

News story: New free schools to open across England

Today 53 new free schools and one University Technical College will open their doors, creating up to 40,000 new school places across the country.

The new openers have been set up by multi-academy trusts, charities and community groups and often provide specialist education for pupils.

Among those opening this week are the Saracens High School, which will be supported by Saracens Rugby Club – a partnership between local schools and Middlesex University to boost pupils' education through sport. Free schools are among the highest performing state-funded schools in the country and many are in disadvantaged areas, helping to improve education for every child, such as Tauheedul Islam Boys High School, Blackburn, The Reach Academy Feltham and Dixons Trinity Academy which all received top GCSE grades in 2017.

Today's announcement is part of a government drive to ensure more families have access to a good school place, which will see the creation of one million places between 2010 and 2020 – the fastest increase for two generations.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

I want to create new, great schools where they are needed most and give parents greater choice when looking at the schools that are right for their children. For years, innovative free schools have been leading the way on this – from the specialist maths schools run by some of our top universities to the special free schools creating places for children who have additional learning needs.

The new schools opening their doors this term will build on this record, bringing in the likes of Saracens Rugby Club and Sky to provide pupils with excellent sports activities and classes on cutting edge media technology. Thanks to reforms like this and the hard work of our teachers, we have 1.9 million more children in good or outstanding schools than in 2010 – I look forward to seeing these new schools flourish too.

Schools opening this week will range from primary schools to sixth form colleges, with some tailored specifically to provide technical education. The new openers include:

- Saracens High School in Barnet – a mainstream secondary school which will provide 1,130 places, including a 230 place sixth-form. This will be the first school opened by a The Saracens Multi-Academy Trust, which

includes Saracens Sport Foundation and Middlesex University.

- Bolder Academy in Hounslow – which is being set up by a group of local headteachers and has teamed up with Sky to deliver in-school and extra-curricular activities in sport, media and technology. It will offer 1,150 places, of which 250 will be sixth-form.
- John Taylor Free School in Staffordshire – will be the first new 11-18 secondary school to open in Staffordshire for a generation. The school will offer 1,440 places and form part of the successful John Taylor Multi-Academy Trust which has consistently had strong results with some of the highest performing schools in the region.
- Red Kite Special Academy in Northamptonshire – a special provision school for 100 pupils with severe learning difficulties and those on the autistic spectrum. The school is part of the Kingsley Learning Foundation Trust between the Kingsley School and the Red Kite Free School.
- North East Futures University Technical College in Newcastle – will specialise in healthcare science and digital technology. The University Technical College is part of the Tyne Coast Academy Trust (TCAT) and has been set up in partnership with the University of Sunderland and businesses including Accenture, Ubisoft and Newcastle-upon-Tyne NHS Trust.

Of those inspected by Ofsted, 85% of free schools are rated good or outstanding, while 31% are rated outstanding. In 2017, two of the top 10 Progress 8 scores for state-funded schools in England were achieved by free schools.

The new openers announced today take the total number of these schools open to 520 since 2010 and means more than 120 in 152 local authorities now have at least one free school, studio school or university technical college in their area. The Department has committed to approving a further 110 new schools by 2020.

The new schools open as 20 local authorities across the country are set to receive a share of a £50 million funding boost to support the creation of new free schools where they are needed most. The Presumption Free School Grant will help pay to build the new free schools and will create around 15,000 places across the country. The Department will work closely with the 20 local authorities selected for the Presumption Free School Grant to support the building of the new schools.

Mark Lehain, Interim Director of New Schools Network, said:

It's fantastic to see another 53 free schools opening their doors for the first time this September. Opening a new school is, rightly, a challenging process and it's thanks to the hard work and dedication of these groups of people that scores of families will benefit.

This cohort of free schools is particularly exciting; it spans the breadth of the country, as well as all phases and types, including four special free schools. It also highlights the strength of the free school policy, which allows schools to provide the education their local community wants – such as Saracens High School, set-up by the rugby club, Middlesex University and the Gold Star Federation, or the Bolder Academy that has teamed up with Sky to provide media and technology teaching.

The free school programme continues to be the most successful and cost effective way of providing much needed new school places. I wish all of those opening this year the very best.

Andrew Griffith, Group Chief Operating Officer for Sky, said:

As Bolder Academy will be literally right on our doorstep, we can see exciting opportunities to be a good neighbour. We have a huge array of skills and expertise here on-site and I hope that we can support the school in many ways, including Sky colleagues volunteering to help out with in-school and after-school activities in areas such as sport, media and technology.

Nigel Wray, Saracens Chairman, said:

What a challenge and a privilege to be able to open a school, to try and make a real difference to young people in a disadvantaged community.

The Saracens High School is, we believe, the first mainstream secondary school ever to be set up by a professional sports club. Our aim, as it is for our players, is to help every young person to be the best that they can possibly be.

