visualizes oil drop in ball form, explains how droplet becomes negative on x ray exposure, clings to droplet bringing conceptual clarity https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DdLvJujDrAI. Werner Heisenberg's Uncertainty principle, leading to quantum model of atom is hardly understood by students.To glorify Heisenberg's idea innovative thought experiment was designed to explain Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle, instills scientific temper, stimulate Out of Box Thinking leading to inventions. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NxjW1GutYZg. Several ball stick models were used to explain organic chemistry mechanisms https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LCjsM-IM4Zs. Inorganic topics like yellow flame test of Sodium is explained depicting the electronic transition. Existence of sand in silica SiO2 is explained 3 dimensionally https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NuATSEUyFx0

5. Relating two variables like pressure and volume and proving Boyle's law of inverse proportionality Pressure-volume is a difficult proposition using data. Two variables like pressure and volume related using experimental data, compiled in graph mode using Boyle's Isotherm https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GINEYcyzxK8. Space filled ball structures used to explain relation between rate of reaction & reactant concentration. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p2ke4dbg6nY

6. Difficulty in student understanding arises when topics like Frequency of wave, SN2 mechanism Walden Inversion in alkyl halides. Frequency is explained using Man sitting inside a boat in still pond analogy https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zroD3-KaioQ, Walden inversion mechanism explained using Turning of Umbrella https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H-Znfdsnjb4, Limiting reagent explained using sandwich analogy. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCas6IXZLM8 . To give real live experience original background sounds like water splash, wind were used.

7. Inability of Student in solving numerical is key concern. Problems related to conversion of centimeter length to meter. Problem solving approaches? To ease Dimensional Analysis numerical animated video is used https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PXXSIDF2DRE. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErAd1oumVKI Live problem videos using whiteboard, Wacom, Screen recording software are used. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=07AAMDA76nQ

8. After topic explanation in class room, many students could understand the concept but are failing in application part. For example: How could we explain breathing process in humans using chemical equilibrium?Breathing video explains chemical equilibrium application https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-65LBCplHXw Movie watching video explains Tyndall Effect

phenomenon. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QDFTAEKSIK0 Sailor signaling in sea, Holmes signal are Phosphine gas applications. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AeJl9IVf0eI

9. How to relate explained topics to engage students in a class room online? Frequency of Wave Live experiment video in class depicts effective student engagement & conceptualization https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4N7pYmPZACg 10.

Shared chemistry knowledge through YouTube channel with 44.4K viewership, 507 subscribers, Quora with 175 followers, answered 112 questions, have 313k viewership, posted LinkedIn videos helped science popularization.
https://www.linkedin.com/in/desam-sudhakar-reddy-557a934b/detail/recent-activity/shares/ , AVs helped students build strong foundations in Chemistry, enabled innovative Teaching methodologies to educator, finally instilled research aptitude among scientists. Against all odds, the desire or passion to teach & share my knowledge in the field of chemistry, has rekindled & aided me to develop good quality videos and I believe that it would have a huge impact on learning process of students & as well aid in enhancing teaching methodologies. Contributed to Education and Environment by publishing different articles. Received "Excellent Scholar Award", "Best Video Award"& nominated for "Best Innovative Learning Tools "at International Education Awards IEA 2020, adjudged as Challenge Winner for Digi EduHack 2020 – Global Event.AVC Impact - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJXOEeKWehA ; Awards https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4xaq6Lr1LXc ; Impact https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nrcd1smPr88 ; YouTube Channel : Chemistry by Sudhakar, AVC : https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCN9QmNjdY55NqHlQJXm1uZg,AVC WEBSITE : https://www.avceducate.com, Quora link: https://www.quora.com/profile/Desam-Sudhakar Published international articles sharing valuable insights contributing to education and environment. 11. Equity in delivering Education – Societal Approach: Teaching Chemistry to students since 20 years. In 10 years developed 900 audiovisuals, covering 38 chapters, prepared Story 1000 Boards, typed 35000 slides, 45 hour Voice over's recorded, dedicated research in teaching methodologies – Probably no man on earth would had ever contributed to Audiovisual Development in chemistry discipline/any discipline, Contributed 2 decades to education sector. Easy access to Education: Videos of 6- 8 minute duration, with less than 10mb size is easily transferable, accessed by all rural students/faculty deprived of proper internet facilities 12. Wise use of technology: AVC audiovisual content is highly sustainable as it can incorporated in all blended courses/flipped learning courses. Superlative audiovisuals can effectively disseminate knowledge with latest futuristic AR/ VR technology in designing practical's, Artificial Intelligence/Game based education projects, which promotes better student engagement

ID: 1644-11 - Category: Volunteering

Great ideas come from anywhere - how to capitalise and innovate!

