

New UK aid will ensure millions of Palestinian refugees receive education, healthcare and food

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It comes as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), which provides essential services to Palestinian refugees in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria faces unprecedented financial difficulty.

Over the past year services to Palestinian refugees have come under increasing pressure. In Gaza, where there has been a significant deterioration in both the humanitarian and economic situation, food is often unaffordable for many where over half of the population is unemployed and a million people are living on less than £3 a day.

Minister for the Middle East, Dr. Andrew Murrison, said:

Today's new UK aid package is a vital lifeline for Palestinian refugees who are facing greater uncertainty than ever before. Our support will help UNRWA ensure families have enough to eat, providing basics such as flour, chickpeas and rice. It will also help to keep over half a million children in the classroom and provide essential access to healthcare for more than three million Palestinian refugees.

The UK has been a long-term supporter of UNRWA. It provides stability in the region, which is crucial for Palestinians, but also the region and the wider world, including the UK. I am deeply concerned about the unprecedented challenges UNRWA faces. Unless additional funding is secured, UNRWA may struggle to continue providing food aid in Gaza. I urge other donors to join us in stepping up their support for UNRWA at this critical time.

Only a political solution can provide a just, fair, and realistic settlement for Palestinian refugees, and until that time the UK remains firmly committed to supporting UNRWA's work and Palestinian refugees across the Middle East.

Last month, on his first visit as Minister for the Middle East, Minister Murrison visited Gaza where he saw first-hand the important work UNRWA is doing to deliver for Palestinian refugees.

Notes to editors

- Today's announcement of an additional £19 million to UNRWA is new funding from the UK's Department for International Development and takes UK support to UNRWA for 2019/20 to £65.5 million.
 - The package was confirmed by Ambassador James Roscoe, Head of Open Societies and Partnerships at the UK Mission to the United Nations, at the UNRWA Pledging Conference in New York today (25 June 2019).
 - UK support to UNRWA is helping to achieve Global Goals 1 and 2 by helping to end extreme poverty and hunger by providing food, vouchers and cash to Palestinian refugees and Global Goals 3 and 4 by providing education and health care services.
- **General media queries (24 hours)**

Email mediateam@dfid.gov.uk

Telephone 020 7023 0600

[Llwybr ymgeisio ar-lein sylfaenol](#) **[Cymraeg newydd](#)**

Gall cwsmeriaid y Gwasanaeth Datgelu a Gwahardd (DBS) sy'n gwneud cais am eu gwiriad sylfaenol trwy ein [llwybr ymgeisio ar-lein](#) wneud hynny yn Gymraeg bellach.

Dywedodd Mark Favager, Perchennog Cynnyrch ar gyfer y gwiriad DBS sylfaenol

ar-lein:

Ers lansio'r gwasanaeth hwn ym mis Ionawr y llynedd, rydym wedi gwrando ar ein defnyddwyr ac o ganlyniad wedi ychwanegu llawer o nodweddion newydd i wneud y cais ar-lein yn gyflymach ac yn haws ei ddefnyddio.

Mae'r nodwedd ddiweddaraf yn rhoi'r dewis i gwsmeriaid Cymraeg gwblhau eu cais cyfan yn Gymraeg am y tro cyntaf erioed; yn awr, gallant wirio eu hunaniaeth, cwblhau eu cais a thalu am y gwasanaeth yn eu hiaith eu hunain.

Bydd gan unrhyw un sy'n defnyddio'r gwiriad sylfaenol [llwybr ymgeisio ar-lein](#) yr opsiwn i weld cynnwys y dudalen yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg a gallant newid rhwng y ddwy ar unrhyw dudalen.

Sylwer, er y gall defnyddwyr wneud cais am wiriad sylfaenol yn Gymraeg bellach, nid yw'n ofynnol i'r DBS gyfieithu gwybodaeth ar dystysgrif, felly bydd y dystysgrif y maent yn ei derbyn yn dal i fod yn Saesneg. Mae hyn oherwydd bod y DBS wedi nodi risg i gywirdeb gwybodaeth os caiff ei chyfieithu.

[New Welsh basic online application route](#)

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) customers that apply for their basic check through our [online application route](#) can now do so in Welsh.

This information is also available [in Welsh](#).

Mae'r wybodaeth hon hefyd ar gael [yn Gymraeg](#).

Mark Favager, Product Owner for the online basic DBS check, said:

Since the launch of this service in January last year, we have listened to our users and as a result added many new features to make the online application quicker and more user friendly.

