

Press release: Housing Minister announces homes boost for rural families

Rural communities will be given more options to convert agricultural buildings into family homes to better meet local housing needs through planning rule changes, announced Housing Minister Dominic Raab.

Changes to permitted development rights will mean up to 5 new homes can be created from existing agricultural buildings on a farm rather than the maximum of 3 currently permitted.

Currently several hundred new homes each year are created through conversions of agricultural buildings, and these changes are expected to boost these numbers further.

The changes will help communities make the best use of existing buildings to help meet local housing needs more efficiently, while at the same time ensuring they remain in keeping with the character of the area and safeguard people's privacy.

Government is also giving applicants an extra year to convert further storage and distribution buildings into new homes that will help relieve local housing pressures.

Housing Minister Dominic Raab said:

We need to be more creative if we are to meet the housing needs of rural communities.

That's why I'm changing planning rules so rural communities have more flexibility on how best to use existing buildings to deliver more much needed homes for families.

This is part of our comprehensive reform programme to build the homes Britain needs.

The new measures will also help farmers adopt the latest innovations in modern farming practices by increasing the size limit of new agricultural buildings on larger farms from 465 square metres to 1,000 square metres.

Permitted development rights are a national grant of planning permission which allow certain building works and changes of use to be carried out without having to make a planning application.

The rights are subject to conditions and limitations to control impact and to protect local amenity.

The amended development right for the change of use of agricultural buildings to provide up to 5 new homes will allow for:

- up to 3 larger homes within a maximum of 465 square metres or
- up to 5 smaller homes each no larger than 100 square metres or
- a mix of both, within a total of no more than 5 homes, of which no more than 3 may be larger homes

To further support housing delivery, applicants will have a further year in which to benefit from the temporary permitted development right for the change of use of buildings used for storage and distribution to residential use. The right will be extended by a year until 10 June 2019.

The regulations to come into force on 6 April support the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's focus on making the most effective use of land or buildings in the [draft revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework](#), announced earlier this week.

Press release: Alun Cairns to host Commonwealth Big Lunch

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns will be joined by endurance athlete Richard Parks and representatives from youth, faith, diaspora and sport groups in Wales at a celebration of the global relationships forged by the Commonwealth when he hosts a Commonwealth Big Lunch in Cardiff Bay later today (12 March).

The Commonwealth Big Lunches, launched in partnership with the Eden Project, will take place across the Commonwealth between Commonwealth Day (12 March) and 22 April. The initiative is part of the official celebrations leading up to the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London next month.

Alun Cairns will celebrate the international and local connections created by the Commonwealth at a Big Lunch event at Caspian Point and encourage people to get together to celebrate their Commonwealth connections right across Wales.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

The Commonwealth is a unique family of nations made up of people bound by shared histories and values.

To celebrate these bonds and our diversity, I'm delighted that the Office of the Secretary of State for Wales is hosting a Commonwealth Big Lunch right here in Wales, bringing members of our

local communities together to celebrate what we have in common, as well as recognising the unique and diverse nature of the Commonwealth.

I'm looking forward to seeing every part of Wales come together to cement friendships, share food and fun with the people they live alongside at their own Commonwealth Big Lunch events between now and April. They offer wonderful opportunities for people of all ages to bring our great Commonwealth family alive in new ways as we work towards a common future – a future I'm incredibly hopeful for and the role Wales has to play in it.

The Commonwealth summit, held between 16-20 April, will see leaders from across 53 Commonwealth countries coming together in London and Windsor to address shared global challenges and discuss how to create a better future.

With the theme of 'Towards a Common Future,' leaders will focus on delivering a more prosperous, secure, sustainable and fairer future for all Commonwealth citizens.

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- To find out more about the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting, click [here](#)

[News story: Universities to be rated by subject quality](#)

Teaching excellence will be rewarded and poor quality teaching exposed under a new rating system for English universities, the Universities Minister has announced today (12 March).

In a global first, Universities Minister Sam Gyimah has launched a new tool that will rate universities either gold, silver or bronze by subject – holding them to account for the quality of their teaching, learning environment and graduate outcomes.

By extending the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework – or TEF – to subject level the government aims to:

- help prospective students compare the different courses on offer across institutions, to make sure they get the most out of their university education;
- shine a light on course quality, revealing which universities are providing excellent teaching, and which are coasting or relying on their research reputation.

The Department for Education has today launched a 10-week public consultation, seeking views on the design of the new framework. This will run alongside a pilot of the scheme, which has 50 universities and colleges taking part, including the University of Cambridge, Imperial College London, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), De Montfort University and the Open University.

Universities Minister Sam Gyimah said:

Prospective students deserve to know which courses deliver great teaching and great outcomes – and which ones are lagging behind.

In the age of the student, universities will no longer be able to hide if their teaching quality is not up to the world-class standard that we expect.

The new subject-level TEF will give students more information than ever before, allowing them to drill down and compare universities by subject. This will level the international playing field to help applicants make better choices, and ensure that more students get the value for money they deserve from higher education.