Research councils focus and restrict their funding to those at higher education establishments. Whilst this currently makes sense for basic/fundamental research, why is this exclusive to this group of organisations? It is understandable that higher education institutions need funds, but there should be opportunities for the rest of society to access more funds to innovate and work on societal challenges too. Especially as so many businesses, charities and individuals are innovating and delivering valuable solutions to many of the challenges that research councils pose.

The best ideas will come from opening these challenges up to not just academics, but experts, innovators and anyone with valuable ideas from all over. There are many ways to easily engage and increase diversity and innovation in the UK. All of these begin with opening up opportunities to more people, rather than attempting to create more innovation in the same way it's always been done and expecting a different outcome. We should look to countries such as the US, who's university and research funding models and cultures have proven to create world changing innovation!

In so many cases organisations, charities and individuals or groups and communities in society are already providing novel, creative and impactful solutions to many of society's problems. We are missing opportunities to capitalise and accelerate such impactful activities, when we could so easily propel them if they were only given more opportunities and access to resources and support.

There should be more funds available for anyone in society with an idea to apply, whether idea-only competitions such as this, or actually funding individuals to lead the projects they suggest. This is especially true as more and more talented former university researchers move to industry where pay and benefits are often higher and the opportunity to work on real-world problems and create impact is often greater (due to larger resources and the constant need for industry to innovate so their competitors don't overtake). Such individuals should be encouraged to start UK businesses, or where they wish to, lead projects in their spare time, or at the very least be able to apply for innovative grant funding ideas without having to work at a

university.

The UK government needs to adapt and innovate to meet the rest of the world - education is being disrupted with online and self-directed learning - how will we fund these talented individuals who don't come from universities. We need to be providing opportunities to tap into and enable experts in these spaces to be able to innovate - this is what will make the UK a global leader and progress against its industrial and other challenge areas much faster. The current methods exclude such talent, industry and charities leaving them providing their knowledge and expertise elsewhere.

For example, those working as software engineers in big tech companies in the UK should be able to apply for funds and grants looking for innovative solutions to problems that require software engineers. Someone working as a community engagement manager at a charity would have excellent ideas and knowledge for how to improve collaboration in society. A patient suffering from a disease will have amazing ideas for how to improve treatment programmes and the diagnosis pathway. We need to be bringing groups together and increasing diversity of ideas.

If the government wants to innovate then the first step is to realise the old traditional methods and processes are often the very methods that stifle innovation. They need to be forward thinking and to do this they need to be opening opportunities up beyond the usual organisations, encouraging cross sector, cross disciplinary and diverse groups to collaborate.

This is particularly true with technology, where so many are turning to online education and building their own tools, and especially as "no code" platforms increase and will allow non-technical organisations such as civil service and charities to utilise technical solutions.

I propose the often suggested moonshot or scientific/innovation challenge funding be

delivered through new inclusive and innovate funding council that anyone can apply to and that anyone can be awarded funds to build and lead such projects. The same level of due diligence, review, detail and project planning should be required; a project management office should also support the delivery of such projects. It's time we became a more modern, inclusive society.

All government and research council funded projects related to real world impact should be required to have an advisory board comprised of relevant industry, academia and end users, and more citizen engagement should be a requirement of such projects. This way, we have greater assurance that solutions will be of real value to those who they are meant to help, and even just the opportunity to input and be heard will be of huge value to society.

Technology should be capitalised on (whilst ensuring everyone has access to technology and training to be able to use this - can use volunteers to deliver training en masse) - e.g. apps can be used to allow residents to vote online, suggest ideas, report issues, propose solutions etc. with their local and national government. If we want an engaged society, then we have to provide more convenient and accessible methods for people to engage. An app with even just opinion voting and reporting issues would be much more efficient than the current systems - old websites with multiple report forms and no ability to see what other members of the community are struggling with. These also focus solely on reporting issues, whereas councils would do much better to provide platforms for community members to provide solution ideas as-well and even funding for those already working on improvements or those with clear plans and ability to carry out such solutions.

Further, such technology should be used to allow the government to make more data-driven decisions, utilising insights and feedback from a cross-section of society to deliver change that is maximally impactful.