The latest new feature gives Welsh customers the option to complete

their entire application in Welsh for the very first time; they can now verify their identity, complete their application and pay for the service in their own language.

Anyone using the basic check [online application route](#) will have the option to view the page content in either English or Welsh and can switch between the two on any page.

Please note, that while users can now apply for a basic check in Welsh, DBS is not required to translate information contained on a certificate, so the certificate they receive will still be in English. This is because DBS has identified a risk to the accuracy of information if translated.

[Speech to AELP Annual Conference 2019](#)

I'm delighted to be here to talk about ensuring quality – not just in T Levels, but across the range of regulated qualifications, including apprenticeship End Point Assessments.

Ofqual places a premium on high quality and assessment validity. Our statutory objectives include securing and maintaining qualification standards and promoting public confidence in them. We take this very seriously.

Ofqual is, of course, particularly in the public consciousness over the GCSE and A level exam season. But I am always keen to stress that our assessment and regulatory expertise is equally applicable to vocational and technical areas.

Whatever type of qualification – or indeed End Point Assessment – there is a judgement to be made about knowledge, skills and behaviours. How that assessment is designed, developed, and delivered has to be right – for the subject or skill area, and for those who will use and depend on the qualification result. The same principles of validity apply whether an academic or vocational assessment – but of course the assessment approaches vary.

Fairness

We regulate on behalf of users, which is a broad church. It includes employers, higher education establishments and training providers. But of course it also includes learners; whether a student in school, an apprentice or an adult learner. We work to secure consistent and reliable assessments and to ensure fairness.

Fairness includes making sure assessments cover the expected content and are clear and error-free, that marking is completed on time and is of high

quality, and that grade boundaries are set to fairly reflect the demand of the paper.

Fairness means designing qualifications so that they are accessible to the full range of students who will take them, and that the requirements are clear to all teachers and trainers. This includes making sure that students who need them have access to enlarged or Braille question papers, or a scribe, or other reasonable adjustments.

It means dealing with any malpractice that might give some students an unfair advantage over others. And it means taking account of any serious disruption or other events which might affect individual students' performances on the day.

Ofqual is focused on making sure the qualification system is fair for everyone, so that they're competing on a level playing field. This is important if students, parents, teachers, trainers, employers and universities are to have confidence in results.

T Levels

When it comes to regulating the Technical Qualification that sits within T Levels, we will be working with the same seriousness and focus that we regulate GCSEs and A levels. To do this, we have taken the opportunity to introduce tailored rules that we have put in place for these new, high stakes qualifications that will operate in parallel with the Institute's contract management process.

But regulating with the same seriousness and focus as General Qualifications doesn't mean treating them the same – both our approach, and the design of the Technical Qualification – enables appropriate tailoring of the assessment to the subject content that has been set by employers, through the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education ('the Institute').

I want to stress this point because Ofqual is sometimes accused of "over-academising" assessments, and I want to put this misconception to bed. It's important to recognise that Ofqual is not a content-setting body. In the case of T Levels, the subject content is – quite properly – being set by panels of employers, through the Institute. Ofqual's role at this stage is to ensure that the content could lead to a qualification that will support valid outcomes. It is not to determine how academic the subject matter is.

We can – and do – encourage flexibility. So for Technical Qualifications there is flexibility in terms of the size of the core versus the occupational specialism. There is flexibility within the core, in terms of the weightings for the core exam and the core project.

And of course there is flexibility in the assessment methods for practical tasks. Validity requires the most appropriate form of assessment to be used for each Technical Qualification – we should expect to see a variety of approaches, much as we do in the apprenticeship End Point Assessments we regulate.

As you'd expect, we are working closely with the Institute to bring together our respective expertise and maximise the different levers available to our organisations. The Institute is running tenders to select awarding organisations to deliver Technical Qualifications. And the Institute will subsequently approve each qualification to ensure it meets employers' needs and the requirements of the contract.

From an Ofqual perspective, we have consulted on and introduced Technical Qualification-specific rules, including issues like the number of assessments, timing, retakes, marking, recognition of prior learning and reviews of marking, moderation and appeals.

We are using materials from the tendering process to inform our recognition decisions. As you'd expect, we're looking hard at each organisation to be sure that they have the capacity and capability to deliver the Technical Qualification, should they win the contract.

And we will be accrediting the Technical Qualifications, employing our assessment expertise to consider them from the perspective of our rules, which dock with the Institute's contractual requirements.

