

News story: Evaluating new medical technologies: apply for business funding

The [Office for Life Sciences](#) has up to £1.5 million to invest in business projects that evaluate innovative medical devices, diagnostics and regulated digital technology in real-world [NHS](#) settings.

Life sciences opportunities

The life sciences sector plays an important role in the UK economy with a turnover of £63.5 billion in 2016. It also has a critical role in providing new medicines and treatments that will improve patients' lives.

More than 95% of companies in the sector are micro, small and medium-sized businesses, which often find it difficult to gain the real-world evidence they need to have their innovative technologies adopted.

This competition aims to help businesses gather that evidence.

Projects must address NHS priorities

Funding is for:

- smaller projects that develop plans for evidence-gathering in the NHS
- larger projects that collect clinical evidence on the performance and impact of a medicine or device in the NHS. Medical and diagnostic devices and digital health technologies must have a CE mark but must not have been marketed for more than 5 years

Projects should be able to show evidence of relevant discussions with organisations such as the [National Institute for Health and Care Excellence](#) and the NHS.

Projects should aim to address [NHS priorities](#) including to:

- reduce cancellations or unnecessary appointments
- reduce the burden on A&E services
- improve patient safety and avoid patient harm
- speed up diagnosis
- enable earlier diagnosis of cancer
- support management of long-term conditions, such as diabetes, chronic pain, cardiovascular disease, asthma and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease

Competition information

- the competition opens on 2 July 2018, and the deadline for applications is at midday on 22 August 2018
 - projects must be led by an SME working alone or with other businesses or research organisations
 - we expect projects to range in size up to £250,000 and to last up to 12 months
 - only the lead partner can claim a grant
 - businesses could attract up to 50% of their project costs
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Press release: Government Announces Plans to Reform Process of Changing Legal Gender

- consultation will look to make process of obtaining new birth certificate less intrusive and bureaucratic for transgender people
- government aims to gather evidence to further advance equality for non-binary and intersex people
- plans will not water down Equality Act protections for single-sex services or for trans people

The government has launched a [public consultation on the Gender Recognition Act 2004](#), on how to make it easier for transgender people to change their legal gender on their birth certificate.

The Prime Minister announced the government's plan to consult on changes to the Gender Recognition Act in 2017.

The government's LGBT survey – the largest national survey of its kind, with over 108,000 participants – showed there is considerable misunderstanding about the requirements of applying for a Gender Recognition Certificate, and many trans people find it overly bureaucratic and expensive.

The 16-week consultation, which affects England and Wales, will review the process of acquiring a Gender Recognition Certificate – which is given to people who are legally recognised as being of their new gender – and aim to reduce the time and cost for people applying.

The consultation will look at many aspects of the process of obtaining legal recognition, including the requirements for the transgender person to:

- provide two medical reports, one showing a diagnosis of 'gender dysphoria' and the other outlining details of treatment received
- obtain the consent of their spouse if they are married

- demonstrate that they have lived in their acquired gender for at least 2 years
- pay £140

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

Last year I committed to carrying out a consultation on the Gender Recognition Act and I'm pleased to be able to launch that today.

What was very clear from our survey is that transgender people across the UK find the process of legally changing their gender overly bureaucratic and invasive.

I want to see a process that is more streamlined and de-medicalised – because being trans should never be treated as an illness.

Minister for Women and Equalities Penny Mordaunt said:

The discrimination and bigotry that the trans community currently faces is unacceptable in today's society – we need a culture change.

In response to our national LGBT survey trans people have told us that the current system to legally change their gender isn't working and they find the process bureaucratic, costly and intrusive.

We want to help people to thrive and to go about their daily life, living in the gender they choose without intrusion or fear of humiliation.

This consultation is a chance for us to change the current system for the better and I look forward to hearing everyone's views.