Maro Itoje, Saracens Rugby Union player and England International said:

It's exciting as a player to see the Saracens High School's vision and ethos is built on the core values that have helped us as a team to be successful over recent seasons. I'm proud to be at a club that is committed to providing young disadvantaged people in our local community with an education.

Mike Donoghue, Head of Trust at John Taylor Free School, said:

We are delighted to be sponsoring the delivery of John Taylor Free School in Tatenhill, which will be the first new build secondary school in Staffordshire for a generation. As is the case with all schools in our Trust, the school will welcome children of all abilities, faiths, social, ethnic and cultural backgrounds and will be a learning hub for the wider community.

John Taylor Free School will equip young people with the knowledge, experiences, skills and attributes to enable success beyond school and will further the innovative heritage of John Taylor High School. John Taylor Free School will share the 'DNA' that has helped make our Trust's schools successful: a focus on quality teaching, the setting of high expectations for all, a belief in collaboration and the added value that it brings to, and an emphasis on the development – academic and personal – of all children and adults who work with us. However, it is a sibling, not a clone – having a character and context that makes it individual, and valued for it.

John Taylor Multi-Academy Trust has worked closely and harmoniously with the DfE, the ESFA, Staffordshire County Council, contractors and other partners to deliver a truly amazing new school which we are convinced, over time, will become a leading presence in the sector across the region and beyond. Today's announcement follows the news earlier this year that an additional £50 million will be spent on creating new school places for children with special education needs and disabilities (SEND), and a further £630 million in basic need funding for 2021 to help meet local demand for places.

[Press release: Multi-million improvements to get underway in Hull next month](#)

Two key projects which will better connect Hull and help shape the city's future will begin next month and members of the public are invited to find out more.

A public event next Thursday (13 September, 10am to 7.30pm, Hull Marina

Holiday Inn) will give people the chance to look at the exciting plans for Princes Quay Bridge and the improvement work at Roger Millward Way roundabout, both of which will start in October.

The new bridge, linking the marina with the southern end of Princes Dock, will improve access and make it easier for pedestrians, cyclists and disabled users to cross the A63.

At Roger Millward Way, an extra lane will be added through the middle of the roundabout and additional traffic signals will help to reduce congestion and smooth the flow of traffic.

Highways England senior project manager James Leeming said:

It's great news that we'll be starting work on these two key schemes. The bridge has been designed to allow further development around the waterfront and is an important part of Hull's plans for the future.

We're carrying out these schemes together under one contractor to minimise disruption and to make the best use of the funds available.

While both the bridge and Roger Millward Way roundabout improvements are being built, we'll have narrower lanes and a reduced speed limit in place.

We want the public to come along to the event and look at what we are doing. There will be the chance to see how the traffic will be managed and how access for pedestrians will be maintained during construction.

The bridge is being part-funded with a £4 million contribution awarded to Hull City Council by the Humber Local Enterprise Partnership.

The £6m improvements to the roundabout are being funded as part of a nationwide £220m Congestion Relief Fund which was announced by the Government last year to help tackle congestion at key locations.

To prepare for work starting on the bridge, Hull's historic Spurn Lightship will be moved by local marine specialists this week. It will then be moved to its permanent home on the Marina once the bridge has been built.

Councillor Daren Hale, portfolio holder for economic investment and regeneration, said:

Following years of lobbying, it is thrilling to see the commencement of these schemes which are vital to Hull. The building of the pedestrian bridge is a core part of the A63 improvement scheme, and the impact the bridge will have on Hull's economy

cannot be underestimated.

The bridge will reunite the Marina with the city centre by connecting the heart of the city to its thriving waterfront, and is a critical element of our long-term regeneration plans.

The bridge is expected to be finished by early 2020 and work on Roger Millward Way is expected to take around 9 months to complete. The schemes will be delivered by Interserve who has been appointed as the contractor.

Both schemes will be completed in advance of the major A63 Castle Street project which will improve access to the port and city centre. The development consent order application for the project will be submitted later this month ahead of work starting in 2020.

The upgrade is part of the government's £15 billion roads investment strategy, which is transforming the road network and improving connections between cities.

More details about the scheme are available on the [scheme webpage](#) and updates will be provided via Twitter using #a63hullpqbridge

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[Press release: West Midlands to become UK's first large-scale 5G testbed](#)

The West Midlands has been selected to become the innovative home to the UK's first multi-city 5G test bed. The multi million pound trial of new high speed connectivity will pave the way for the future rollout of 5G across the UK, making the region the first in the UK ready to trial new 5G applications and services at scale.

The Urban Connected Communities Project, the next step in the Government's 5G Testbed and Trials Programme, will develop a large-scale, 5G pilot across the region, with hubs in Birmingham, Coventry and Wolverhampton.

Up to £50m is currently available for the project, subject to further development and approval of the business plan. This includes £25m from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and a further £25m match funding from regional partners. An additional £25m may be made available at a later stage.

