

# New bursaries to help learners to upskill and retrain

Learners who could struggle with study-related costs such as books and childcare fees can now apply for up to £2.5 million worth of targeted bursary funding to help them access new higher education 'short courses'.

As part of the government's pledge to offer tens of thousands of adults the chance to retrain in later life, gain in-demand skills and open further job opportunities, 22 universities and colleges across England will be offering over 100 short courses to students from this September as part of a three year trial.

Developed with the help of employers, the courses give learners the flexibility to gain an accredited certificate and valuable skills that can be applied in the work place in key areas. These courses that could be as short as six weeks – or as long as a year if studied part-time – in subjects vital for economic growth including STEM, healthcare and education.

To support this flexible study, learners can now apply for tuition fee loans created especially for the short courses to support them for the duration of their study and administered by the Student Loans Company.

Alongside this, bursary grants will be available for learners who need extra financial support to pay for additional costs associated with study. Anyone applying for a loan for one of these 'short courses' who faces financial barriers to their learning could be eligible for a bursary. This includes the costs of learning materials such as books, childcare fees and learning support for disabled students.

Secretary of State for Education James Cleverly said:

This bursary will break down barriers to learning and give everyone the ability to upskill and retrain at a pace which suits them. It doesn't matter what their personal situation or background is.

For too long, our education system has focussed on traditional three-year courses which lock students in and give little flexibility. We are now moving towards a more modern way of learning to provide students with the opportunity to reach their potential whilst meeting the needs of the economy".

Paula Sussex, CEO of SLC, said:

SLC is playing a fundamental role in the delivery of the

Government's HE reform agenda. To deliver lifelong learning, we will be building an entirely new system of student finance for England; providing tuition fee loans for these short courses is an important first step in that process. Along with DfE and sector representatives, we will use this experience to help us support the planned introduction of the government's lifelong learning offers.

The scheme will be part of the data gathering for the wider Higher Education Short Course Trial, which will support the development of the government's lifelong learning offer which will be introduced from 2025. The bursary is for the time-limited trial only, as broader decisions on the lifelong learning maintenance support are still subject to government policy decisions.

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## [UK-wide review of pig supply chain launched](#)

The Government has today (15 July) launched a [review of the pig sector](#) to increase fairness and transparency in the industry.

The consultation follows recent challenges experienced by the sector due to global pressures including rising costs and labour shortages, which have raised questions about the functioning of the supply chain. It seeks views on issues such as transparency, price reporting, clarity of contractual terms and conditions, and market consolidation.

It will run until 7 October 2022 and invites views from pig farmers, abattoirs, processors, retailers, marketing groups and all stakeholders involved in the pig supply chain across the whole country.

Today's announcement is the latest action from the UK Government and the Devolved Administrations to support farmers as they have been dealing with turbulence in international commodity markets, exacerbated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, leading to increased input costs, including feed, fuel, energy, and fertiliser.

Farming Minister Victoria Prentis said:

Recent months have been very difficult for pig farmers due to a range of pressures including rising costs and global labour shortages. We have engaged closely with the sector to support them in considerably reducing the backlog of pigs on farms and I continue to work with producers and retailers to support the sector.

I am a firm believer in 'Buy British' and supporting our domestic pig producers, and a fair and transparent supply chain is paramount. I hope the industry engages fully with this consultation so that we can help to address the challenges that they are facing.

Scottish Government's Secretary for Rural Affairs and Islands Mairi Gougeon said:

The Covid-19 pandemic and the continued lack of available skilled labour have had a disproportionate impact on the pig sector. It is imperative that we understand the current supply arrangements within the sector and explore the nature of the relationships between the various parties in the supply chain.

I welcome this consultation, with the hope that it effects proposals for a more consistent approach across the pig supply chain. I would like to encourage all producers and processors, across Scotland, to take part in this consultation and ensure that their voices are heard on this matter.

Welsh Government Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd, Lesley Griffiths said:

These are challenging times for the pig sector and I encourage everyone involved in the industry in Wales to respond to the consultation. This will enable us to gather important feedback and evidence about how supply arrangements in the pig sector currently function and to explore the nature of the relationships between the various parties in the supply chain.