The government has been clear that this consultation will not be making any changes to the Equality Act 2010 and the protections within it. The Act states that individuals must not be discriminated against because they are trans, but that single-sex services such as domestic abuse refuges can provide services in a different way, or exclude a transgender person from the service, if this is proportionate and justified.

The government has not yet taken any decisions and responses to the consultation will be considered very carefully before making any.

Government figures show the number of people who have successfully obtained a Gender Recognition Certificate (4,910) since the legislation came into effect is far fewer than the estimated size of the trans population in the UK.

In recent years, we have made progress in tackling the barriers that transgender people face within the UK. We have:

- introduced a £3m project to help tackle transphobic bullying in schools
- put more money into NHS Gender Identity Services
- conducted one of the largest national surveys of LGBT people in the world, receiving over 14,000 responses from trans and non-binary people

Cara English, Policy Engagement Officer at trans charity Gendered Intelligence, said:

Gendered Intelligence welcomes the government's plans to make it less difficult to change legal gender. Meaningful reforms to the Gender Recognition Act are desperately needed if we're going to make the process easier, less bureaucratic and exclusionary for trans and non-binary people.

It's encouraging to see the government take the needs of LGBTQI people seriously, recognising that the GRA needs to be reformed to make it more transparent for those who need to access it. This consultation is all about highlighting the lived experiences and needs of people disenfranchised from the current GRA and giving value to their voices.

Notes to editors

- the Equality Act allows providers to offer single-sex services that exclude trans people so long as it is proportionate to do so and it achieves a legitimate aim. An example of a single-sex service might be a domestic violence refuge for women. The government is aware of many refuge services that are fully trans inclusive, and allow trans women entry, but is also equally aware of services that may, in some circumstances, choose to exclude trans women and instead refer them on to a different service – this is lawful provided it is adequately justified
 - the legal recognition process is separate from the pathway that trans people follow to obtain medical treatment that they may wish to have, such as hormones or surgery
 - the government will consider the results of the consultation carefully before making any decision on how to reform the GRA. We are not necessarily proposing self-declaration of gender
 - we are examining what safeguards could be needed as part of any new legal gender recognition system, and will work closely with the Ministry of Justice to understand the issues specific to prisoners
 - we are not proposing to lower the minimum age limit for legal gender recognition below the current age of 18
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Press release: International Trade Secretary meets US Commerce Secretary

The International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox MP, met US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross in London on Monday (2 July). They had a constructive conversation ahead of the next meeting of the UK-US trade and investment working group later this summer.

They discussed the importance of long-term, stable, reciprocal economic investment and how this underpins broader stability.

They also discussed areas where trade between the 2 countries could be strengthened ahead of the UK's exit from the EU. The International Trade Secretary reiterated the need for a global response to issues like production and demand, and highlighted the importance of UK exports to US businesses and security.

The International Trade Secretary and US Commerce Secretary discussed the recent US decision to impose tariffs and Dr Fox expressed a need for a swift resolution to securing product exemptions for UK businesses affected by the recent US tariffs.

Media enquiries

Speech: Local Government Association Annual Conference 2018

Introduction

Thanks, James [Councillor Jamieson], I'm delighted to be here at my first LGA Conference.

When I was appointed to this role, I said that it was a great honour to be representing you all and leading on local government.

And I meant it.

Because my passion for local government isn't just professional. It's deeply personal.

I grew up with local government.

And I'm reminded of this every day by a photo hanging in my parliamentary

office of my great grand father standing on the back of a cart in rural Cornwall.

How my dad's life chances, from growing up in near poverty, were transformed by a Grammar School Education... and the career opportunity that local government gave him.

How that helped transform his outlook...

... from starting off working in the town clerk's office of the then Restormel borough council to ultimately becoming a chief executive of a London borough...

... and, for a period, Controller at the Audit Commission.

The insight into his work underlined to me the power of local government to be an incredible force for good – not as a distant, faceless bureaucracy, but, from the biggest unitary to the smallest parish council, as the heartbeat of the communities it serves.