Minister for Digital, Margot James said:

5G has the potential to dramatically transform the way we go about our daily lives, and we want the citizens of the UK to be amongst the first to experience all the opportunities and benefits this new technology will bring. The West Midlands Testbed, which is the first of its kind anywhere in the world, will be instrumental in helping us realise this ambition.

Following its selection through open competition, the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) will now work with the 5G Testbeds and Trials Team at the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and industry partners on preparing the formal business case for approval, with the first of a series of projects expected to go live early next year.

The West Midlands Combined Authorities bid has an initial focus on the health, construction and automotive sectors, with its overarching ambition to help drive economic growth and benefit people's lives through participation in new digital technologies and digitally transformed public services.

Subject to formal approval, initial plans include:

- Hospital outpatient appointments and emergency consultations carried out remotely by video link not subject to dropage or latency barriers. As well as being more convenient for patients, this means they can play back their appointment at a later date or share it securely with a family member or carer to help inform their care.
- "Connected Ambulances" – Paramedic crews at an incident could access specialist advice while they are at the scene, eg video conferencing with consultants or other clinical specialists. Live streaming of patient data from ambulance en route to hospital would help inform the immediate care patients receive on arrival.
- Live streaming of CCTV footage from public transport buses, enabling immediate action against anti-social behaviour. "Intelligent cameras" using artificial intelligence (AI) to identify incidents could provide the opportunity for far greater coverage than is possible at present.

Autonomous vehicles will transform the way we travel, preventing major accidents, improving traffic flow and reducing energy consumption. The WMCA will partner with Jaguar Land Rover to facilitate real world testing of driverless cars.

Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands, said:

This announcement is game-changing for the West Midlands economy. This will be the backbone of our future economy and society.

We have been working to put the foundations in place to grow the industries which will create the jobs of the future, particularly around driverless vehicles and life sciences where we have a genuine advantage. To deliver the future of these industries we need the power of 5g.

The potential of this technology is endless – and we will enjoy the benefits first. From monitoring the health of babies and the elderly, to the way out people are linked to the economy of the future, the way companies do business, the way we deliver public services, the experience of travellers on public transport and the way we deliver City of Culture and the Commonwealth Games – everything can be made better thanks to the power of this technology.

DCMS funding for the project will come from the £200 million government has assigned to develop 5G technologies as part of more than £1bn of investment in next-generation digital infrastructure, including via the £31bn National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF).

The 5G Testbeds and Trials Programme forms part of the Government's Industrial Strategy, aimed at continually driving the UK's connectivity, telecommunications and digital sectors, and investing in the skills, industries and infrastructure of the future.

Notes to Editors

1. The NPIF is designed to bolster UK productivity, which is crucial to raising living standards. Through the NPIF, the Government is investing in the vital infrastructure needed to make it easier for people to connect with others, and work remotely and flexibly.
 2. West Midlands Combined Authority have committed an initial £25m of funding to the Urban Connected Communities Project, which Government will match. This will be subject to approval of the project's business plan. Further public funding will be subject to the development of the project and the parameters of the business case. The total investment made from public funding for the entire project will be matched by commercial funding.
 3. In the next phase of the Urban Connected Communities project West Midlands Combined Authority will be looking to develop partnerships with the mobile sector to design and deliver the project.
-

[Press release: Sir Alan Duncan statement on the United Nations International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala](#)

The Rt Hon Sir Alan Duncan MP, Minister of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office said:

The UK is disappointed by the Government of Guatemala's decision not to renew the mandate of the United Nations International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) beyond its current end date of September 2019.

CICIG has made a valuable contribution to the fight against corruption and impunity in Guatemala, strengthening the national institutions of Guatemala in the process. The UK, along with the EU and other international partners, has been a strong supporter of CICIG and we value their work and close cooperation with the Office of the Attorney General of Guatemala.

The UK hopes that CICIG is able to carry out its work fully and independently until the conclusion of its mandate.

We remain committed to supporting the rule of law and strong, independent institutions in Guatemala, which are vital for increasing security and prosperity.

Further information

- Follow Foreign Office Minister Sir Alan Duncan on Twitter [@AlanDuncanMP](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

Media enquiries

For journalists

Email

newsdesk@fco.gov.uk

Newsdesk

020 7008 3100

[Press release: Sir Alan Duncan statement on the United Nations International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala](#)



The Rt Hon Sir Alan Duncan MP, Minister of State for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office said:

The UK is disappointed by the Government of Guatemala's decision not to renew the mandate of the United Nations International Commission against Impunity in Guatemala (CICIG) beyond its current end date of September 2019.

CICIG has made a valuable contribution to the fight against corruption and impunity in Guatemala, strengthening the national institutions of Guatemala in the process. The UK, along with the EU and other international partners, has been a strong supporter of CICIG and we value their work and close cooperation with the Office of the Attorney General of Guatemala.

The UK hopes that CICIG is able to carry out its work fully and independently until the conclusion of its mandate.

We remain committed to supporting the rule of law and strong, independent institutions in Guatemala, which are vital for increasing security and prosperity.

Further information

Published 3 September 2018