

Funding boost for pupils leaving alternative provision

Young people in Alternative Provision (AP) at risk of unemployment or dropping out of education at age 16 are set to receive further mentoring, pastoral support and careers guidance under Government plans to level up opportunity for all young people and build back better.

The Department for Education has today (21 May) announced a further £8 million as part of the AP Transition Fund for 2021/22 to support up to 11,400 Year 11 pupils as they move into the next stage of their education, work or training after they leave school, more than doubling the original investment in the fund last year.

The money – up to £750 per pupil – will help AP settings pay for one-to-one support such as mentors or specialist transition coaches to help young people make decisions about their options after they finish school, helping guide them into further education, post-16 training routes or directly into employment.

Children and Families Minister Vicky Ford said:

Being excluded from school should never be at the cost of a young person's education or place a barrier in the way of their future. All young people deserve an excellent education that sets them up for life and we know that the last year has been really challenging for students in Alternative Provision.

This fund helps these students, who are often extremely vulnerable, to get back on track with their education and paves the way for their future careers. That's why we are putting even more investment into it this year, so more Year 11 pupils can benefit from this bespoke support and build their self-confidence to make the transition into the next phase of their lives easier, whether that is in further education or employment.

The funding builds on the £7 million provided to schools last year as part of the programme, following concerns that pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 may slip into unemployment or out of further education as a result of many young people missing out on time in the classroom with their teachers and peers during the pandemic.

Robert Gasson, Chief Executive of the Wave Multi Academy Trust, said:

The effective use of the transition fund last year enabled us to support our Year 11 pupils and improved their outcomes significantly. As such I am delighted that this fund has been

announced again for this year, as I know it will be crucial in ensuring that our pupils remain supported at what will continue to be a very challenging time for them once they have left us.

Tim Morfin, Founder and Chief Executive of Transforming Lives for Good, said:

Given the impact of the pandemic in the lives of young people, we're delighted that the Transition Fund has been created to give young people the personal support they need to take their next step in education, further training or employment.

Data shows that just over half (54%) of young people who finish Key Stage 4 in Alternative Provision go on to a sustained post-16 destination, compared to 94% attending mainstream schools, and 23% of the cohort are classed as 'Not in Education, Employment or Training' (NEET). Without making a successful transition to post-16 these more vulnerable pupils are at risk of being exploited into gang involvement, county-lines activity or serious violence.

Alternative Provision can offer a lifeline to these young people and their families, in providing tailored support from teachers and smaller classes to help them focus and fulfil their potential.

Today's additional funding follows the Government's announcement to ensure equal opportunities for post-16 education to help the nation recover from the pandemic, creating a new law for post 16 and adult education and training systems, providing the skills that people need for well-paid jobs and opportunities to train throughout their lifetime.