As the bedrock of our democracy, on which our people can build better lives.

So I could not be more proud and pleased to be working alongside you.

You live and breathe the issues affecting your local areas.

And you've been harnessing this knowledge more effectively than ever to lead and deliver over the course of another busy and challenging year.

I'm hugely grateful for all your efforts.

In saying that, I'm under no illusions about that the challenges that you – and we as a country – face. A difficult financial environment.

Big changes in demographics, lifestyles and technology.

Growing pressures on services.

There are no easy answers to these issues.

But I will listen and respond to what you're telling me.

And work with you to really understand the difficulties you face.

We won't always agree and I will provide challenge, when needed, to champion high standards and quality services.

But you can be confident that I will always stand up for you and for local government's interests.

Funding

I know that money has been extremely tight. And that you've gone the extra mile to deliver efficiencies and help reduce our country's debts.

And that significant financial pressures remain.

We have listened and responded.

This year's local government finance settlement provided a boost in funding and extra money for adult social care.

We've also responded to calls for more control over the money raised through the extension of business rates retention.

Local authorities estimate they will receive around £2.4 billion in business rates growth in 2018 to 2019 – a significant sum on top of the settlement.

And I plan to shortly publish a prospectus for a further round of business rates retention pilots in 2019 to 2020, to help us understand how best to transition to greater retention from 2020 to 2021.

This will be published alongside our consultation on the approach to next year's annual settlement.

But you have told me that we need to do more, particularly when it comes to adult and children's services.

I know that the social care system is under significant pressure and we are committed to ensuring it is sustainable for the future. Health and social care are inextricably linked and any reforms must be aligned.

Which is why – as the Health and Social Care Secretary has announced – we will publish a Social Care Green Paper in the autumn.

This will include proposals to reform social care, better integrate services and put social care on a long-term, sustainable footing.

I also know that you, more than most, will appreciate the complexities and the need to get this right.

That's why I'm keen to work with you on this, to draw on your frontline insight and intelligence – as seen, for example, in the LGA's recent publication on [what drives spend on children's services](#).

With that in mind, we're also keen to work with you on a whole new approach to distributing funding through the [review of relative needs and resources](#).

Everyone agrees that the current formula needs fixing. And I want to see a robust, straightforward approach, where the link between local circumstances and resources allocated is clear.

I know that the final outcome won't necessarily please everyone. But our overriding priority must be to make the best use of resources available.

2020 will be a big year for local government.

It will bring together the outcomes of the Spending Review and the Fair Funding Review. We are also aiming to increase business rates retention to

75% around this time.

I look forward to working closely with you as we prepare for these changes.

Changes that present a valuable opportunity to consider what local government in the 21st century can do and can be and the resources it needs to deliver.

Modernisation

This will help inform an important part of my discussion with colleagues across Whitehall – as will the excellent work you're doing not just to achieve value for money, but to modernise and rethink the way you deliver services.

Rochford District council, for example, has become one of the top councils for recycling by sharing a waste service with 3 other councils – a contract that has freed it up to remodel the service around behaviour change and that demonstrates the rewards to be reaped from greater collaboration on waste services.

And in Leeds, staff have are taking the lead on delivering social care services via a staff mutual. These services helped secure a good rating and also saved the council money.

The smarter use of technology is also driving improvements and helping develop more efficient, targeted and responsive services. This has the potential to be genuinely transformative.

So I'm delighted that my colleague Rishi [Sunak], the Minister for Local Government, will be launching the Digital Declaration at this conference tomorrow, setting out how central and local government can learn from best practice in this area and build the public services of tomorrow.

I know that some of you have also been looking at reorganising the way you operate by for example, combining, in the interests of your communities where there's a good deal of local support and it involves credible geographies.

I want to support this work, although I have no intention of forcing reorganisation on local government where it isn't wanted or needed.

There is so much impressive work going on out there and so much talent and expertise in the sector.

