

£50 million to deliver world-class facilities for T Level students

£50 million will be invested in colleges, schools and sixth forms delivering T levels across England from 2022 to improve and expand teaching spaces and facilities.

The funding will ensure students have world-class facilities when studying for T Levels, helping to transform the provision of technical education to help fill local skills gaps and level up opportunities across the country. Sixty-five building projects will receive a share of the funding, providing thousands of students with industry quality equipment for hands-on experience right from the start of their training, and high-tech classrooms.

T Levels – co-created with over 250 employers including Fujitsu and Amazon – are equivalent to three A levels and uniquely combine classroom study with industry placements, so students gain the skills businesses need allowing them to go straight into the workplace, onto an apprenticeship or further study. New subjects including Health, Science and Onsite Construction will be added from September.

The funding will be used to refurbish buildings and facilities, including upgrading classrooms and creating specialist spaces such as teaching wards, and building or improving laboratories for health and science students.

Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills Gillian Keegan said:

T Levels are a game changer for young people, providing a high-quality technical equivalent to A levels that have been designed hand-in-hand with leading employers so students and businesses can be sure they will get the skills they need to thrive in a high tech economy.

This multi-million pound investment will mean even more students will benefit from world-class facilities, giving them access to brilliant new buildings that will help them get ready for the world of work.

West Suffolk College is one of the providers to receive a share of the investment, to refurbish and create new facilities to deliver Digital T Level courses, including a mixed reality suite to explore uses of coding, and specialist classrooms and collaborative teaching spaces to enable informal learning.

Tameside College will create a health skills ward to support teaching on the Health and Science route, and Birchwood Community High School in Warrington will refurbish spaces to create a new laboratory and other spaces to teach Health and Science.

Dr Paul Phillips, CBE, Principal and Chief Executive of Weston College Group said:

The successful application for the T Level Capital Fund Building and Facilities Improvement Grant has enabled Weston College to transform facilities and develop new opportunities for learners to work with state of the art resources. As we move forward with the government's skills strategy via the White Paper, funding such as this is paramount to realising the highly positive aims and objectives from central government.

David Hughes, Chief Executive of the Association of Colleges said:

T Levels will be available in more than 100 colleges and schools from this September and are a high quality option for young people looking to build a career. I welcome the fact that the government is continuing to invest in up-to-date buildings and facilities for these courses and students.

T Levels form a key part of the government's reforms to revolutionise skills and technical education, providing students with the skills and experience they need to progress into well-paid jobs, further study or an apprenticeship.

The first three T Levels in Design, Surveying and Planning for Construction, Digital Production, Design and Development and Education and Childcare were introduced in September 2020. A further seven are rolling out from this September in subjects including Health, Science and Onsite Construction, with subjects including Finance, Media and Legal introduced from 2022 and 2023.

Today's announcement builds on the £133 million made available to support providers delivering T Levels in 2020 and 2021, including funding given to all new T Level providers to purchase specialist equipment so students have access to the equipment they will use when they get a job. Further funding is expected to be awarded later in the year.

[Landmark consultation launched on the reintroduction of beavers in England](#)

Plans to release beavers into the wild in England have been set out in a consultation launching today (Wednesday 25 August) – marking a cautious step towards further reintroductions and establishing native beaver populations.

Beavers can play a hugely significant role in helping to restore nature to England. Widely referred to as 'ecosystem engineers', they create dams from trees, mud and rocks, which raise water levels, creating pools and wetland habitats which support the recovery of a wide range of native species.

Under the Government's proposals, applications for licences to release beavers into the wild would need to meet certain criteria, including demonstrating positive stakeholder engagement and local buy in, and proof that a comprehensive assessment has been undertaken of the impacts on surrounding land, the water environment, infrastructures, habitats, and protected species. Projects must also ensure that support for landowners and river users is put in place.

The consultation follows a successful reintroduction in Devon – [the River Otter beavers reintroduction trial](#) – which over five-years brought a wealth of benefits to the local area and ecology, including enhancing the environment at a local wildlife site, creating wetland habitat, and reducing flood risk for housing downstream.

