

Press release: Government pledge £28 million to support children and young people

Ten projects are receiving investment as part of the second round of the £80 million Life Chances Fund and will focus on helping young people into employment by providing education and training. The projects will also help reduce the number of days young people spend in care and help vulnerable children get prepared for school.

The projects are Social Impact Bonds, meaning Social Investors provide projects with up front funding and are reimbursed by government only when projects meet agreed results.

The Government's contribution is in addition to funding from local authorities who will provide a combined £83 million to the successful projects.

Minister for Sport and Civil Society, Tracey Crouch, said:

The Life Chances Fund is helping transform lives across the country and I am looking forward to seeing how these fantastic projects use this funding to benefit children and young people, teaching them valuable life skills.

Examples of the projects that will receive funding are:

Sheffield City Council will receive £19,294,766, the largest amount of money from the Life Chances fund. This will set up a local projects to help tackle a range of issues from mental health and wellbeing to homelessness and youth unemployment.

Harrow Council will be given £1,895,000 for its flexible therapeutic solution that offers 24/7 accessibility to support. This will enable young people to plan, coordinate and accelerate progress towards their goals. It will target vulnerable young people aged between 10 and 18, both in care and outside.

Think Forward will be granted £683,620 to implement its Move Forward programme which supports young people aged 14-25 with mild to moderate learning disabilities to develop the aspirations, qualifications and skills they need to realise their potential and gain paid employment.

The Life Chances Fund is being delivered on behalf of DCMS by the Big Lottery Fund, the largest funder of community activity in the UK.

NOTES TO EDITORS

The £80m Life Chances Fund launched in July 2016 with the objective of tackling entrenched social issues and helping those people in society who face the most significant barriers to leading happy and productive lives.

The fund is structured around six key themes: drug and alcohol dependency, children's services, early years, young people, older people's services, and healthy lives.

To date, a total of £45,152,177 of Life Chances Fund money has been committed across 20 projects, with more funding to be announced in the summer.

The grantees, the money they will receive and the project they will deliver, are listed below:

Sheffield City Council: will receive £19,294,766. This aims to maximise the impact of public spending across the city and achieve better social projects for residents. It will transform the way public services are delivered in Sheffield.

Future's Advice – Nottinghamshire: will receive £891,660 to offer a bespoke package of support and training to young people including: individual coaching, group work and peer support, and personal budget management, to reduce the proportion that are not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Norfolk County Council: will receive £1,238,512 to reduce the number of days children and young people spend in care. This will generate savings for the council and achieve improvements to the children's school attendance, educational attainment and wellbeing.

Gloucestershire Positive Behavioural Support Service: will receive £360,000 for its positive behavioural support service which aims to avoid the poor outcomes and high costs associated with children and young people with learning disabilities in residential care settings.

Harrow Council: will receive £1,895,000 for its The Adolescent Collaborative Multi-Channel which offers flexible therapeutic support through a new mobile app with 24/7 accessibility enabling young people to plan, coordinate and accelerate progress towards their goals. It will target vulnerable young people aged between 10 and 18, both in care and outside.

London Borough of Barking & Dagenham: will receive up to £540,000 to reduce the number of young people who are not in education, employment or training (NEET), through the provision of an intensive two-year one-to-one coaching programme delivered to young people in school years 10-12. The programme will target those hardest to reach and most at risk of becoming NEET.

Innovation Unit – Doncaster: will receive £1,795,810 to address poor school attendance and education attainment among 11 to 16 year olds who have been identified as having low social mobility and are at risk of becoming NEET.

The Skill Mill – locations across the north: will receive £1,793,302 to help get ex-offenders aged 16 – 18 into paid labour opportunities.

Family Lives – Westminster and Kensington & Chelsea: will receive £252,900 to narrow the gap in school readiness between vulnerable children and their better off peers by introducing the Parent Child Home Program, an American evidence-based programme targeted at low income and vulnerable families.

Think Forward – Islington, Kent and Surrey: will receive £683,620 for its Move Forward programme which will support young people aged 14-25 with mild to moderate learning disabilities to develop the aspirations, qualifications and skills they need to realise their potential and gain paid employment. The project includes the engagement of parents and staff at mainstream and special schools and colleges and Local Authorities. It will provide holistic and personalised 1:1 coaching support and participants will gain financial, social and wellbeing benefits associated with improved self-esteem and employment.

Press release: UK aid to help people in Cox's Bazar ahead of monsoon season

The UK today (Monday May 7 2018) pledges fresh humanitarian support for the Rohingya people living in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh.

The support comes ahead of the looming cyclone and monsoon season, and includes help to vaccinate almost one million people against deadly cholera.

Conditions in the huge camps near the Burmese border are set to become more life-threatening in the coming weeks as the rainy season begins, which could wash away the fragile and cramped makeshift shelters that are exposed to the elements and cause fatal diseases to spread more rapidly.

From the onset of the crisis the UK has been a leading donor, and today's announcement of an additional £70 million of humanitarian support will help ensure hundreds of thousands of persecuted Rohingya people who have fled neighbouring Burma will be better protected during this dangerous time.