And I want to do all I can to help you celebrate and spread this; to increase transparency and share best practice.

And we want to hear from you about how we can best do this, so that councils can not only make their funding go further, but truly transform services and engage those who use them

Onward devolution

This last point is crucial.

The days of people passively accepting what's offered are long gone.

In our digital age, the ability to feed back, interact with and shape services is the new norm and government – central and local – needs to reflect that.

It provides the opportunity to harness community groups, the voluntary sector, and, increasingly, those mobilising online and on social media, and use their hyper-local knowledge to redesign services.

People want to have a say over what happens in their communities.

Which is why we'll be publishing the civil society strategy this summer; setting out our vision for how government can work positively with groups on the ground.

And why we created the city region mayors, who have got off to such a successful start.

We've been clear that devolution deals should, wherever possible, include this kind of "onward" devolution of service delivery, with local communities deciding what outcomes matter most and finding local solutions that suit local circumstances.

I'm pleased to see that some of you are already stepping up to do this and shifting power from the state to the citizen.

This is true localism in action and a much-needed renewal of our democracy, giving people, particularly from disengaged groups, a real sense of ownership over the places where they live.

What might be described as an "ultra localist" agenda is something that helps create stronger communities.

Housing

It supports a stronger sense of belonging and identity to the place that you live in and is something I will be giving greater thought to in the time ahead.

This sense of ownership also very much depends on all parts of our community having a decent, affordable, secure home.

On this count, we have the challenge of a generation on our hands.

Successive governments, of all stripes, quite simply failed to build enough homes.

And the consequences are plain to see: ordinary families, young people

starting out in life and many others struggling to secure that most basic of human needs – a place to call their own – and being denied the opportunities and security that come with it.

Which is why fixing our broken housing market is one of this government's top domestic priorities.

Councils, of course, have a big role to play in this.

And thanks to your efforts, we've made significant progress, with planning permissions up and 217,000 homes delivered in 2016 to 2017– the highest level in all but one of the last 30 years.

But there's further to go.

Which is why we're supporting local authorities to do more to deliver new homes – with a focus on affordability and building them where they are most needed.

It's why we've responded to your calls for extra financial flexibility and last week invited councils to bid for £1 billion of extra borrowing – paving the way for a new generation of council housing.

It's why we're investing £9 billion in a wide range of affordable housing and giving councils and housing associations more certainty over their rental income until 2025.

And why we're reforming planning and working with you to combat homelessness and rough sleeping.

We need to speed up the delivery of new homes and this is not only planning permissions. Today I am announcing a new approach to delivery of the £9 billion [Affordable Homes Programme](#).

Homes England will enter into longer term Strategic Partnerships with housing associations to deliver affordable homes.

These Partnerships will allow housing associations to have a single conversation with Homes England, thereby delivering more homes more quickly.

I am launching the first 8 Strategic Partnerships today – one of these is a consortium including Sandwell.

We are investing £590 million of the Affordable Homes Programme in this approach to deliver over 14,000 new affordable homes, including for social rent.

These deals will work across the country and I know you will work closely with the housing associations in these areas to deliver the affordable homes that your residents want and need.

In addition, we will shortly be publishing our Social Housing Green Paper – an important part of our wider response to the disaster at Grenfell Tower.

A year on, the shocking events of 14 June 2017 that triggered this work are still hard to comprehend.

And I want to thank everyone who supported those affected, helped with recovery efforts and who have been working with us to keep people safe.

Remediation work has started on more than two-thirds of buildings in the social housing sector and we announced a package of measures last week to speed up the work that councils are carrying out with the owners of high rise blocks in the private sector to make these safe.

And we're going further – by publishing [guidance](#) today on applying for the £400 million of funding announced by the Prime Minister for the removal and replacement of unsafe ACM cladding on social sector buildings.

This work with communities has been crucial in so many ways, not least in helping rebuild public trust, with local government at the forefront.

