

Press release: Universities asked to do more to support care leavers

Universities across the country are being called on to do more for young people leaving care by giving them personal support, helping them pay for accommodation and providing money to buy books and join social clubs.

Currently just 6 per cent of care leavers aged 19-21 go into higher education, and those that do are nearly twice as likely to drop out than their peers. This is why Universities Minister Chris Skidmore and Children and Families Minister Nadhim Zahawi are calling for a shift in culture at universities to welcome care leavers and provide wraparound support to help them thrive.

The new Higher Education Principles published today (14 March) set out how universities – especially the most selective and best-resourced – should do more for young people leaving care by providing them with personal support through buddy systems as well as giving them money for course materials and to fully experience student life.

Children and Families Minister Nadhim Zahawi said:

Far too many young people leaving care are missing out on opportunities that their peers take for granted. Many universities are already improving their offers to care leavers, through our Care Leaver Covenant and beyond, but I want this to become the norm – not the exception.

These principles are important in creating a culture shift for all universities. They set out clearly what we expect from them in helping young people leaving care to start higher education, and call on them to extend the kinds of practical and personal support that will make a challenging transition less overwhelming.

Under the principles, the most selective universities are being asked to go further and set a high bar for the sector, providing free accommodation and bursaries to cover study and student experience costs, such as laptops and books as well as access to social groups.

Admissions teams should provide outreach to councils and schools to encourage looked after children to apply for higher education. Support could also include subsidised and year-round accommodation, as those leaving care to start university may not have the same family networks or a place to stay during the holidays. The new guidance sets an expectation on the level of support universities should offer to care leavers, putting them on track to succeed as soon as they arrive.

Universities Minister Chris Skidmore said:

Everyone, including young people leaving care, should have the opportunity and the support to thrive in university and go on to succeed. Care leavers taking up a place at university face different pressures to their peers, but we are determined to stop them from dropping out due to challenges beyond their control.

The access and participation work done by universities must ensure all parts of society have fair access, especially for care leavers. But a place at university is only the start and universities must also focus on supporting young people to make the most out of their course and ultimately secure employment in the future.

This builds on the launch of the Care Leaver Covenant, which sets out pledges made by the Government, businesses, charities, and voluntary sector groups to provide work and education-based opportunities to young people leaving the care system. So far 73 organisations have signed up to the Covenant, including 13 universities.

Poet and care leaver Lemn Sissay, who is also Chancellor of the University of Manchester and a champion of the Care Leaver Covenant, said:

Leaving care without qualifications or direction is seriously hard. I know. I was that person. It's critical that we come together to make sure that all young people, including those who have left the care system, have every opportunity, which is why these principles are so important, so vital.

It's truly great to see the Department for Education working so closely with universities in the interests of vulnerable young people leaving care. For me it is a historic moment. It's never happened before. One day I hope all universities will be able to say we are signed to The Care Leaver Covenant.

By encouraging universities to think more about the offer they make to care leavers, the guidance aims to reduce the number who are deemed as 'not in education, employment or training' (NEET) – almost 40 per cent of care leavers aged 19 to 21, compared to 13 per cent for this age group overall.

The new guidance builds on wider government support available to care leavers. The Department for Education has already extended the offer of support from a Personal Adviser to all leavers to the age of 25, while all care leavers who go to university are entitled to a £2,000 bursary from their local council, £1,200 from the college if they go into further education and £1,000 for the first year of an apprenticeship.

The principles also come after the Office for Students (OfS) published new guidance, under which universities that charge higher fees must have access and participation plans for implementation in 2020/21. The OfS will scrutinise these plans and hold universities to account on how they are improving outcomes for underrepresented students, including care leavers.

Anne Longfield, Children's Commissioner for England, said:

I want to see more young people in care going to University and the Department for Education is right to promote ways that universities can support those in care to apply for degrees and to flourish while they are studying. I am calling for universities to compete to offer the best support to children in care as we should all have the highest aspirations for these young people.

I was pleased to provide our input into the development of the Department for Education Principles based on the issues about which care leavers are increasingly calling my office for advice.