The 12-week consultation is seeking views on:

- Potential future releases into the wild
- Current and future releases into enclosures
- Mitigation and management of beaver activity or impacts in the wild, including the River Otter population and all other existing wild living beaver populations

Plans to give beavers legal protection in England are also being announced today, to support their recovery. This will make it an offence to deliberately capture, kill, disturb or injure beavers, or damage breeding sites or resting places.

Secretary of State George Eustice said:

We are committed to providing opportunities to reintroduce formerly native species, such as beavers, where the benefits for the environment, people and the economy are clear.

Today marks a significant milestone for the reintroduction of beavers in the wild, with the launch of the Government's consultation on our national approach and management of beavers in England.

But we also understand that there are implications for landowners, so we are taking a cautious approach to ensure that all potential impacts are carefully considered.

Chair of Natural England, Tony Juniper, said:

The launch of Defra's consultation today marks an important and

positive moment for the future of these wonderful animals in England. Beavers are not only fascinating creatures in their own right, but are also ecosystem engineers that will play a key role in restoring and linking habitats, in the process bringing many environmental benefits, like we have seen in the highly successful River Otter trial in Devon – hugely positive transformations, including the creation of wetland habitat, improving water quality and smoothing flood peaks.

I encourage everyone to respond, so that the way we shape the future of wild Beavers reflects as many perspectives as possible.

Decisions on the reintroduction of formerly native species in England are made based on the principles set out in the Government's [code of best practice for reintroductions](#), which was published in May this year. Future beaver reintroductions will be subject to a licence from Natural England.

Today's announcement contributes to delivering against the 25 Year Environment Plan commitment to provide opportunities for the reintroduction of formerly native species – provided there are clear environmental, social and economic benefits.

Responses to the consultation will be used to inform decisions on the approach to further releases of beavers into the wild in England. A summary of responses will be published in early 2022.

Today's announcement is part of the Government's commitments aimed at tackling the twin threat of biodiversity and climate change.

The Government's Environment Bill will deliver the most ambitious environmental programme of any country on earth and drive forward action to protect nature and improve biodiversity, including through a target for species abundance for 2030, aiming to halt the decline of nature.

The consultation will be live on gov.uk at 9:30am, Wednesday 25 August.

- Beavers were once native to Britain but were hunted to extinction in Britain around 400 years ago.
 - The scope of this consultation covers beavers in England. Wildlife policy is devolved so decisions about reintroductions of species in Scotland and Wales are made by the Scottish Parliament or the Welsh Parliament.
 - A partner pack is available for download.
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[Press release: Landmark consultation launched on the reintroduction of beavers in England](#)

Consultation launched to seek views on the cautious release and management of beavers into the wild

[£4 million funding to boost UK biomass production](#)

- 24 projects will receive government funding of up to £200,000 to increase UK production of biomass that can be used as sources of green energy
- projects include growing algae from whisky manufacturing, increasing yields of grass varieties and accelerating the breeding of willow trees
- biomass is used for low-carbon renewable energy generation and is a key component in UK's commitment to tackle climate change

Farming seaweed and growing algae from the by-products of whisky manufacturing are among 24 projects today (Wednesday, 25 August) awarded £4 million government funding to boost biomass production.

The 24 innovative projects, from start-ups and family-run businesses to research institutes and universities, will receive funding of up to £200,000 from the government's [Biomass Feedstocks Innovation Programme](#) to produce low-carbon energy using organic materials.

The projects will boost biomass productivity in the UK, through breeding, planting, cultivating and harvesting of organic energy materials.

Biomass refers to sustainably derived plant material that could be used as fuel to produce energy or to create products such as chemicals and bioplastics. It is a small but important part of the renewable energy mix that the UK requires to meet its commitment to eradicate its contribution to climate change by 2050 – and is also backed by the UK's independent Committee on Climate Change.

Biomass materials include non-food energy crops such as grasses and hemp, material from forestry operations and marine-based materials such as algae and seaweed.

Energy Minister Lord Callanan said:

Working to develop new and greener types of fuel like biomass is an important part of building a the diverse and green energy mix that we will need to achieve our climate change targets.