The plans announced today will build on the progress already made under the first wave of TEF – which awards universities with an overall rating of gold, silver and bronze. This new framework recognises that outcomes and teaching quality differ not just by university but also by course, and will allow students to look behind provider-level ratings and access information about teaching quality for a specific subject.

Those universities and colleges taking part in the pilot scheme for subject-level TEF are working with the sector in academic years 2017/18 and 2018/19, with the intention that the first full year of subject-level TEF will take place in 2019/20.

The new framework will take into account student feedback, drop-out rates and graduate outcomes to help deliver the objectives of the review of post-18 education launched by the Prime Minister last month, ensuring that students get the value for money they deserve from higher education.

The Minister will also launch an Open Data competition, the first of its kind in the UK HE sector, which will use selected government data on universities so that tech companies and coders can create apps to help prospective students decide where to apply.

This competition will build on the government's recently published Longitudinal Education Outcomes (LEO) dataset, which gives information on employment and salaries after graduation. By democratising access to information about courses and their outcomes, it will help all applicants, regardless of their background, make better decisions and get better value for money.

The Universities Minister added:

Our new Open Data Competition will open up Government data on universities for the first time. It will harness the creativity and enterprise of coders and tech businesses to create new tools to help applicants get value for money. And it puts government data to work for students, democratising the information Government holds about universities.

Press release: Government announces £300 million for landmark ageing society grand challenge

- Today's funding will support better diagnosis for UK patients through AI and new tech at new regional centres of excellence
- 500,000 Biobank volunteers will see their genome sequenced providing data that will help the UK lead the world in development of tools for early diagnosis and new pioneering therapies
- Extra £40 million invested in new hub for UK Dementia Research Institute
- New funding will develop new products and services which will help people live in their homes longer, tackle loneliness, and increase independence

As part of the government's plan to build a Britain fit for the future, the Business Secretary Greg Clark has today (Monday 12 March) announced a £300 million competitive fund to develop the innovations and new technologies of tomorrow.

Through the ambitious Industrial Strategy, government is investing over £300 million from its Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF) to bring together the UK's world-class research expertise with business investment to develop technologies and industries that can help the UK prepare for the challenge of an ageing society.

To ensure taxpayer money is being invested in the right areas, the government set out four Grand Challenges in its Industrial Strategy – priority areas and industries the UK is determined to be at the forefront of in the future where we can lead the global technological revolution, creating more skilled jobs to boost the productivity and earning power of people throughout the UK. Through its Ageing Society Grand Challenge the government has committed to invest in harnessing the power of innovation to help meet the diverse needs of an ageing society.

More than 10 million people in the UK today can expect to see their 100th birthday, compared to the 15,000 centenarians today. Ageing populations are a global phenomenon that are creating new demands for technologies, products and services, including new care technologies, different housing models and innovative savings products for retirement.

Today's new allocation of funding will see the government invest over £300 million to ensure the UK is able to meet these demands, with £98 million for a 'healthy ageing programme' and £210 million for a 'data to early diagnosis and precision medicine programme' to improve diagnosis of disease and develop new medical treatments and technologies.

Welcoming today's announcement, Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

Through our Industrial Strategy we will not only boost innovation and productivity across the UK, but we will also ensure that this government changes people's lives for the better.

We are investing over £300 million into developing the treatments of the future, in new technologies that will revolutionise the way we age and provide everyone with the best possible chance to grow old with dignity in their own home.

By 2020 we want to be the best country in the world for dementia care and research and today's announcement of £40 million for the Dementia Research Institute is a vitally important step on that journey.

Caroline Dinenage, Minister of State for Care said:

As a society we are living longer – a child born today can expect to live to 100 years – but now we must seize the opportunity to improve the quality of lives lived longer. With an increasingly ageing population we must transform the way we think about our work, our housing, our health, our finances and our communities.

These investments will not only help in our aims to make this the best country in the world to live with dementia but provide a revolutionary vital boost to develop and scale up products and services of the future, ensuring everyone can age well and live more independently throughout their lives.

Healthy ageing programme

The £98 million 'healthy ageing programme' will drive the development of new products and services which will help people to live in their homes for longer, tackle loneliness, and increase independence and wellbeing.

The programme will be investing in tackling one of the toughest medical

challenges facing society today, dementia. With an estimated 850,000 people in the UK living with the disease, the government will be investing in the creation of innovative new treatments of the future to help tackle it.

An extra £40 million will be going into the UK Dementia Research Institute (UKDRI) to create a new hub in partnership with University College London (UCL) that will host 350 leading scientists, researching new treatments to improve the lives of millions.

Dr Rob Buckle, Chief Science Officer at the Medical Research Council, added:

Developing the UK Dementia Research Institute hub in partnership with UCL will bring tremendous benefits for science and for health.

The new building will provide state-of-the-art facilities for research and the development of new dementia therapies, and will be located alongside neurology clinics and have a dedicated space for engaging dementia patients and their families and carers.

Data to early diagnosis and precision medicine programme

The £210 million investment in the 'data to early diagnosis and precision medicine' challenge will see the UK lead the world in the development of innovative new diagnostic tools, medical products and treatments.