UK aid is providing medication, sturdier shelters, food, clean water and support for women to give birth safely. It is also helping to support a large vaccination campaign against cholera in and around the Cox's Bazar camps that will benefit almost a million people – made up of both Rohingya families and Bangladeshis living near the camps – which is close in size to the population of Birmingham.

Today's UK aid is expected to provide up to:

- 200,000 people with the necessary materials to strengthen their shelters;
- 300,000 people with food assistance and clean water;
- 30,000 pregnant and breastfeeding women and 120,000 under-fives with emergency nutrition;
- 50,000 women – many of whom will give birth during the rainy season – to have access to midwifery care;
- 52,900 women and girls to have access to bathing cubicles; and
- 50,000 people to have access to healthcare services.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

The scale of this crisis is growing daily. With the devastating cyclone and monsoon season looming, even more lives could be lost, landslides could wipe out shelters and fatal diseases could spread.

The UK is leading the way to help vaccinate people against a deadly cholera outbreak, strengthen shelters, and provide vital food and water to vulnerable Rohingya families who have already been forced to flee their homes because of brutal violence and persecution.

The Bangladeshi Government must now use their expertise to ensure Rohingya families are saved from the dangerous rains.

Across the globe countries were quick to respond to the plight of the Rohingya people last year, but what is needed is a longer-term commitment to these vulnerable men, women and children who have suffered so much.

Today's announcement of UK aid takes the UK's total support for the crisis since August 2017 to £129 million and builds on the work the UK is doing throughout Bangladesh to prepare for and respond to the incoming monsoon rains.

UK aid backed vaccines have been sourced from the global cholera vaccine stockpile, funded by Gavi. The campaign, which started yesterday, is being implemented by the government of Bangladesh, working alongside the World Health Organisation.

UK-supported measles and diphtheria vaccination campaigns have also taken place. These vaccinations will provide protection against some of the most common diseases in the camps, which can be more widespread during the rainy season.

UK aid supported work on preparing the Cox's Bazar camps for the monsoon season began in January.

At the time, the UN estimated 102,000 Rohingya men, women and children were living in areas at risk of flooding and 12,000 people were at risk from landslides.

Work is also being done to reinforce pathways through the camps, which are needed to deliver supplies and services. More than 158,000 people have also received reinforced shelter and sandbags to protect them from winds and flood water.

Notes to editors

1. The UK has contributed £129 million to the crisis since 25 August 2017. As part of this, £70 million announced today is a new package of support, not previously allocated to this humanitarian programme.
2. This contribution will see the UK providing 10.5% of the total budget set out in the humanitarian Joint Response Plan launched in March.
3. This crisis resonates with the British public who have shown remarkable generosity raising £25.9 million for the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) Appeal. This includes £5 million which has been matched pound for pound by the UK Government.
4. There are approximately 941,000 Rohingya people living in Cox's Bazar camps. Of these 681,000 are new arrivals since August 2017.
5. The Oral Cholera Vaccine (OCV) campaign started on 6 May. The UK is Gavi's largest donor, contributing £1.44 billion over the 2016 to 2020 period, which equates to approximately 25% of their spend globally.
6. It will target approximately 1 million people including Rohingya people and those living in the host communities. Oral Cholera Vaccine is recommended to be given in two doses. Children under five will receive two doses and adults will receive their second dose from the previous campaign conducted in November.
7. Healthcare workers are also being trained to prevent, identify and treat common illnesses likely during the rainy season.

[Press release: Fully digital divorce application launched to the public](#)

The online service offers prompts and guidance to assist people in completing their application, and uses clear, non-technical language. The whole process can be completed online, including payment and uploading supporting evidence.

More than 1,000 petitions were issued through the new system during the testing phase – with 91% of people saying they were satisfied with the service. The new, refined and easy to use version was rolled out across England and Wales from 1 May.

Court staff currently spend 13,000 hours dealing with complex paper divorce forms, but this simpler and less technical online service has already contributed to a 95% drop in the number of applications being returned because of mistakes, when compared with paper forms. This means only 0.6% of forms have been rejected since January.

Justice Minister Lucy Frazer, said:

Allowing divorce applications to be made online will help make sure we are best supporting people going through an often difficult and painful time.

More people will have the option of moving from paper-based processes to online systems which will cut waste, speed up services which can be safely expedited, and otherwise better fit with modern day life.

These changes are part of £1 billion programme to transform the court system – making it quicker, more accessible and easier to use for all. Other examples of the government's court reforms which are making access to justice easier for everyone include:

- A digital system which makes it quicker and easier for people to claim money owed, resolve disputes out of court and access mediation.
- A new service which allows people to submit their tax appeals online – drastically cutting the number of applications being returned as incomplete or inaccurate.
- A paperless system, in operation at Lavender Hill Magistrates' Court, which means thousands of offenders caught dodging fares or using fraudulent tickets can now be punished more swiftly and effectively.