And your role – in ensuring that all groups in our society feel valued and can succeed – could not be more important as we leave the European Union.

Brexit and local growth

Brexit will, undoubtedly, generate different opportunities and challenges for different areas.

And I want to thank the LGA for its valuable work in this area; in identifying the issues at stake and also in recognising the opportunities that will be available.

I met council leaders earlier today to discuss how we can work together on this issue and I want to hear from more of you over the coming weeks and months.

There's clearly more to do on this issue and today I can announce that I am setting up a delivery board with local government that will support the implementation of changes linked to Brexit within the sector.

Regardless of our political differences, we all have a duty to ensure that every community can benefit as we build a modern, outward-looking Britain after Brexit.

In this context, it's even more essential that we renew our focus on local growth and higher productivity through not just the devolution deals already underway, but the other growth opportunities – housing deals, local industrial strategies and the LEP (Local Enterprise Partnership) review – that are open to local areas.

These opportunities, of course, include our significant investment in the Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine.

And I couldn't leave the great city of Birmingham without saying how pleased I am to be Ministerial Champion for the Midlands Engine.

I look forward to working with Sir John Peace and the other partners across the region to ensure that it can really thrive.

These efforts – to invest in skills and infrastructure – will stand us in good stead as we prepare for Brexit, yes, but also in our ultimate goal of creating, quite simply, great places to live and work.

Communities

This is what everything that we're doing – on local growth, on housing, on quality public services – comes down to – building the strong, vibrant, well-integrated communities that we all want to see, with local government leading the way.

We're supporting these communities to flourish – to ensure that people of all backgrounds can take advantage of the opportunities that our country offers – through our bold new [Integrated Communities Strategy green paper](#).

Everyone needs to play their part in this endeavour. And strong local leadership is critical to making sure this message gets through and to driving this agenda.

Which is why we're trialling a new localised approach to tackling integration challenges in 5 areas – Blackburn with Darwen, Bradford, Peterborough, Walsall and Waltham Forest.

And why we plan to host a Communities Conference in September; to inspire policymakers and showcase the incredible impact that communities can have.

From my previous roles, I know just how important this work is to creating a strong sense of civic pride and identity and places that people are proud to call home.

And – as we saw following last year's terror attacks in London Bridge, Manchester and Finsbury Park and also, of course, the Grenfell Tower fire – how there's nothing more powerful than a community coming together in the darkest of times.

I want to pay tribute to the way that local authorities worked with their residents and other partners in the aftermath of such loss and suffering.

Conclusion

This has, without doubt, been a challenging year, but I am full of admiration with how you've responded.

And I'm keen to celebrate this work and to see you continue to innovate, aim high and really show what world-class local government looks like.

This will be vital to help us seize the opportunities and meet the challenges that lie ahead – on building the homes our county needs, on strengthening our communities, on powering growth and ensuring that, after Brexit, every part

of our country can prosper.

In doing so, I want you to know that I'm on your side.

In doing so, I want you to know that I believe in local government and what you do. That I want to see a renewal and renaissance in local government.

And that I'm here for the same reason as you – to make a difference and deliver for communities who deserve no less.

Thank you.

Speech: Amanda Spielman at the Education Policy Institute conference

Good morning. And thank you for inviting me to be here today.

David's invitation specifically asked me to consider what the 'implications of key system wide challenges are for Ofsted'. So, nice and simple!

Of course these challenges are manifold but for the sake of brevity and focus today I want to consider Ofsted's perspective on multi-academy trusts, or MATs.

The rate of change in the school landscape continues: in 2016 to 2017 around 1,200 new academies opened. We are already up to around 900 new academies this year. In addition, around 100 more multi-academy trusts have opened since August last year. This makes for a total of 1,100 in the system, of which 150 are what Ofsted define as large MATs – that is, with at least 9 constituent schools. Existing MATs continue to grow, as the vast majority of new academies join trusts. And on top of that we have more rebrokerage of existing academies, either into a trust for the first time, or to a different trust when things aren't working as they should.