Alistair Jarvis, Chief Executive of Universities UK, said:

Universities are committed to working closely with schools and local authorities to increase the number of care leavers attending university and provide them with appropriate support to thrive at university.

These principles will help universities to build on existing work to provide personal support for care leavers to realise their full potential.

News story: £2.2 billion of new UK investment opportunities launched

- New £1.19 billion property investment portfolio launched in Wales
- Additional £1.01bn of investment projects launched in Durham, Harrogate, Swindon, Bournemouth, North Essex, Oxford and Bicester
- UK Government will showcase the projects at the world's largest property exhibition MIPIM Cannes

£2.2bn worth of new investment opportunities, which will create new homes and jobs, have been launched today (Thursday 14 March) by the Department for International Trade.

Launched at international property event MIPIM, the new projects include an array of development opportunities in England and the government's first Wales property investment portfolio.

Among the new investment opportunities on offer to international investors is a 444-acre 'experiential' resort in Oxfordshire and 3 new garden communities

in North Essex, set to create more than 43,000 new homes over the next 50 years.

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox MP said:

The portfolios we are showcasing at MIPIM represent the wide array of real estate investment opportunities the UK has to offer that can satisfy the needs of every type of international investor.

These developments will create more jobs and homes for our residents, delivering essential infrastructure and I am incredibly pleased my department, in conjunction with Homes England and MHCLG, have supported their launch.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

This first Welsh portfolio presents a real opportunity for international investors to capitalise on our nation's innovation and expertise.

I'm delighted to present a broad range of projects across all parts of Wales which demonstrate our strengths in sectors ranging from tourism to business and clean energy generation. Each opportunity showcases what makes our beautiful, resourceful country such an attractive destination for investment and business and I look forward to discussing them further with potential investors.

DIT will lead the government's presence at MIPIM, where over 23,000 people are expected to attend, including investment representatives from over 100 countries.

The UK government will host a number of panel sessions at the UK pavilion throughout the week, discussing topics including the opportunities for investing in the Northern Powerhouse and devolved nations, and the impact technology will have on the real estate sector in the future.

The portfolios showcased at the UK pavilion have been put together by the DIT's Capital Investment team which aligns with the greater governmental initiative to attract and support both local and foreign investment into infrastructure, property developments and energy projects throughout the UK.

Wales Portfolio

- Cardiff: a mixed office and multi-storey car park development in Cardiff Central Quay
- Milford Waterfront: a leisure-focused development in Milford Haven
- Barry Island: Nells Point; a beachside tourism development on Barry Island
- Swansea: Phase 2 of a mixed development in Swansea Central The four new

projects will be combined with two existing projects in Anglesey North Wales.

And

- Durham: Forrest Park; a logistics and light manufacturing business park on a 52-hectare site in Newton Aycliffe
- Harrogate: Future Park; a mixed manufacturing, leisure, retail, and technology development
- Swindon: Kimmerfields; a residential and commercial development with a hotel in Swindon's business district
- Bournemouth: Winter Gardens; a residential development with restaurants, supermarkets and leisure space
- Oxford: a commercial development on the existing Culham Science Centre site on the outskirts of Oxford
- Bicester: Bicester Motion; a 444-acre 'experiential resort' comprising a hotel, conference centre and technology hub
- North Essex Garden Communities: three new garden communities across North Essex, providing up to 43,000 homes over the next 50 years

Press release: Government drive to boost attainment in North East schools

Thousands of children across the North East will benefit from a £24million investment to improve school standards and boost their career prospects.

The Education Secretary Damian Hinds will today (Thursday 14 March) set out plans to support up to thirty schools through the Opportunity North East (ONE) initiative – a multi-million pound Government-led programme to improve social mobility and raise aspirations for children. These schools include:

- Duke's Secondary School, Northumberland
- Trinity Catholic College, Middlesbrough
- Berwick Academy, Northumberland
- St Aidan's Church of England Academy, Darlington
- Haughton Academy, Darlington
- Unity Academy, Middlesbrough
- Hetton School, Sunderland

These ONE Vision schools, as they will be known, will be partnered with high-performing institutions and given bespoke support to raise standards and help up to 25,000 young people learn the skills and knowledge that will help unlock their potential.

