

News story: £1million to improve life skills for young people in Doncaster

A £1 million programme to improve access to sports, arts and culture for 5,000 disadvantaged young people across Doncaster has been launched today by Education Secretary Damian Hinds.

Young people from some of the most deprived parts of the town will have access to free extra-curricular activities and healthy meals over the summer holidays including competitive sport, cooking classes and outdoor pursuits. The programme will help broaden young people's horizons, giving them the opportunity develop lifelong skills in leadership and teamwork, as well as helping build character, resilience and confidence so they can become successful adults.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds launched the programme of activities, funded through the Government's Opportunity Area programme, during a visit to Bentley Youth Centre where he met with the first young people to benefit from the scheme this summer.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

The Opportunity Area programme is about broadening the horizons of young people from disadvantaged areas. I want every young person living in Doncaster to be able to access extra-curricular activities that build the resilience and character they need to fulfill their ambitions, whatever they are.

This investment will help young people in Doncaster learn the skills of leadership and teamwork that are so important later in life, giving them the boost in confidence they need to succeed in education or the world of work.

The funding includes £550,000 to pay for a programme of summer activities in 2018 and 2019, and a £450,000 fund for local voluntary and community groups to support young people in Doncaster develop additional skills through out-of-school activities from September.

The summer activities are free for participants aged five-18 and include boxing, cycling, football, baking, nature trails and stop motion animation classes. From September, schools will be able to access community programmes through The Princes Trust, drama and arts classes through Doncaster Arts, sports through organisations like the Jamie McDonnell Fight for Good CIC (Community Interest Company), and business and entrepreneurial skills workshops.

The summer project will be run by EXPECT Youth, Doncaster's youth alliance which works closely with the Opportunity Area programme by delivering

projects for the most vulnerable in the borough.

Alongside a schedule of activities running from 23 July to 31 August, the funding will also offer healthy meals to the thousands of children taking part over the summer.

Chair of the Doncaster Opportunity Area Partnership Board, Professor Sir Chris Husbands, said:

It's great to see EXPECT Summer's programme of events for children and young people in Doncaster. This supports the priorities we outlined in our Opportunity Area delivery plan and will help young people to develop essential life skills.

EXPECT Youth Strategic Development Director, Peter Norman, said:

We are committed to creating opportunities for children and young people to lead a healthy, active lifestyle that will help them unlock their talent and fulfil their potential.

EXPECT Summer activities will help aid the development of their essential life skills to help them deal with the challenges of everyday life at school, college and employment.

Each of the Government's 12 Opportunity Areas receive a share of £72 million for a tailored plan to improve social mobility for children and young people, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Doncaster's [plan](#) focuses on boosting development in the early school years, increasing excellent teaching capacity, improving careers advice and introducing mentoring programmes.