Our rules are intended to help secure appropriate comparability, and to ensure that there is a consistent level of demand across all Technical Qualifications. Employers – through the Institute – will be setting the initial grade standards, and Ofqual will regulate to maintain those standards over time and across the cohort. Simply put, our aim here is to ensure that a candidate would get the same grade for a given performance, whenever and wherever the assessment is conducted.

This approach, where we consider the fitness for purpose of the awarding organisation as well as the lifecycle of the qualification they propose to deliver, is a tried and tested method. We have seen the importance of checking quality at the start, through accreditation and technical evaluation. And we have learned much from monitoring how the assessments run in practice. We are experienced in using the full range of our regulatory levers to keep things on track and have applied it across the range of qualifications we regulate.

Functional Skills qualifications

Reform offers a great opportunity to build in quality and for Functional Skills qualifications, I hope you've been following our regular updates on how the new English and maths qualifications are progressing through our technical evaluation process. As you'll be aware, first teaching for the new versions is this September. Our focus is now on a safe transition from old to new and you should all be preparing for the removal of old versions.

We are keen to ensure that colleges and training providers have all the information needed to prepare, so we have published a range of resources and links on our website. We have encouraged awarding organisations to publish specifications and materials to help with preparation, in draft if necessary.

I do want to remind you that the last date for registering learners on the current qualifications is 31 August, and after that all new registrations must be on the reformed qualifications.

A regulated approach to apprenticeships EQA today

And we take equal interest in our regulation of apprenticeship End Point Assessments. Back in 2017, we first published a document setting out our approach, and the regulated approach to External Quality Assurance is now really well established.

At every stage we are focused on meeting the needs of employers and protecting the interests of apprentices. We have engaged proactively and reactively to ensure these outcomes. In May, we presented to the Institute's Quality Assurance Committee what we have found from our External Quality Assurance activity thus far.

We set out our view that you need to build in quality and validity at the start. We see evidence that comparability between End Point Assessments (EPAs), developed and delivered by different End Point Assessment Organisations (EPAOs) against specific standards, can diverge.

Where assessment plan design allows for variances in approach there is a risk to consistency for that EPA. We've employed an ongoing programme of technical evaluation of EPA materials, working with sector experts to identify and mitigate these divergent approaches.

We can also see that the EPA market is maturing – though not necessarily in ways that we might have expected. Currently, fewer EPAOs have put fewer EPAs on our Register than we'd anticipated.

We are also seeing some EPAOs deciding some EPAs are not sustainable for them, and looking to withdraw from that part of the market. We are clear that apprentices should not be left high and dry. So where necessary we are intervening to protect the interest of learners by steering the pace or sequence of withdrawals. We will continue to monitor this maturing market closely in support of the Institute.

And EPAOs are responding to the changes and challenges of this new market.

Established awarding organisations are taking steps to strengthen their subject expertise so that they can deliver against assessment plans and meet the needs of specific sectors and industries.

And a variety of new organisations are looking to rise to the challenge of providing EPAs. Some of these are very niche organisations with evident depth of expertise and influence in their industry and sector. Some are finding the rigours of designing and applying robust assessment methodologies challenging.

They need to be able to demonstrate their capability and capacity to develop all the relevant required types of assessment as specified in the assessment plan. So we have seen them considering how they can develop this and we have

supported their thinking and development.

Finally, we can see that our regulatory framework is having a wide influence over the quality of EPAs, across the apprenticeship system. We are seeing the strengths of our Conditions being applied by awarding organisations – wherever and whenever they provide an EPA, and not just where we are the EQA provider.

Looking ahead

So, it is from that evidence base that we should look ahead.

The Institute has the statutory responsibility for overall quality assurance of the apprenticeship programme: that is something we support strongly.

But the EQA options and arrangements are complex. As previously mentioned, the Institute has asked us how we might work as part of an optimised system for EQA, and particularly how we might work with professional bodies and employers.

Our response reaffirms our view that the simplest, most streamlined and consistent delivery of quality assurance for all non-degree apprenticeships would be through Ofqual regulation. We have signalled that we are prepared to extend our role as EQA provider.

Where EPAOs are already recognised members of the regulated community, this can be done quite quickly. Where EQA is currently provided by professional bodies and other groups – we could (and would wish to) – work in partnership with those professional bodies. That way we can combine our assessment expertise with their sector and subject expertise; together we can be more than the sum of our parts.