At a summit of schools, education experts, head teachers, business and

university leaders hosted at Middlesbrough Football Club today, Schools Minister Lord Agnew will set out more detail on Mr Hinds' plans – first announced in October – to help give young people in the North East more support and help as they transition from education to work or further education.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

“These thirty schools will be at the forefront of our plans to drive up academic standards, boost social mobility and raise aspirations for children in the north-east.

“They will receive more support to boost their performance and tackle the issues holding young people back – delivering on my determination to do something about the fact that, while talent and potential are evenly spread, opportunities sometimes are not.

“While there has rightly been focus on differential rates of attending a top university according to ethnicities, actually a young person from the North East is around half as likely to go to Oxford as a young person from an ethnic minority.

“I want everyone to feel that this is a country that works for them and want every child to have access to a world class education – and I'm looking forward to seeing these schools flourish.”

The 30 'ONE Vision Schools' will receive:

- Expert guidance from education leaders, bespoke to the needs of each individual school, to improve standards; and
- A high-performing partner school, which has a track record in turning around underperforming schools with similar characteristics to those, to provide support and share best practice.

The Education Secretary launched Opportunity North East in October last year, pledging £24 million to tackle issues holding back young people from the region.

Young people in the North East are the least likely to apply to higher education of any region in the country. In fact, 18-years olds from London are 50% more likely to apply to university than 18-year olds from the North East.

The region also has:

- some of the best performing primary schools in the country, but secondary school performance is below other regions; and
- one of the highest proportions of young people not in education, employment or training after year 11. Opportunity North East aims to tackle these issues by:
- Investing £12 million in targeted approaches to improve the transition from primary to secondary school, drive up standards – particularly at secondary level – and improve outcomes for pupils post 16;

- Working with secondary schools and colleges to encourage young people to consider university, degree apprenticeships and other high quality technical education options;
- Partnering with local businesses to improve job prospects for young people across the region; and
- Investing a further £12 million to boost early career training for new teachers and help improve the quality of teaching and raise standards in the region's schools, ahead of roll-out in other regions.

CEO of Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust Hugh Hegarty said:

"This Government initiative is very welcome and will bring significant benefits for young people across the region.

"As a Multi-Academy Trust, we have a strong reputation for knowing our schools and ensuring resources are accurately deployed. We will benefit from partnering with schools from outside the North East as this adds to our capacity to improve life opportunities for all our young people."

CEO of Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust Alan Hardie said:

"Northumberland Church of England Academy Trust is committed to ensuring that all of our pupils have an excellent education and gain the best possible outcomes.

"We are delighted that Duke's Secondary School has been offered support from the ONE Vision programme as it is completely aligned with our focus on continuously improving the quality of teaching and learning. We believe that the tailored support from ONE Vision will accelerate our progress towards achieving the high aspirations we have for our students.

CEO of North East Learning Trust Lesley Powell CBE said:

"The Opportunity North East initiative is a welcome opportunity to raise educational achievement, aspirations and expectations for children across our region.

"Our research school at Shotton Hall can play an important part in realising some of the aims of the initiative by helping schools and teachers to better use research-based evidence in their classrooms to improve teaching and learning. This is an exciting opportunity to further make a difference, and I'm delighted that we are in the position to support more schools to raise standards."

Today's announcement is part of a government drive to improve education and boost productivity in the North of England, and follows on from investment in the Northern Powerhouse strategy.

[News story: Autistic people asked for their views to help transform support](#)

Autistic people, their families and those caring for them are being [asked for their views](#) on how care and support in England can be improved.

The call for evidence is part of the cross-government review of the [national autism strategy](#), which will be refreshed and launched later this year. The strategy will be extended to cover children as well as adults, so services work better for autistic people of all ages.

Autistic people, family members, carers and professionals can all take part in the online survey. The government is asking people to provide their views on:

- how autistic people feel within their local communities and whether members of the public understand their needs
- whether autistic people, their families and carers receive the right support for all their needs at the right time
- how much autistic people are supported to develop their skills and independence
- where progress has been made, and where it still needs to be made
- what the key priorities should be for the future

People now have an opportunity to express their views on what is working and where more needs to be done to transform care and support. This could include:

- in school through support to access the curriculum
- at hospital through timely diagnosis
- within the community through respite care or support to enter the workplace

There will also be face-to-face sessions with groups of autistic people, including children and young people.

