

# **‘Levelling up’ outside the compulsory schooling system**

Claire Crawford, CEPEO and IFS

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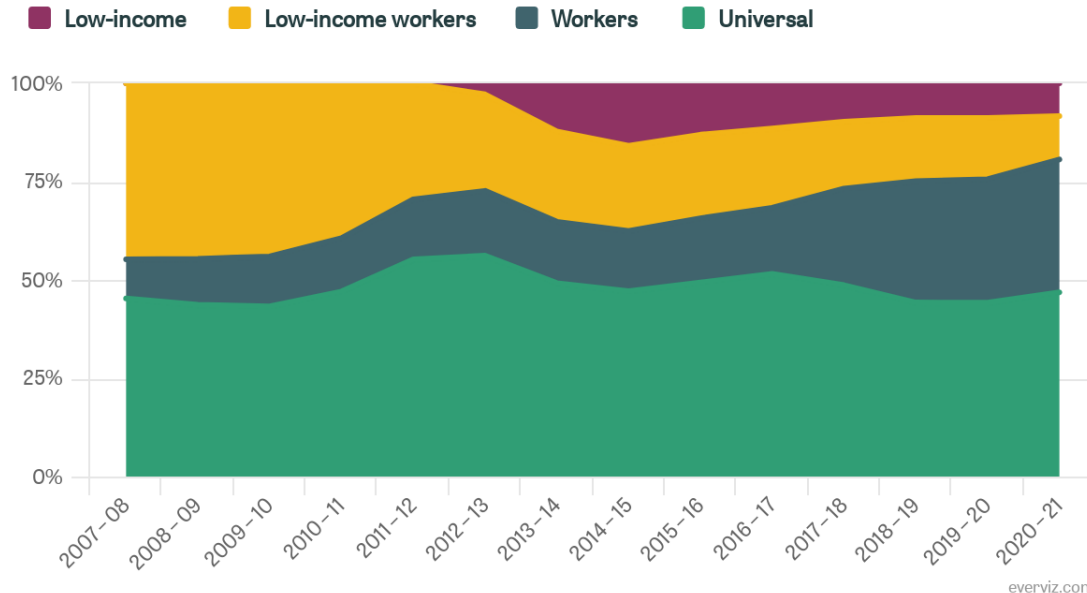
## Spending across different educational phases

- Report demonstrates that spending per student per year is highest in HE; lower but similar in FE, primary & secondary schooling; lowest in early years
- Those from lower SES backgrounds under-represented in HE (and relatively over-represented in FE), suggesting higher spending for more advantaged
  - Although worth noting the relationship is reversed in schools – assuming additional funds are spent on disadvantaged pupils (Belfield et al., 2018)
- Announced increases in spending for FE/adult learning suggest a commitment to investing in these areas (with no announcements yet on HE for comparison)
- But announcements only partially reverse substantive cuts over last decade

## Spending on early years

- Report also shows that spending per child in the early years has increased markedly over last 20 years – but this is mostly because of increased entitlements
- Spending per hour of education/care has changed relatively little over last decade – and extra spending announced in recent SR unlikely to substantially increase it
- Relative focus of spending on higher levels of education may be counterintuitive when set against literature suggesting early investments are more effective
- But balance of spending within early years also doesn't lend itself to 'levelling up'

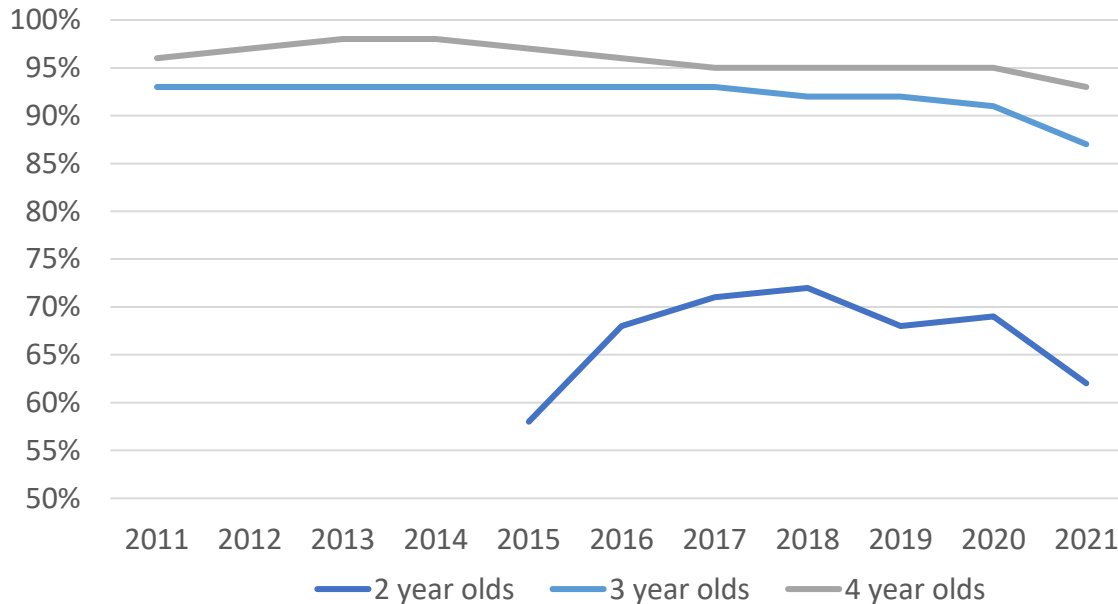
**Figure 5. Share of early education and childcare subsidies targeted at different groups**



Source: <https://ifs.org.uk/education-spending/early-years>

- Significant rebalancing of spending away from support for low-income workers via tax credits towards higher-income workers via tax-free childcare
- A 3 yr old from a family with two earners of almost £100,000 each will get 30 hours of free childcare while a family just above the universal credit cut-off will get 15

Take-up of the free entitlement among *eligible* 2, 3 and 4 year olds



- Number of 3 and 4 year olds eligible for early years premium *increased* by around 6,000 (6.2%) between 2020 and 2021
- Over same period, number of children eligible for free school meals in schools (same eligibility criteria) rose by more than 20%