We will continue to work collaboratively with the industry, as well as governments across the UK, to ensure a resilient future for our Welsh pig sector.

Northern Ireland Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs Minister, Edwin Poots MLA said:

The pig sector has seen significant challenges recently with pig farmers being financially impacted by the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, a marked reduction in skilled labour, increased feed costs and moving pigs off the farm for slaughter.

I am committed to raising the issue of fairness for pig farmers in the marketplace and exploring further any issues faced in the pig sector. I am pleased that Northern Ireland stakeholders will have the opportunity to take part in this UK wide consultation and I strongly encourage all Northern Ireland stakeholders to respond.

Once responses have been analysed, a summary of responses will be published to outline findings and propose any actions.

### **Government support to pig farmers:**

- The UK Government have provided a package of measures to help address these unique circumstances and support the pig sector, including temporary work visas for pork butchers, and Private Storage Aid (PSA) and Slaughter Incentive Payment (SIP) schemes to facilitate an increase in the throughput of pigs through abattoirs. We are also working with industry to support their efforts on the longer term recruitment and retention of domestic workers.
- In England and Scotland, the two meat levy bodies, the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board and Quality Meat Scotland, suspended the statutory levy for pig farmers and producers during November 2021 – suspending payments of the levy pig farmers and producers are required to pay.
- Farming Minister Victoria Prentis has chaired three roundtables – in February, March and July 2022 – with pig industry representatives from across the UK to discuss the challenges that the sector has been facing in recent months. Following this, Minister Prentis met with representatives of the agricultural banking sector to discuss the current situation in the pig sector. The banks confirmed that they are working closely with impacted pig farmers during this exceptionally challenging period and remain keen to be supportive.
- We have established the UK Agricultural Market Monitoring Group (UKAMMG), to monitor all key agricultural commodity markets. We and have also increased our engagement with industry to supplement our analysis with real time intelligence.
- Together with Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB), we are working to both expand existing export markets and to identify new export markets for pork, particularly lightly processed pork. On 17 March this year, we were able to announce the opening of a new export market to Chile worth £20 million in the first 5 years of trade. This follows us gaining market access to Mexico, for fresh pig meat in September 2021 – with support from the UK Export Certification Partnership (UKECP) and pork producing establishments. Defra continues to work to expand the UK's access to the Mexico market to include offal and edible by-products.
- The Scottish Government have put measures in place to aid the pig sector and successfully ran a Private Storage Aid Scheme for pork processors at the beginning of this year. Also, a Pig Producers Hardship Support Scheme was made available and extended twice, providing much needed support for pig farmers of around £1.8 million in total.
- In Northern Ireland, DAERA launched a support scheme worth up to £2

million for pig farmers who have been financially impacted by the effects of weakening markets, increased feed costs and getting pigs moved off the farm for slaughter earlier this year.

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## Better care for people with a learning disability and people with autism

- Measures include offering better support from birth, better preventative support in the community, and work to improve quality of care
- Government has set out how it will reduce the number of people with a learning disability and autistic people in specialist inpatient care by 50% by March 2024 compared with March 2015

People with a learning disability and autistic people will receive better and more focused community care as part of plans to reduce the number in specialist inpatient care.

The Building the Right Support Action Plan published today brings together in one place commitments from across government and public services to ensure there is suitable community support available for people with a learning disability and autistic people. This supports government plans to reduce reliance on mental health inpatient care.

Measures brought together in the action plan include:

- Speeding up discharges for people with a learning disability and autistic people supported by additional targeted funding of more than £90 million in 2022/2023 including:
  - A £40 million investment from the NHS Long Term Plan to continue to improve the capacity and capability of crisis support for autistic people and people with a learning disability in every area of the country and £30 million of funding to continue putting key workers in place for children and young people with the most complex needs
  - A £21 million Community Discharge Grant to local authorities which will help people with a learning disability and autistic people to be discharged
- Limiting the scope under which people with a learning disability and

autistic people can be detained by reforming the Mental Health Act to improve how people are treated in law

- Building on specialist training for health and care staff to ensure they have the skills to better care for people with a learning disability and autistic people

The plan focuses on keeping people safe now and also delivering long term change for people with a learning disability and autistic people. It aims to ensure people are treated with dignity and respect, experience personalised care and treatment, and can live an ordinary, independent life in their own home as part of the community.