Supporting people on the autism spectrum or with learning disabilities is one of the 4 clinical priority areas in the [NHS Long Term Plan](#).

Minister for Care Caroline Dinenage said:

Autistic people must be at the heart of any improvements we make to their care and support. This is an opportunity to make a real difference to hundreds of thousands of lives. We want services from healthcare to education to work better for autistic people of all ages – it's no coincidence that learning disability and autism are one of the clinical priorities in the NHS Long Term Plan.

Please get involved and share your views so we can work harder than

ever to improve care and support for autistic people, their families and carers.

Speech: Building public trust for the use of patient data

I am delighted to be here. As many of you will know, this is an agenda which has personal significance for me.

Although it may feel to us that data ethics and health data sharing are 21st century challenges, it is hardly a new concept that human progress is built on our ability to gather accurate information, share it ethically and, finally, critically analyse it so we can transform raw data into actionable knowledge.

Since before the establishment of the NHS in 1948 we have sought more and better ways to record, share and structure health data for patient benefit.

Indeed, many of the scientific, ethical and regulatory challenges we are debating today in relation to patient data have their heritage in the evolution of clinical trials in which UK researchers have always been world leaders.

From James Lind's famous 1747 scurvy trial, which already contained most elements of a controlled trial.

To the Medical Research Council's (MRC) first double blind trial of patulin (for common cold) in 1943.

To its first randomised control trial of streptomycin in 1946 – which was a landmark trial for its systematic enrolment criteria and data collection compared with the ad hoc nature of other contemporary research.

We should be proud to have led the way in so much groundbreaking medical discovery.

But we must do more than celebrate our successes. We must recognise these highly meticulous and ethical standards that have become deeply ingrained in our medical research and clinical systems is an exceptional national asset.

And they are principles which stand us in good stead to realise the huge potential of patient data to improve health, care and services across the NHS.

Long Term Plan

And that is exactly what the [Long Term Plan](#) recognises. Developed with frontline staff, patients and their families, it calls for targeted investment in health data infrastructure and analysis to help deliver better prevention, earlier diagnosis and more targeted treatment.

But it's easy to forget that a key benefit of using health data more effectively though is safer, more responsive services to enable clinicians to spend less time administrating and more time treating patients. What they were actually trained to do, in other words.

This is why:

- the [Health Secretary's tech vision](#) has laid out a road map for interoperability and better digital standards
- we are investing in the digital infrastructure at different levels in the NHS from Local Health and Care Record Exemplars (LCHREs) to digital pathology and radiology

And why we are building on the great success of the 100,000 Genomes Project – which crucially translates into clinical care with the Genomic Medicine Service – with a National Genomic Strategy to draw together our world-leading strengths from the UK biobank to the commitment to sequence 5 million genomes in 5 years.

Even with all this activity though, we all know we are just at the beginning of this journey and that is why we are so determined to start on firm foundations.

One thing we have learnt through long, hard experience since that first 1747 trial though, that we have heard clearly today, is that the precondition for all medical innovation and clinical care is patient trust.

National Data Guardian

That is why I am so pleased to be here today to mark the role of the [National Data Guardian](#) being placed on a statutory footing.

This is an enormous achievement. It was a longstanding government commitment, but there were some challenges along the way to getting here and we would not be here without all of you – so I want to thank every one of you who played a role in getting us passed the finish line.

Placing the National Data Guardian on a statutory footing strengthens the role as an independent and authoritative voice for the patient on how their data is used across the health and care system. It is right that patients are confident they have a strong champion, not only to advise them, but also to challenge the system and ensure that confidential information is safeguarded and used appropriately.

In establishing this role, Dame Fiona has firmly rooted the National Data

Guardian within the health and care system as an essential building block for building public trust for the use of patient data.