ID: 1425-11 - Category: Volunteering

Overcrowded prisons

UK prison overcrowding is a serious challenge in the UK, made worse by the high reoffending rates fueling the repetitive cycle of incarceration, re-offending and re-incarceration. A criminal

record severly hampers a person's options to find employment and integration into law-abididng society, therefore increasing the likelihood of re-offending. The majority or prisoners are incarcerated for non-violent offences (~69%) and so I propose that first instances of a non-violent offence are not visible for employment vetting purposes.

This will result in a decrease in reoffending and unemployment rates and a reduction in the UK prison population.

ID: 1216-11 - Category: Volunteering

Measure Children and Young People's Wellbeing in schools and colleges termly from KS2 upwards

The shift to use of online technologies in education makes it very easy to ask subjective wellbeing questions of pupils from key stage 2 upwards on at least a termly basis. The questions are well established and can be benchmarked. The technology exists to be able to do this and is used effectively in South Australia, United Arab Emirates and the Netherlands as well as in some academy chains and independent schools in the UK.

This data would allow us to understand where issues & strengths exist, who for, where and potentially why and how they interact. It can help us to understand how long impacts last or whether people adapt (they often do). We will be able to see the wider non-academic impact of schools that has become apparent in the pandemic and value this properly. We will be able to pick up and address the effects of loneliness, lack of physical activity, mental health, parental economic circumstances and academic attainment together; all of which we know effect our future resilience. We know from longitudinal studies that the impact individual teachers on both wellbeing at 32 and later educational attainment can be identified from as young as ages 8 and 10; we would not have to wait a generation to see and act on these findings effectively.

Requiring this data from all schools termly from KS2 upwards and linking anonymously to the National Pupil Database would be am investment in the future wellbeing of the nation. The data needs to be available to all who have an interest in the wellbeing of our young people - families, communities, civil society, multiple public sector organisations and employers. Seeing the value

add in wellbeing terms will help communities have agency in improving life chances quite likely, but not at all certain, to have been impacted by the pandemic.

ID: 553-11 - Category: Volunteering

Making education available to the masses easily and at a fair level.

I feel that it could be so easily (and economically) made fair across the board and accessible for the majority of people. If a TV channel was assigned for each year group, and daily lessons televised in the same format and timetable as would be used in school, you would only technically require one set of teachers. Lessons could be recorded in an actual classroom to give a feeling of normality and access to the usual equipment etc for demonstrations. One set of worksheets and timetables could be emailed (or posted to those without access) to all children and then each school could just have their own teachers available for questions if required either through online chat or a call. They wouldn't all be under pressure to be sending out separate workloads from each individual school, freeing up a lot of time and expense (and avoiding a lot of stress) and they would have time for admin, supporting students with questions, marking work etc. As the government's TV broadcaster of choice is the BBC it could also be easily accessible on iPlayer for those who need a recap or miss any time with sickness or medical appointments. Everyone would receive the same education, from the same teacher, at the same time. They could even make sure that every pupil in the country was benefitting from the best level of teaching available, as they could choose the best teachers and only need one per subject. If anything, some pupils would be getting a better level of education than they do at their own school. I know some don't have access to the internet (although I see there are schemes available to help with that now) but I don't know of many without a TV, and those with more than one child who do have internet access could use iPlayer for multiple children if that was a possibility. I see they have started putting a couple of hours a day of 'educational programmes' on, but this really doesn't take the place of actual lessons as such, and I'll be honest, I tried watching a couple of random 'Bitesize' shows and I couldn't get on with it as an adult, let alone expect my kids to stare at that orange background and mind numbing subjects. But if this is possible then I don't see any reason why it isn't doable to go that step further and introduce a full 'school day' on there instead. I do really think that it could be a good way to get everyone on the same train, ease the pressure on both schools and parents, and I feel it could be pretty easily executed (definitely easier than what the schools and parents are currently struggling through!). It could even be an opportunity long term after the pandemic for those with physical access issues, for homeschooling support, for those with issues such as disability, bullying, hospitalisation, even children who have been suspended etc. Maybe areas with limited school spaces or new developments where enough class space isn't available yet. Or even future pandemics or similar (never say never, at least hopefully we'll learn from this time around

and get it right if we have another!) Please excuse the grammar and bullet point-rambling feel to my answer, I have a baby asleep on my arm, a small boy chatting in my ear and bouncing on my shoulder, and I'm definitely glad my kids aren't old enough to need me to remember anything I did in secondary school in the current circumstances!