And of course there remain over 14,000 local authority maintained schools, the vast majority of which are good and outstanding. Although to categorise these as LA-run, in the classic sense, is a misnomer, given the amount of autonomy these schools enjoy. And local authorities play a different role in the system to that which they played even a decade ago. It is in part as a recognition of that level of autonomy that we have stopped inspecting local authority school improvement services.

Of course MATs themselves come in many shapes, sizes and range of geographical spread. There is quite a spectrum, from back-office models all the way through to fully-integrated models. Ofsted does not have a preferred model, but there is, I believe, a debate for us to have about scrutinising

the range of models and how they are contributing to the delivery of high standards of education. But for the purpose of today's discussion it is the more integrated models that I wish to focus on. These are the MATs where many education-related decisions are being taken at the centre about the curriculum, teaching and assessment, and about policies and actions, planning and governance.

I think it is now generally understood that for MATs, it is the trust itself that is the legal entity. The trust has ultimate responsibility for all the decisions that lead to its pupils receiving a high quality education. Increasingly, trusts tell us that they want to have a joined-up conversation with us about the many cross-MAT decisions they make, rather than repeating essentially the same conversation with a different lead inspector on every inspection of a school in a MAT. We have been doing our best on this within the limitations of our remit. But we do know this falls short of the ideal.

For that reason, I was delighted when the Secretary of State signalled his intention to look at the accountability arrangements for MATs in his speech to the NGA [National Governance Association] last month. And I look forward to our continuing engagement with the department on what a new assessment regime might look like. But it is important for everyone to remember that the line of accountability for MATs flows to the Department for Education (in practice through regional schools commissioners or RSCs) not through Ofsted. They are the managers for academy funding agreements. We bring objectivity and sector expertise in our inspections and reports, and also in our monitoring and risk assessment. This makes us one player in a multipartite system involving RSCs, ESFA and Ofsted.

I am also acutely aware that these conversations will take time. It is appropriate, therefore, that we don't stand still while we wait for them to come to fruition. That's why we are revising our existing methodology and approach to the inspection of MATs, so as to make sure, within the limits of the powers we do have, that we are getting as much insight as we can in the most efficient way.

Trialling a new approach

During this summer term we are visiting a small number of MATs to trial aspects of a new approach which we hope will improve the inspection experience for MAT leaders, for their academies and for inspectors. In line with our [corporate strategy](#) of more intelligent inspection, our key objectives are:

- to better understand the way MATs are organised, operate, and the role they play in their own right and ensure that our inspection reflects this
- to improve our reporting on the impact that MATs are having, whether this is as part of a MAT focused review or a standalone inspection of an academy or free school that is part of a MAT
- to make focused reviews of MATs more intelligent, through better coordination and through sharing of evidence between inspection teams

We also want to ensure that in individual inspections of MAT schools, the

role of the MAT is properly considered.

My inspectors frequently encounter 2 significant misconceptions, sometimes when they are conducting focused reviews of MATs but more commonly when they are inspecting individual schools that are part of a MAT but that do not fully understand their own status within a trust.

First, schools often continue to see themselves as separate from the leadership of the MAT. The trust is something 'out there' that acts on them in a school improvement capacity, in the same manner as local authorities once did. But this is a profound misunderstanding of the MAT model.

Secondly, there are deep confusions about governance. Often local governing bodies are presented to inspectors as responsible for governance, when we know that in reality it is trustees and members who are the governors of the trust. The local bodies may have some delegated responsibilities or may be purely advisory: often their members are themselves unclear, and don't know to whom, if anyone, they report. The position is sometimes no clearer at trust level. Published schemes of delegation can be confused, with the same names appearing at member, trustee and executive level, so that the oversight and executive functions are entangled. I want all my inspectors to be clear – MAT leadership and management comes from the MAT executive team; governance comes from trustees and (only in the last resort) members.