Minister for Care and Mental Health Gillian Keegan said:.

For too long autistic people and people with a learning disability have remained as inpatients in mental health units not necessarily because it was the best place but because of failings in the system and a lack of community facilities to support them.

I am committed to driving further, faster progress to ensure people with a learning disability and autistic people, of all ages, receive high quality health and social care support in their communities when they need it.

The plan prioritises safety and quality of life and includes the proposal in the draft Mental Health Bill that neither a learning disability or autism can be considered mental health disorders requiring compulsory treatment.

Where people would benefit from inpatient care, the plan seeks to improve the quality of care in mental health hospitals. This includes taking steps to ensure care review recommendations are followed, reducing restrictive practices, and targeted support for people in long term segregation to move into the community or a less restrictive setting as appropriate.

This work will be supported by increasing the availability and choice of specialist and supported housing options.

The Health and Care Act 2022 introduced a new requirement for registered providers to ensure their staff receive specific training on learning disability and autism, which is appropriate to their role.

There are also proposed new duties on commissioners to ensure there are the right community based services in their area and there is better monitoring of risk of crisis at a local level.

Early intervention is key to ensuring people get the right support throughout their lives, which includes improved experiences of education and early diagnosis. The government will build on the £10.5 million Covid-19 Mental

Health Recovery Fund and £2.5 million NHS Long Term Plan investment, with a further £2.5 million to support the delivery of the Long Term Plan commitment to improve autism diagnosis pathways for children and young people.

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## Man and haulage firm fined for illegally dumping waste soil

A man has been fined for illegally transporting waste soil – and the transport company from which he hired trucks to move it hit with hefty fine.

Sam Dowell, 30, was fined £1,840 at Cambridge Magistrates' Court last year for causing the transportation and dumping of waste soil without the appropriate permits. Dowell, who pleaded guilty at an earlier hearing, also had to pay £2,000 compensation. He also had to pay a third of the cost of removing the illegally dumped soil, plus costs of £1,900.

Patrick Coleman, 75, of Galsworthy Road, Barnet, North London, who is the sole director of haulage company PJC Sweepers Ltd, which rented the trucks to Dowell. Coleman was acquitted at Cambridgeshire Crown Court on 1 June 2022 for transporting waste without a permit. However, his company was fined £6,000 plus costs of £10,000, a further £4,000 compensation for the remediation of the site. He also had to pay a £170 victim surcharge at the same court on 4 July, 2022.

Dowell had been given a contract to help prepare a piece of land in readiness for the groundworks of a housing development in Bassingbourn, Cambridgeshire. His employees carried out the work while he identified a site next to the Royston Sewage Treatment Works in Melbourn, Cambridgeshire, for dumping the waste soil. Dowell leased lorries from PJC Sweepers Ltd to move it.

However, this site is owned by AWG Land Holdings Ltd, part of the Anglian Water Group. Anglian Water Group includes Anglian Water Services Ltd, and did not have an environmental permit to accept waste.

Coleman's haulage company should have carried out duty of care checks to ensure the waste soil was being moved to an appropriately licensed waste site.

His Honour Judge Cooper observed:

Despite the drivers being challenged by a representative of the landowner to inform that the deposits were not authorised, they carried on regardless until the police were called. By then around 30 lorry loads of deposits had already been made.

Describing the actions of PJC Sweepers Ltd as “completely reckless”, he added:

Anyone who puts profits before the protection of the environment needs to understand that they face a serious sentence.

Duty of care cannot be delegated to another company. There is a duty to check how the next waste holder in the chain will handle the waste and where the wastes journey will end.

The failure by the company’s employees to make these checks – which would have revealed that the receiving site was not a permitted site. This meant that the deposits of waste soil made on or before 14 January 2019 were illegal.

