

# [Press release: £7.5 million fund for councils' digital innovation opens](#)

Councils seeking to transform their public services through digital innovation can apply to a new [£7.5 million fund](#) from 24 September, Local Government Minister Rishi Sunak MP has announced.

Speaking at the LocalGovCamp event in Birmingham, Minister Sunak invited applications from local authorities to change the way they invest in technology, share expertise and ensure members of the public receive the best quality digital services from their local council.

Grants of up to £100,000 will be available for projects which demonstrate they benefit local public services and have the potential to be rolled out more widely across the country.

Local Government Minister, Rishi Sunak MP, said:

Digital innovation is re-shaping our lives, and many local authorities are at the forefront of embracing technology in ingenious ways to improve services for the public.

Whether it's an app to report fly-tipping, or a slick web solution to pay your council tax, we want to know the best ideas so we can help to make them happen.

I would also like to encourage councils to sign up to our Local Digital Declaration, so we can all support each other and build on each other's work to revolutionise public services.

The fund will also be used to provide digital skills training for at least 1,000 staff working on digital solutions at councils.

The fund's opening comes after the government made a "digital pledge" backed by the £7.5 million of government funding with the launch of a Local Digital Declaration in July. The declaration aims to connect the work of local government digital teams to deliver better local public services.

Alongside this, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government established a new team to work with councils to help them deliver on their declaration commitments.

Local authorities can apply and find out more information at [localdigital.gov.uk/fund](https://localdigital.gov.uk/fund)

Local authorities and central government departments in England are eligible to submit an expression of interest, whether individually or in partnership with other local authorities. All bids will need to demonstrate input from at

least two local authorities.

The bidding is not open to non-public sector organisations. However, there are no restrictions on winning bids to commission a private company to help deliver the project.

The deadline to submit an expression of interest is 5 October 2018. A decision on which projects have been chosen is expected to be announced by 3 December.

A blog about the fund's opening is at: [mhclgdigital.blog.gov.uk](http://mhclgdigital.blog.gov.uk)

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## **News story: Defence Secretary announces extension of support to Ukraine's Armed Forces**

In his first visit as Defence Secretary to Ukraine, Gavin Williamson announced that the UK will be extending its military training operation there for a further two years until 2020.

Mr Williamson met with Defence Minister Stepan Poltorak and General of the Army, Victor Muzhenko, to discuss the threats faced by Ukrainian Armed Forces. He also announced the expansion of the UK Defence Section in Kyiv and introduction of a permanent Naval Attaché to help build Ukrainian naval capability.

The Defence Secretary also met President Poroshenko reaffirming the UK's commitment to their country. He also discussed the Russian security forces continuing to disrupt merchant vessels trying to access Ukrainian ports in the Sea of Azov, posing negative effects on Ukraine's economy.

He also travelled to Marinka in the east of Ukraine to see the effects of the four-year conflict in the Donbas region, and received an operational update from the Joint Force Operation Commander Lt Gen Serhiy Nayev. The visit to Marinka highlighted the severity of the ongoing conflict, including its humanitarian and environmental impacts, driven by Russian aggression.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

I witnessed first-hand the suffering caused by the brutal conflict in eastern Ukraine – a conflict that is being prolonged by the Russian-backed separatists.

By extending and expanding our training programmes, we are sending a clear message – we support the people of Ukraine and are firmly committed to its sovereignty as it faces down blatant Russian aggression.

In his first visit as Defence Secretary to Ukraine, Gavin Williamson announced the UK will extend its military training operation for a further two years. Crown copyright.

The training, delivered through Operation Orbital, has been expanded in 2018 to include anti-armour, infantry skills, counter-sniping and mortar planning. This is in addition to the defensive skills programmes such as the identification of mines and improvised explosive devices (IEDs), medical care and logistics that UK personnel have been delivering since early 2015.

British personnel have trained over 9,500 of the Ukrainian Armed Forces since the start of Operation Orbital in 2015. The coming year will see a continuing growth in joint training activity with our Canadian allies as well as initiatives between UK personnel and other nations who have also committed themselves to supporting Ukraine.

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## **[Notice: B7 5HS, Aston Manor Limited: environmental permit issued](#)**

The Environment Agency publish permits that they issue under the Industrial Emissions Directive (IED).

This decision includes the permit and decision document for:

- Operator name: Aston Manor Limited
- Installation name: Aston Manor Brewery
- Permit number: EPR/QP3334VF/A001

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## **[News story: Funding boost to help pupils affected by domestic abuse](#)**

The Home Office has today (Friday 21 September) awarded charity Operation Encompass £163,000 for its vital initiative to support children who attend school following a domestic abuse incident.

Operation Encompass is a system which ensures the police contact a school before the next school day when one of their pupils has been exposed to domestic abuse.

This allows a school's safeguarding team to make sure the appropriate support is in place to give the pupil the assistance they need.

The simple, yet highly effective, scheme is the brainchild of headteacher Elisabeth Carney-Haworth and husband David, a former police officer.

Elisabeth, the headteacher of Torpoint Nursery and Infant School in Cornwall said:

Imagine arriving at school after hearing or witnessing domestic abuse – you have not slept, had no breakfast, don't have all your school uniform and your home is in disarray. Now you are expected to sit in your classroom and learn.

This is happening in our schools every day and the current procedures in many police forces do not allow for the reporting to schools of domestic abuse incidents in a timely fashion.

This funding from the Home Office will assist in ensuring that Operation Encompass is embraced fully by all police forces and that the partnership between the police and schools will enable them to work towards providing trauma-informed support.

David, a former police sergeant at Devon and Cornwall Police, added:

We know if you are a child exposed to domestic abuse then you will suffer emotional and psychological harm and it will have negative consequences on their health, education and wellbeing.

This funding will help make sure Operation Encompass will be in every force, in every school, for every child. Our children deserve no less.

The scheme currently operates in some form in 33 forces in England and Wales.

The funding will support the rollout of the initiative to all forces and allow Operation Encompass to carry out an audit of existing systems and the effectiveness of the supportive interventions in place for children.

Statistics have found that as many as 1 in 5 children in the UK are witness to or exposed to domestic abuse and those affected by this horrible crime are 4 times more likely to go on and experience or perpetrate domestic abuse later in life.

Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability Victoria Atkins said:

I am so proud to award funding to this vital initiative. The passion David and Elisabeth have shown in developing Operation Encompass is inspiring and demonstrates how such a simple solution can support so many children.

It is heartbreaking to think that a child's education is suffering through no fault of their own. By police and schools having this system in place we can ensure these youngsters have the immediate support they need.

This shows the government's commitment to providing help to children affected by domestic abuse and we will build on this as we introduce the draft Domestic Abuse Bill.

The funding is the latest in a series of steps the government has taken to transform the way we respond to domestic abuse, and specifically support children. In July, the Home Office launched an £8 million fund for projects designed to intervene early to help children who have been directly or indirectly affected by domestic abuse.

This comes ahead of the draft Domestic Abuse Bill, which will be published later this session. More than 3,200 people responded to the domestic abuse consultation, which includes measures such as introducing a new statutory definition of domestic abuse, new domestic abuse protection orders, and the creation of a domestic abuse commissioner.

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## [News story: Essential maintenance to our online services](#)

*Updated:* Essential maintenance planned for Tuesday 25 September.

You may experience some issues with our online services between 5pm and 9pm on Tuesday 25 September.

We're sorry for any inconvenience.