It is a complicated picture, full of confusions. And our own inspection still sometimes fails to address those misconceptions. It is still too often the case that our individual inspections of these schools, when they aren't part of a focused inspection, make limited reference to the MAT role, something that clearly fails to recognise the significance of that relationship and the responsibilities the trust has for leadership and management. We must do better, and that is why we are beginning a programme of training for Ofsted's school inspectors in the autumn term, to make sure that we are ourselves consistent.

We are also looking at ways of improving the quality of information we hold about MATs. We want inspectors to have a more accurate understanding of the way MATs are set up and operate before they embark on an inspection. We have been engaging with MATs on this and will continue to do so. After all, we can't do a good job of inspection if we don't fully understand the status of the school we are inspecting.

Much of this may come across as a tidying up exercise. But by making these small step changes; and with the changes that may emerge from the departmental review we may arrive at a different model of inspection.

The MAT performance picture – why this matters

Some may ask, indeed some do ask, why we are so concerned about inspecting MATs. After all as long as Ofsted is looking at the constituent schools, isn't that sufficient? But this is to misunderstand the nature of modern school inspection. Because inspection is now done mainly through discussions with leaders about the decisions they take about education, about

safeguarding, about how they implement them and how they know they are working in practice. To the extent that those decisions are taken in the MAT, which many of them often now are, for example about curriculum, about teaching or assessment or staff training, the inspection conversation necessarily reaches into MAT. This isn't an expression of an Ofsted preference. It is a statement of fact.

Similarly governance is the function of a MAT board, so we cannot come to a view about the effectiveness of governance without looking at how the MAT board exercises its functions.

Ofsted began focused inspection of MATs back in 2013, and has visited 21 different MATs since then, 6 of them in the last 12 months. It is fair to say we initially focused our resources on the MATs that we felt were performing less well. After all Ofsted exists to be a force for improvement and we aim to direct our efforts in to those areas where we can see most cause for concern.

As our last [Annual Report](#) laid out, there are a number of common themes, or more bluntly problems, that we find in poorer performing MATs. Generally leaders of these trusts are unable to secure sustainable trust-wide improvement. This is down to a number of weaknesses, including: inconsistent quality of teaching, poor quality middle leadership, inconsistent professional development and training; leadership that did not know the schools they ran well enough and lack of clarity in governance arrangements.

But as Jon Andrews has just shown us, there are also many many high performing MATs that are helping to transform the life chances of pupils across the country.

As previous Ofsted analysis has shown, these MATs also share some common characteristics, such as:

- an ability to recruit and retain strong executive leaders
- a well-planned, broad and balanced curriculum
- a commitment to providing a high-quality education for all pupils
- investment in the professional development of teachers and the sharing of knowledge and expertise across a strong network of constituent schools
- a high priority given to initial teacher training and leadership development to secure the pipeline of talent
- clear frameworks of governance, accountability and delegation
- effective use of assessment information to identify, escalate and tackle problems quickly

This is a powerful template.

Education quality and data – the John Patten principle

One of the characteristics highlighted above was the importance of a broad

and balanced curriculum. I would hope it hasn't escaped anyone in this room's attention that this theme of curriculum has been a core component of my first year and a half as Chief Inspector: making sure that we direct much of our attention to education of substance and how it is achieved, not just reported outcomes.

And last year I received an interesting letter from John Patten, who was the Secretary of State responsible for steering Ofsted's creation through parliament. He reminded me that Ofsted had been created:

in deliberate parallel with examination performance tables. They were introduced in tandem to ensure greater transparency, accountability and educational improvement in the interests of children, parents and the wider national community'.

In other words Ofsted, from its very inception, was designed to complement, rather than reinforce, performance data.