We have also committed to further developing our EPAO fora, so that they better reflect the depth and breadth of EPAO delivery. We remain committed to sharing best practice.

And finally, we have signalled our intent to extend the reach of our expertise. We intend to introduce a ‘field force’ to look at how assessments are working in practice at the point of delivery.

We’ll be undertaking on-site monitoring of EPAs, to gather intelligence from employers and apprentices and to strengthen the evidence base for our risk-based, targeted interventions. We want employers and professional bodies to be confident that EPAs provide an accurate measure of occupational competence. And we want to ensure that the assessment is fair for apprentices.

This field force will also inform our views of the delivery of other types of qualifications. This is a natural extension of our proposals to strengthen controls over centre-based judgements and the moderation and verification of assessments.

This work started with our evaluation of how Direct Claims Status operates.

You might recall that we recently consulted on changes to our rules, and I was pleased to see the warm reception our proposals received from AELP in particular. We're working through the consultation responses now, and you can expect to hear more in September.

Conclusion

So you can see that the approach we adopt to regulation is geared completely towards securing high quality assessment products that command public confidence, protect the interests of learners and deliver what employers and others need from them.

The messages I'd like to leave you with are that:

We have increased our focus on vocational and technical qualifications, treating them with the same seriousness as GCSEs and A levels.

We recognise the need for flexible approaches to assessment – one size does not fit all and our priority is to ensure validity and fairness.

We are fully engaged in the government's reforms and believe strongly that regulation plays a critically important role in assuring quality and fairness.

Thank you.

£778m investment in Birmingham and the West Midlands to deliver 2022 Commonwealth Games

- Games will benefit Birmingham, the West Midlands and the UK through job creation, business and trade opportunities, and tourism
- Budget is split 75% / 25% between central government and Birmingham City Council and partners

Birmingham and the West Midlands region will benefit from a £778 million investment to stage the 2022 Commonwealth Games, the government has confirmed today.

The public funding, which includes contingency, will be split approximately 75% / 25% between investment from central government (£594 million) and Birmingham City Council and a number of its key partners (£184 million).

This investment will deliver significant benefits for Birmingham, the West Midlands and the UK long after the 11 days of sport in 2022 are over. Birmingham 2022 will open up a wealth of opportunities, including business

and trade, cultural engagement, volunteering, physical activity, jobs and skills, education and tourism. Over 1 million tickets will be made available for spectators from across the UK and around the world.

Additional commercial revenue will be raised by the Birmingham 2022 Organising Committee and Commonwealth Games Federation Partnerships through ticket sales, sponsorship, merchandising and the sale of broadcast rights.

Regular financial updates on the budget will be provided in the lead up to the Games. The Birmingham 2022 Organising Committee will also lay its accounts before Parliament in the usual manner for government arm's length bodies.

Birmingham was awarded the rights to host the Games in December 2017. This announcement comes following a detailed budget review that took place after Birmingham was awarded host city rights.

Mims Davies MP, Minister for Sport and Civil Society said:

The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games will be the biggest sporting and cultural event ever held in the city. Watched by one and a half billion people worldwide, this is a massive opportunity to showcase the best that Birmingham, the West Midlands and the whole UK has to offer.

The Games budget is a significant investment in Birmingham and the region that will deliver benefits to local people for years to come. It will increase participation and encourage more people to get active and stay active, and to volunteer to be part of this fantastic event 10 years on from London 2012.

Cllr Ian Ward, Leader of Birmingham City Council, said:

The level of investment coming into the city and the wider West Midlands as a result of our decision to successfully bid for the right to host the Commonwealth Games, is huge.

The Games are undoubtedly a catalyst, bringing forward many regeneration and infrastructure schemes, so they are delivered much quicker that we could have done so otherwise.

The event also gives us a golden opportunity to reposition the city and region on a global stage and bring citizens together. The announcement of the budget is a time to reflect upon this and thank all of the partner organisations that have joined forces to put resources into the local contribution to the overall Games budget.

Ian Reid, Chief Executive Officer for Birmingham 2022, said:

The £778 million of public funding confirmed today not only covers our costs for delivering the Games but a portion of this money will be invested in a couple of our key venues, covering some of the costs relating to the redevelopment of the Alexander Stadium and the building of the brand new Sandwell Aquatics Centre.

These projects and others, which will receive additional and accelerated funding because of the Games, will benefit the city and the region long after our closing ceremony on 7 August 2022.