Notes to editors:

1. Two case studies are available for interview. Please call the MoJ press office on 020 3334 4872 for more information.
2. Rebecca, who did not want her last name to be used, received legal confirmation of her divorce 11.5 weeks after submitting her application – the paper process takes around six months. She said: "Thank you ever so much for making this process so much less painful than it could have been, especially as a disabled person. The service was a lot easier because I use a wheelchair and didn't have to go out, and I also found it very easy as an autistic person to get support from the team when I had questions."
3. Elaine Everett was separated for more than two years before applying for her divorce, which she has now received. She said: "It was marvellous, pain free and less stressful than the paper form which I tried several years ago to complete but got fed up of it being rejected."
4. Some 91% of people satisfied with the service relates to 1100 people questioned.
5. Evidence has shown 40% of divorce applications are rejected at the first stage due to the forms not being complete or missing documents. Since January, from the circa 1100 applications only 0.6% have been rejected, due to us monitoring, evaluating and understanding the reasons for rejections and developing the system to eliminate these.
6. Speaking at a lecture earlier this month, Sir James Munby, President of the Family Division of the High Court, said: "The online divorce pilot

has been a triumphant success and shows, to my mind conclusively, that this is – must be the way of the future.”

News story: Foreign Secretary to visit Washington

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson will travel to Washington DC today (Sunday, 6 May) for two days of talks with the US Administration on Iran, North Korea, Syria, and other major international issues.

While in Washington, the Foreign Secretary will meet Vice President Mike Pence and other senior Administration figures, including National Security Advisor John Bolton. He will also have the opportunity to discuss key issues with Congressional foreign policy leaders.

Speaking ahead of his visit, Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

On so many of the world’s foreign policy challenges the UK and US are in lockstep. We’ve seen this recently with the response to the poisonings in Salisbury, our strong response to Assad’s use of chemical weapons in Syria, and the effort to de-nuclearise North Korea.

The UK, US, and European partners are also united in our effort to tackle the kind of Iranian behaviour that makes the Middle East region less secure – its cyber activities, its support for groups like Hezbollah, and its dangerous missile programme, which is arming Houthi militias in Yemen.

Further information

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Press release: Schools Minister announces boost to computer science teaching

Organisations are invited to run the first ever National Centre of Computing Science Education, the School Standards Minister Nick Gibb announced today.

The national centre, along with 40 leading schools across the country, will help improve teaching of the computing curriculum and is supported by a new programme which will train up to 8000 computing teachers on the latest digital skills – that is enough to ensure every secondary school in England has a teacher who can support pupils to succeed.

The digital sectors contributed £118 billion to the economy in 2015 and an estimated 1.2 million more people with specialist digital skills are needed by 2022. By ensuring the next generation has the technological skills we need we can help to maintain the UK's position as a leading global digital economy.

This announcement comes as thousands of pupils prepare to sit reformed GCSEs in twenty subjects this year, including computer science. It follows last year's successful introduction of reformed maths and English GCSEs, with 59.1 per cent of pupils achieving a grade 4 or above in these subjects. The new, gold-standard GCSEs are on a par with the best in the world and will help deliver the skilled workforce Britain's industries need.

Standards are rising in schools thanks to these reforms and the hard work of teachers, which has resulted in 1.9 million more children in good or outstanding schools than 2010.

School Standards Minister Nick Gibb said:

The fast-paced world of technology is constantly evolving and it is important that our computer science teachers are trained in the very latest digital skills.

This programme will give teachers the subject knowledge and support they need to guide their pupils through the new computing curriculum. The knowledge pupils will gain in this subject at GCSE and A level will help employers to be able to recruit the skilled workforce they need, helping to build a Britain that is fit for the future.

On Monday 14 May, pupils will start sitting the new computer science GCSE for the first time after working towards it since 2016. This qualification has replaced the ICT GCSE and now includes more challenging content, such as coding and computer programming. This is to ensure that pupils that take this GCSE are better

prepared for further education, higher education and beyond.

Today's announcement follows on from the Autumn Budget, during which £84 million was committed to upskill computer science teachers. The National Centre of Computing Education will be a major part of this commitment, providing resources at primary and secondary level. Linked to this centre will be a national network of 40 school-led Computing Hubs where teachers will be able to access specialist training which will benefit pupils.

Some of the funding will also be used for an A-level support programme. This will set out to improve the quality of teaching in AS and A level computer science, and increase students' knowledge and understanding so they are better prepared for further study and employment in digital and technology roles.

This announcement also looks to fulfil one of the aims of the Industrial Strategy, which is to invest in maths, digital and technical education and to help generate well paid, highly skilled jobs across the country. According to the government's digital strategy, digital sectors contributed £118 billion to the economy in 2015 and exports of digital goods and services now amount to over £50 billion. Many jobs also now have a digital element, and it is predicted that within 20 years 90% of all jobs will require some element of digital skills.

Today sees the process of finding a supplier begin, and work on the National Centre is expected to start during autumn 2018, with the first training available in the 2018/19 academic year.