To be clear, I am not suggesting that there should be no correlation between what we find about the quality of education on inspection and what the data says about a school's performance. They are, one hopes, clearly related. But inspection asks a different question. We want to know how schools are achieving a good education, not just what the results are.

As I said to the Public Accounts Committee in Parliament last week, while I believe the current performance measures are as good as they ever been, I very much want to make sure that at Ofsted we focus on the 'how', on what performance tables cannot capture, so we can get the clearest view of whether schools, and where relevant the MATs to which they belong, are doing the right things.

Of course we already do this to a considerable extent. If you take the analysis done for my first annual report, where we compared our inspection judgements with Progress 8 outcomes, the charge that 'data is all' is clearly disproved.

More recently, my [data team published research](#) that shows that 'good' schools with a low percentage of white working class children who are eligible for free school meals, so advantaged schools, have a median Progress 8 score of +0.2. Whereas, if you look at the schools at the other end of the disadvantage spectrum, 'good' schools with a high percentage of this group have a median Progress 8 score, is quite a lot lower. It is -0.1. That is a big difference.

The same pattern of difference applies to all our judgements.

Rather than suggesting a bias against deprived schools, if anything, our data shows that inspectors are demonstrating, through their judgements, an awareness that Progress 8 isn't a perfect measure of progress and that it doesn't paint the whole picture of educational quality in a secondary school.

In the new framework, we're thinking about how we can take the inspection conversation even further on education itself and less on data. This is the human element that Ofsted brings to the accountability process. You can't create a precise, codified rule for what good looks like. Data should always be just the start of the conversation that our inspectors have with schools. After all no performance table can tell you what schools aren't doing; they can't reveal what's not happening or who isn't being educated.

It is that interest in 'why and what' that has been driving our work on the curriculum. It has been extremely gratifying that since announcing our new focus on the curriculum there has been virtually no disagreement with my thesis that it is an area that has been given too little attention for too long.

I do appreciate though that any change of emphasis from Ofsted does excite nervousness in the sector. We have an absolute obligation, which we take very seriously indeed, to make sure that we don't inadvertently create workload or generate misconceptions about Ofsted preferences. We also have to make sure we put plenty of time and resource into developing any changes.

So I want to be reassuring about our new framework. We are not rushing into this. It will be 2 years into my tenure as Chief Inspector before we get to the formal consultation our proposed changes, which won't come into effect until September next year. We are taking our time.

This has allowed us to carry out a thorough, research-based, curriculum review, before going anywhere near inspection practice. We have researched primary and secondary curriculum, undertaken workshops with schools to help develop this further and will be testing ideas in the summer. Alongside our research work, we've already built more about the curriculum into our inspector training, with very positive feedback.

Curriculum

I know that there have been concerns raised in some quarters that a move by Ofsted to define what a good approach to curriculum looks like, will lead, by accident perhaps rather than design, to the creation of an Ofsted-approved curriculum. I can reassure you this will not be the case. We will be interested in why schools make the decisions they make, whether that's about shortening Key Stage 3 or the range of qualifications on offer.

I am in fact firmly of the view that a focus on curriculum will help to tackle excessive workload for teachers and school leaders. Such a focus moves inspection more towards being a conversation about what actually happens in schools. As opposed to school leaders feeling that they must justify their actions with endless progress and performance metrics. Those who are bold and ambitious for their pupils will be rewarded as a result and hopefully the shift will act as a disincentive for some of the more dubious gaming activities we hear too much about.

And as the recent interest in our research into off-rolling shows, there is a great appetite in the system to expose inequity and where schools are losing

sight of the purpose of education. And we all know that if Ofsted is clearly focusing on these practices, those tempted to succumb will reconsider.

At the end of the day our job is to look at what decisions are made, how they are translating into practice, and how schools know they are having the intended effect. I cannot stress enough, what we want is a dialogue to help make sure that every child gets a full, deep, rich education.

Conclusion

And where better to end than on that aspiration. This is the basis on which our new school landscape will surely be judged.

Thank you.