We are working closely with our partners, especially the Commonwealth Games Federation, to ensure that wherever possible we are reducing the cost of staging a Commonwealth Games and we're committed to delivering this event on budget. We'll provide regular financial updates over the next three years, so that our progress can be tracked.

Having our budget confirmed is a key milestone for us and we can now look forward to delivering a fantastic Games for the people of Birmingham, the West Midlands and the country.

Dame Louise Martin DBE, president of the Commonwealth Games Federation said:

We are pleased to have confirmation of the public investment in Birmingham 2022, which reinforces the Commonwealth Games' position as a cost-efficient multi-sport event focused on delivering numerous long-term benefits for the host city. An important element of the budget detail is the significant decrease in direct Games delivery costs compared to Gold Coast 2018.

A key focus since the launch of our strategic plan, Transformation 2022, has been to buck the global trend of rising Games delivery costs. Thanks to extensive partnership, we are pleased to see the operational costs come down whilst the value of the event to the host city and region is fully maximised. This confirmation unlocks significant investment in some inspiring infrastructure and legacy initiatives that will benefit Birmingham and the West Midlands for generations to come.

Andy Street, the Mayor of the West Midlands, said:

This is a huge investment in Birmingham and the wider West Midlands to ensure the Commonwealth Games leaves a legacy far beyond 2022.

Investment in the region is already being unlocked thanks to the Games, with improvements to public transport and the regeneration of Perry Barr well underway. We expect the wider benefits of

hosting the Games, including the economic and tourism boost, to last long into the future.

The Commonwealth Games will bring a global spotlight to Birmingham and the West Midlands, and we are looking forward to taking this opportunity to showcase our region to the world and celebrate how far we have come.

The Games will open a wealth of new opportunities for people who live and work here, will contribute millions to the local economy, and provide a global stage for us to introduce a rejuvenated, refreshed West Midlands to the world.

Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games budget

[Birmingham 2022](#) will open up a wealth of opportunities for people across the West Midlands region and the UK, including cultural engagement, business and trade, volunteering, physical activity, jobs and skills, education and tourism.

With an estimated global audience of 1.5 billion, Birmingham 2022 offers a unique opportunity to harness the power of sport and cultural activities to boost the West Midlands region and to promote Global Britain across the Commonwealth as we leave the EU.

The evidence from previous host cities demonstrates the significant benefits of staging the Games. Gold Coast 2018 Games is expected to have delivered a £1.3 billion boost to the Queensland economy.

The economic benefits from the Games will include new employment and improved skills, investment and export opportunities and increased tourism.

The Games provides an important opportunity for local and regional suppliers and the Games partners are already working with businesses across the West Midlands to ensure that they make the most of this. On the Gold Coast, 84% of contracts were won by local or regional businesses and in Glasgow, 76% of the total value of contracts awarded went to Glaswegian or Scottish companies.

To ensure that local companies start to capitalise on the opportunities that the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games present, briefings for hundreds of businesses have already taken place and more are planned in the run up to the Games.

Breakdown of funding

Government investment	£594 million
Birmingham City Council and partners investment	£184 million
TOTAL	£778 million

Notes to editors:

The Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games will take place between 27th July and 7th August.

It will be the biggest sporting and cultural event ever held in the city, featuring thousands of world-class athletes, over a million spectators and an estimated global TV audience of 1.5 billion.

Birmingham 2022 is being delivered in unprecedented circumstances, with a significantly truncated timescale, after the hosting rights were withdrawn from Durban in March 2017 and awarded to Birmingham in December 2017.

In addition to the budget of £778 million for staging the Games, there are a number of existing projects in the region that will deliver long-lasting benefits, which can also help to deliver the Games in the summer of 2022.

This includes the £496 million development of 1,400 new homes at Perry Barr which will serve as the Commonwealth Games Village during the Games in 2022, the delivery of which Birmingham City Council is responsible. The Perry Barr development will be supported by £165m of government funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, as announced in October 2018.

The Commonwealth Games will act as a catalyst for the regeneration of the Perry Barr area with the development of a high-quality new residential neighbourhood. Post-Games, the development will be converted into more than 1,400 homes, the first phase of a long-term regeneration plan for Perry Barr and surrounding areas that will provide 5,000 new homes in total.

The Games will also benefit from investment in transport infrastructure including by Transport for West Midlands. This includes improvements at Perry Barr and University stations and new SPRINT rapid bus routes, subject to the necessary approvals. Passengers across the region will benefit from these proposals long after the Games end in 2022.