

Package to transform education and opportunities for most disadvantaged

Education will be at the heart of major new reforms set to give every child and adult the skills they need to fulfil their potential, no matter where they live.

Through the government's Levelling Up white paper, areas such as County Durham, Cornwall and Hartlepool are set to benefit from improved schools, part of a package of measures that will also boost take-up of high-quality training across England and support stable families that help children to succeed.

The plans being published tomorrow (Wednesday 2 February) will identify 55 cold spots of the country where school outcomes are the weakest, to target investment, support and action that help children from all backgrounds and areas to succeed at the very highest levels. These include Rochdale, the Isle of Wight, Walsall, parts of Yorkshire and Sunderland.

As 95% of these areas are outside London and the South East, it is the struggling schools of the North, Midlands, East of England and South West that will be receiving much more support over the next decade.

In these new '[Education Investment Areas](#)', the Department for Education will offer retention payments to help schools keep the best teachers in the highest priority subjects. These areas will be prioritised as the location for new specialist sixth-form free schools where there is limited provision to ensure talented children from disadvantaged backgrounds have access to the highest standard of education this country offers.

Schools in these areas that have been judged less than Good in successive Ofsted inspections could be moved into strong multi-academy trusts, to attract more support and the best teachers. This will be subject to a consultation in the spring.

The paper will set a new national mission to ensure that 90% of children leaving primary school in England are reaching the expected standard in reading, writing, and maths by 2030. In 2019, just 65% of pupils met all 3 standards, with the proportion substantially varying across the country.

Schools in the Education Investment Areas will also be given support to address wider issues. For instance, schools struggling with attendance will be encouraged to join a new pilot programme to tackle the issue.

Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi said:

The most valuable resource on the planet is the human resource. Investing in people to get on in life and receive the best possible education is core to the mission of this government, and we are

determined to help people gain the knowledge and skills needed to unleash their potential.

This white paper sets out our blueprint for putting skills, schools and families at the heart of levelling up. It focuses on putting great schools in every part of the country, training that sets you up for success in a high-skilled, well-paid career and ensuring no one misses out on opportunities simply because of where they live or their family background.

Raising our expectations and aspirations for children, as well as creating a high-skilled workforce, will end the brain drain that sees too many people leaving communities in order to succeed. These plans will help create a level playing field and boost the economy, both locally and nationally.

In direct response to the activities young people said they want outside of school, the government has announced a National Youth Guarantee. Backed by £560 million worth of investment, plans set to be outlined in the Levelling Up white paper will mean that every young person in England will have access to regular clubs and activities, adventures away from home and volunteering opportunities by 2025.

An extra £200 million is also being invested in the government's Supporting Families programme in England, helping create strong, stable families where children thrive. This brings total investment to £695 million to improve the lives of up to 300,000 vulnerable families. The programme will help local areas tackle the challenges families face that can hold children back from attending and achieving at school or put them at risk of neglect or harm.

Minister for Levelling up Communities and Equalities Kemi Badenoch said:

Our Supporting Families programme is providing the most vulnerable families with the help they need to build a better future.

This help means more children returning to the classroom, more parents out of work starting a job and more support for the victims of domestic abuse.

Alongside these reforms will be a new skills mission set by the government to help improve people's lives and boost the economy. This will target 200,000 more people in England to help them complete high-quality training each year by 2030, including 80,000 more completing courses in areas of England with the lowest skills levels.

Skills are a crucial driver of economic disparities between people and places, so the mission will help level up opportunities in left behind areas. Boosting skills improves human capital which can drive up earnings potential and life chances for people who have already left school.

To better understand the skills gaps, the Education Secretary is establishing a new Future Skills Unit which will look at the data and evidence of where skills gaps exist and in what industries.

Thousands more adults will soon be able access free, flexible training and get the skills needs to secure careers in sectors including green, digital and construction as part of up to an additional £550 million boost to expand the popular [Skills Bootcamps](#) across the country. Prisoners can also now take advantage of Skills Bootcamps as part of a new trial to support them to find work on their release, levelling up opportunities for more people.

The plans published tomorrow will also set out the government's commitment to making Institutes of Technology the pre-eminent organisation for technical STEM education in England, through which successful ones may apply for a Royal Charter. This will help secure their long-term position as anchor institutions in their regions, placing them on a par with the UK's world-leading historic universities.

The government will also aim to double the capacity of the [Supported Internship programme](#) to provide thousands more young people who have additional needs with the skills to secure and sustain paid employment. Backed by £18 million over 3 years, the programme will additionally drive up the standards and quality of internship delivery across the country for students who have an education, health and care plan.

Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), their families and caregivers will be better supported with respite care and internship opportunities. Councils will be funded £30 million for the next 3 years to set up more than 10,000 additional respite placements, helping to provide positive opportunities for disabled children and young people and to give family carers a break so they can look after vulnerable children better in the long-term.

All local authorities which contain 1 of 12 of the government's [Opportunity Areas](#) will be designated as Education Investment Areas, and so will benefit from these interventions. Opportunity Areas have been and continue to be effective, with their funding extended up to the end of August 2022.

The new funding for respite and Supported Internships come alongside more than £45 million of continued targeted support for families and parents of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). These programmes will:

- target support to improve monitoring, support and intervention for local authorities and local health and care partners' delivery of statutory SEND services, with a focus on underperforming areas and sharing best practice
- improve participation and access for parents and young people for high quality advice and support; and
- directly support schools and colleges to effectively work with pupils with SEND, for example through training on specific needs like autism.

The 55 areas selected as Education Investment Areas to raise school standards include Bedford, Blackpool, Bolton, Bradford, Bury, Cambridgeshire, Central Bedfordshire, Cornwall, County Durham, Coventry, Darlington, Derby, Derbyshire, Doncaster, Dorset, Dudley, East Sussex, Halton, Hartlepool, Isle of Wight, Kirklees, Knowsley, Leeds, Lincolnshire, Liverpool, Luton, Manchester, Middlesbrough, Norfolk, North Northamptonshire, North Somerset, North Yorkshire, Nottingham, Nottinghamshire, Oldham, Peterborough, Plymouth, Portsmouth, Rochdale, Rotherham, Salford, Sandwell, Sefton, Somerset, South Gloucestershire, South Tyneside, St. Helens, Stoke-on-Trent, Suffolk, Sunderland, Swindon, Tameside, Wakefield, Walsall and Wirral.