

[News story: New £1.6million investment in projects in North Yorkshire](#)

New programmes worth £1.6 million will support young people and their families living on the North Yorkshire Coast with practical help to boost early learning at home and improve access to extra-curricular activities.

Parents who struggle to help their young children develop reading, writing and language skills will be supported by a £800,000 scheme that will offer support such as community workshops with early years experts.

The project will also fund the creation of 40 speech and language 'champions' to work with nurseries and preschools in the area, helping identify earlier when children might need better support and make sure they arrive at school ready to learn.

It will also provide support to more than 20 primary schools to improve pupils' speech, language and communication skills. Support could include an onsite therapist in more severe cases – an expansion of the Scarborough Pledge, which tackles educational disadvantage.

Alongside this, a second scheme also worth £800,000 will launch in September to improve access to sports, arts and cultural activities for more than 3,500 young people aged five to 18 in Scarborough, Whitby and Filey.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

It was great to visit Scarborough today and hear first hand how the Opportunity Area programme is having a positive effect on families' lives and young people's opportunities.

The Opportunity Area programme is about making sure we create the right conditions to broaden the horizons of young people from disadvantaged areas, and give them the best start in life.

The funding announced today will help to support parents on the North Yorkshire Coast with their child's early language development and also help young people access extra-curricular activities that build the resilience and character they need to fulfill their ambitions, whatever they may be.

The Education Secretary launched the projects, all part of the government's £72 million Opportunity Area programme – of which North Yorkshire Coast is one of 12 – during a visit to Coventry University Scarborough Campus where he met with members of the Partnership Board and young carers who will benefit from the investment.

Some of the area's most deprived young people will have access to free extra-

curricular activities from September through 18 new projects aimed at giving them the opportunity to develop lifelong skills in leadership and teamwork, character, resilience and confidence so they can become successful adults.

These include:

- An out-of-school Life Skills Club at Stephen Joseph Theatre for young people across nine schools to engage with the performing arts, with sessions in street dance, drumming, drama, film-making, and singing;
- Workshops with Krash Labs, using computer gaming and digital tools to boost children and young people's social skills – particularly those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities; and
- Sports sessions through North Yorkshire Sport to teach young people about the values associated with those activities and deliver their own community social action challenge, such as a sports day or work with local schools.

The Opportunity Area Partnership board is also match-funding £50,000 of investment from the Two Ridings Community Foundation as part of the #iwill fund. This fund aims to increase volunteering among young people in the area by 50% by 2020, encouraging them to fundraise, give up their time or campaign for a chosen cause.

Children from disadvantaged backgrounds or those with additional needs can face the greatest barriers in their early development, so it is important that where that help is needed it is in place as early as possible – such as through the government's free childcare offer for two-year-olds from lower income families, which has been used by nearly 750,000 children.

The funding builds on the Education Secretary's vision to halve the number of children finishing reception year without the early communication or reading skills they need by 2028, and on £20 million of investment already announced to improve early language and literacy for disadvantaged children around England.

Chair of the North Yorkshire Coast Opportunity Area Partnership Board, Sir Martin Narey, said:

I'm delighted the Secretary of State is visiting the North Yorkshire Coast Opportunity Area to see the efforts we are making to improve social mobility along the coast.

I know that improving social mobility has long been a priority for this Education Secretary, and I want him to see the encouraging progress we are making. Too many children along the coast do not fulfil their potential. The Opportunity Board, all volunteers and which I chair, is determined to address that.

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.

North Yorkshire Coast's plan, which covers the district of Scarborough, focuses on improving the quality of the early years' education available, boosting maths teaching in primary and secondary schools, developing children's literacy skills and creating more good secondary school places.