Public trust

As Dame Fiona says, the 10 principles have been a key step in moving us forward in public and clinician trust for health data sharing.

We remain absolutely committed to ensuring that the public have trust in how their data is used, that it is used effectively to support better health and care outcomes, and they understand there are robust safeguards in place to ensure it is used for purposes which they recognise as appropriate.

Patients should have a clear explanation of how their data may be used for purposes beyond their individual care and of the security and legislative controls that are in place to protect their data.

People want to know their privacy and rights are safeguarded and to understand how and when data about them is shared, as well as how and when they can make an informed choice about whether to share their data.

We must continue the conversation we have started with the public, to build and maintain trust and confidence, recognising that there is no 'one' public and also that people's views on patient data will naturally evolve depending on their personal experience and of course the advances in technology.

That is exactly why the role and independence of the National Data Guardian is so vital.

Cybersecurity

But of course, our ability to unlock the benefits of using data relies not only on the public having confidence in the health and care system's appropriate and effective use of data but also in their confidence that their data is held securely.

Cyber threats to patient data are constantly evolving and always present. Health and care organisations must remain prepared and ready to respond.

This isn't just about protecting patients' confidentiality by making sure that their data is secure, though of course that's essential. It's also about making sure the systems on which patients' data is held can't be disrupted or corrupted, because we want the right data to be available at the right time.

For this reason we've worked with our arm's length bodies to provide a range of specialist services that help organisations manage cyber risk and, if the worst happens, respond quickly in the event of an incident.

Since the 2017 WannaCry attack we've invested over £60 million to make significant improvements in the cyber resilience of local infrastructure and we have a stronger regulatory framework to impose harsh penalties on organisations that allow data breaches to occur.

We can never be complacent when it comes to ensuring the cyber security of our hospitals, ambulance services, or any of the many organisations that handle patient care and data, and there is still work to do.

But this work to toughen up the cyber protection of the NHS is an essential enabler of better care, to ensure that data can be available where it's needed, and that the public can trust that their data is secure.

Role of NHS staff

But as Dame Fiona so clearly laid out, we all know this isn't only about trust. The role of NHS staff is critical.

Unsurprisingly, we've found that the public are most likely to listen to information about the benefits of, and their choices around the use of their data if it comes from frontline NHS staff.

Medical researchers and secondary care clinicians are obviously on board with health data sharing, but the wider picture is more mixed. The Your Data Matters work highlighted that certain groups of NHS staff were less positive than the public about the benefits of data sharing. Others are unclear on how the rules apply to them. It goes without saying that if we are to realise the full potential of health data sharing – for patients, for our health system, indeed for those very NHS clinicians – this must change.

Patients like me with complex illnesses and co-morbidities are crying out for a health system that shares our data better so we don't have to explain our medical history at every appointment.

Patients like me with rare diseases, who have battled through a decades-long diagnostic odyssey, are desperate for advances in data science to be applied to our anonymised health data so that others don't have to suffer as we did and can be diagnosed and treated earlier.

Patients like me want to have more control over our health data so we can manage our own long-term conditions more effectively and reduce unplanned GP and A&E visits, not to mention improve our quality of life.

We are looking to the whole health and care system – including clinicians – to help us do this.

Of course there are challenges. But that is the case with every medical innovation in history. The 'challenges' didn't stop Lind's scurvy trial or the MRC's streptomycin trial or the 100,000 Genomes Project.

All those achievements involved overcoming great odds and discovering new clinical standards, new protocols and effectively disseminating them – setting up new ways of working right across the whole health and care system.

No health system in the world is better at this than us. We are more than equipped to respond to the challenges that health data sharing creates.

And I know that because of all of you and the work you have already done.

Conclusion

Today I have referred to a few examples of clinical trial success, but the Understanding Patient Data website is awash with case studies of outstanding practice from across the country. Clinicians, industry, researchers, charities and government working together – all in accordance with the rules set out by the National Data Guardian – to improve patient care, patient safety and NHS services.

To all of you Health Data Leaders here today – I want to offer my personal thanks. I look forward to working with all of you.

I look forward to working with the National Data Guardian. Not only to ensure we keep building trust. But also that data saves more lives.