An environmental permit is important to prevent harm to the environment, nuisance to neighbours and protect the landowners from illegal deposits. It also ensure that the relevant taxes are paid. The defendants were prosecuted due to the undermining of legitimate waste management industry and the suffering to local communities caused by illegal deposits of this nature.

Simon Hawkins, Manager at the Environment Agency, said:

All waste companies must complete duty of care checks. By not following their duty of care, companies can potentially harm our natural resources and blight communities. It also undermines, legitimate businesses that do follow the rules, which enables the offender to gain an unfair commercial advantage over them.

Our role is to protect the environment for people and wildlife, so we won’t hesitate to take action against those who put it at risk. And to businesses flouting the rules our message is clear: you won’t get away with it.

Anyone who suspects illegal waste activity is reminded to report it to our 24-hour hotline by calling 0800 80 70 60, or anonymously contacting Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

You can check your waste collectors waste carriers registration at <https://environment.data.gov.uk/public-register/view/search-waste-carriers-br okers> or call 03708 506 506.

Last year the Environment Agency and partners launched the Joint Unit for Waste Crime, aiming to stop serious and organised crime in the UK Waste Industry. You can find out more about the initiative on our [website](#).

Summary of regulations under which the 2 parties were prosecuted:

The offences are all committed contrary to Section 33(1)(a) Environmental Protection Act 1990 and is an either-way offence. On summary conviction the



maximum penalty is an unlimited fine and/or a term of imprisonment not exceeding 6 months. On conviction on indictment the maximum penalty is an unlimited fine and/or a term of imprisonment not exceeding 5 years.

From 6 April 2010, anyone operating a regulated facility to recover or dispose of waste can only do so in accordance with an environmental permit granted under the Environmental Permitting Regulations. An environmental permit is granted subject to a number of conditions to protect the environment and local communities from potentially harmful substances. This includes such things as smell or litter nuisance, and requiring appropriate management systems and infrastructure to be in place prior to commencing any waste activities.

Certain relatively low risk activities are exempted from the need to have an environmental permit. There is no record of an environmental permit or registered exempt waste activities at the site.

Sam Dowell pleaded guilty at Cambridge Magistrates' Court on 29 March 2021, where he was sentenced on the same date.

Patrick Coleman was acquitted after a hearing at Cambridgeshire Crown Court on 1 June 2022.

For East Anglia press office please contact (24 hours): 0800 917 9250

All Environment Agency news releases, both area and national, can be found under Announcements at [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/environment-agency)

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## [Launching the Defence Centre for AI Research](#)

News story

Dstl and the Alan Turing Institute have jointly launched the Centre in order to research problems related to advancing artificial intelligence (AI) capability.



The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) has announced the formation of the Defence Centre for AI Research (DCAR) as part of the newly released Defence AI Strategy and the recently established Defence AI Centre.

The Centre is being launched in conjunction with the [Alan Turing Institute](#), the UK's institute for AI and data science.

Funded through the Ministry of Defence's Chief Scientific Advisor, the Centre will focus on the underpinning problems associated with enabling advances in AI capability. Examples include areas such as:

- low short learning – the ability to train machines to learn without the need for vast amounts of data
- the application of AI to war gaming
- understanding the limits of AI models
- managing multiple sensors
- human-centric AI
- ethics

In many cases it is expected that outcomes will not only be of interest to defence but also the wider UK economy.

Whilst based in London, Turing will use its outreach to engage with universities around the country, drawing together the UK's best expertise.

The establishment of the Centre is expected to result in the creation of at least 5 to 8 new academic posts starting from September 2022, with the potential to grow further.

Glen Hart, Senior Principal Scientist from Dstl, commented:

The DCAR will be a centre of excellence which provides real focus to developing and applying AI ethically in defence contexts.

The [Defence AI Strategy](#) was published in June 2022 with the vision that, in terms of AI, the UK's MOD will be the world's most effective, efficient, trusted and influential defence organisation for its size.

The MOD is committed to [developing AI in an ambitious, safe and responsible way](#).

The creation of the DCAR follows the launch in June of the [Defence Data Research Centre \(DDRC\)](#) under a consortium led by the University of Exeter.

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