We are backing UK innovators to ensure we have a homegrown supply of biomass materials, which is part of our wider plans to continue driving down carbon emissions as we build back greener.

Funding recipients

Today's funding recipients include:

- Rickerby Estates Ltd in Carlisle has received over £150,000, to look at scaling-up the harvesting of willow crops using new cutting-edge technology such as automated processing machinery that is controlled by GPS satellite guidance systems
- Green Fuels Research Limited in Gloucestershire has received over £190,000 for a project that will allow microscopic algae to be produced for biomass using wastewater from breweries and dairy industries
- SeaGrown Limited in Scarborough will use over £180,000 funding to develop new techniques to farm and harvest seaweed off the North Yorkshire coast, taking advantage of seaweed's qualities as a source of biomass and its ability to remove carbon from the atmosphere
- Impact Laboratories Limited in Stirlingshire, Scotland, received over £170,000 to look at innovation in the commercial cultivation of algae utilising heat provided by geothermally-warmed water from abandoned mine sites
- Aberystwyth University, Wales, has received over £160,000 for their 'Miscanspeed' project, which is looking at ways to improve the breeding of high-yielding, resilient Miscanthus or elephant grass – grass varieties that are well-suited for biomass use – in the UK

As a result of the £4 million government funding, the Biomass Feedstocks Innovation Programme will enable greater supply of organic materials from domestic sources rather than using imported matter, with the 24 projects supporting rural economies across the UK, including providing jobs and encouraging investment.

The Biomass Feedstocks Innovation Programme is funded through the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's £1 billion [Net Zero Innovation Portfolio](#). This supports the Prime Minister's [10 Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution](#) that sets out the approach government will take to build back better, support green jobs, and accelerate our path to net zero.

UK Net Zero Business Champion Andrew Griffith said:

Innovation is crucial to achieve a low carbon future and it's fantastic that the UK is home to so much world-leading entrepreneurial talent that will help us meet our climate change commitments.

Not only will this funding for biomass feedstocks help to achieve net zero by 2050, but it rightly rewards innovative people and businesses that are leading the way to a brighter, cleaner future.

The UK government intends to publish a new biomass strategy in 2022 which will review the amount of sustainable biomass available to the UK and how this could be best utilised across the economy to help achieve the government's net zero and wider environmental commitments.

Dr Matthew Brown, co-founder of Forest Creation Partners, said:

This government funding will enable us to find more places to plant trees up and down the country, fighting climate change and supporting local nature and communities.

We're proud to be part of Britain's global leadership in using data science to create a greener and better world.

Dr Sebastien Jubeau and Dr Douglas McKenzie founders of Phycofoods, trading as Phyco-F, said:

At Phyco-F we are delighted to have been awarded a contract to evaluate the feasibility of producing microalgae at significant industrial quantities using CO2 and nutrients produced as by-products of whisky production.

If this evaluation is promising we will work with our partners in the whisky industry to develop a plan for the UK's first demonstration plant that will be operating before the end of 2023.

In November 2020, the government launched the brand [Together For Our Planet](#) which provides practical tools, resources and advice to support companies to take action on climate change, understand their emissions and develop a plan to tackle them.

Notes for editors

- the Biomass Feedstocks Innovation Programme is funded through the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy's £1 billion Net Zero Innovation Portfolio, which aims to accelerate the commercialisation of innovative clean energy technologies and processes through the 2020s and 2030s
- this competition is being conducted in 2 phases, one building on the other, to produce innovations that address some of the barriers to feedstock production, helping to scale up the supply of UK sustainable biomass in the coming years
- in Phase 1, suppliers will receive full funding to produce robust project plans for innovations that, if implemented, would make a

positive material contribution to UK feedstock supply

- in Phase 2, Phase 1 projects that successfully progress will enact their project plans, successfully constructing, operating, testing, refining and evaluating the innovations and having a clear commercialisation route for deployment

[Read a full list of successful projects.](#)

The besiegement in Daraa must stop

Statement by Ambassador James Kariuki at the Security Council briefing on Syria