As part of the funding announced today, the government will be investing in genomics, ensuring the UK continues to lead the world in large scale whole genome sequencing. Genome sequencing can help those with rare diseases receive faster diagnoses and cancer patients gain better access to personalised treatment programmes.

Through the new investment, the UK will sequence the genomes of 500,000 Biobank volunteers. The data from each of these volunteers will provide a rich resource of data that UK researchers will use to build a greater understanding of disease processes and enable the development of tools for early diagnosis and a new wave of therapies.

Regional centres of excellence

Over £70 million is going to be invested in creating regional centres across the UK to offer UK patients better diagnosis using new technologies including Artificial Intelligence (AI).

This investment, as well as future funding from industry, in new centres of excellence will support industry collaboration with the NHS to help the UK lead the world in digital pathology and radiology, including using AI to analyse medical images.

Applying AI to medical images has the potential to diagnose disease more accurately and therefore provide more targeted treatment, and increase efficiency in the health system.

Each centre will enable companies, including SMEs, to rapidly develop, test and implement products and systems in partnership with doctors and academics, improving patient care and gaining early evidence of real-world product value.

Investing in these programmes will enable research that could result in globally significant advances in healthcare such as cures for some cancers. The different strands of the ISCF programme will create the data needed to enable research into better diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disease.

Notes to editors:

What is the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund?

1. In the Industrial Strategy White Paper the Government committed to invest a further £725m in the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF) over the next four years. The Government, through UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), will invest in challenges through the ISCF. Through focusing on the big innovation challenges facing the UK, the ISCF will maximise the value of the new ideas being developed and capture the value of innovation in the UK.
2. The ISCF is a new mission orientated funding approach providing an opportunity to build on our competitive advantage in key areas of research and business sectors, and develop innovative ideas that will transform industries and create whole new ones. It will bring together the UK's world leading research with business around a major industrial and societal challenge. Challenges have been aligned to the four 'Grand Challenges' set out in the Industrial Strategy White Paper.
3. The ISCF will borrow from the US Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) model by placing the responsibility for delivering a challenge in the hands of a 'Challenge Director'. Challenge Directors will be leading experts in the area and will coordinate across different delivery organisations to make the challenge a success.

Expressions of interest are now open for the [Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund Wave 3](#).

Speech: Damian Hinds: There are no great schools without great teachers

I'm delighted to have this opportunity to speak directly to school and

college leaders here at ASCL – two months into the job.

Secretary of State for Education is a hugely exciting role to be taking on. But I also feel the weight of responsibility, the enormous responsibility of working with this whole sector – the lecturers, the social workers, and, of course, with teachers and with school leaders like yourselves.

What you and your teams do is one of the highest callings, the noblest of roles, with an impact on our society, far, far into the future.

In my first couple of months, I have had the opportunity to visit some of our nurseries, schools and colleges in different parts of the country.

And, everywhere I've visited, I have been so struck by the hard work, the care, the imagination shown by teachers and leaders – their dedication to doing the best for their pupils.

So, I'm going to begin today with a thank you.

We have, together, been striving harder than ever to make sure every child in this country gets the very best education – so that when they finish their formal education they have the knowledge, the skills and the qualifications that set them up for life, whatever path they take.

A core part of our approach has been to hand power back to headteachers, because we know you are the ones best placed to make the right decisions for your schools.

And thanks to your efforts, and to the dedication of teachers across the country, our schools are improving.

Since 2010, there are now 1.9million more children attending good or outstanding schools. More children are studying the key subjects that can keep their options most open. And the attainment gap between disadvantaged children and their more affluent peers has shrunk by 10% since 2011.

Our national curriculum and the new rigorous GCSEs have put England's system on a par with high performing countries.

And we will look to keep raising our game, investing in the vital subjects of the future like maths, coding and modern languages; making sure that the next generation is best prepared to face the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

I know that education is, above all, a people business. Syllabus, technology, structures – these things all matter. But ultimately it is about people: the teacher, the head teacher, the lecturer, the support staff.

There can be no great schools without great teachers. To motivate children, to make knowledge meaningful, to inspire curiosity. The quality of teaching matters more than anything else; and it matters even more for disadvantaged pupils.

Right now, we have so many brilliant teachers in our schools – the best generation of teachers yet. And my top priority is to make sure this does remain an attractive and fulfilling profession.

But, with rising pupil numbers, and a competitive employment market, I do recognise that employment and retention are difficult for schools – and it is not getting easier.

And, clearly, one of the biggest threats to retention, and also to recruitment, is – as Geoff (Geoff Barton, ASCL general secretary) says – on workload.

Too many of our teachers, and our school leaders, are working simply too long hours – and too often on tasks that the evidence shows are not helping children to learn.

We need to get back to the essence of successful teaching; strip away the workload that doesn't add value and give teachers the time and the space to focus on what actually matters. Trust teachers to teach. That's in the interests of teachers but it is also in the interests of children.

As Geoff has set out you, as leaders of your schools, you have the power to drive real change. You are the ones who can help to meet this challenge directly and it is, ultimately, your actions that will make the most difference.

But I fully understand that you don't operate in a vacuum, you react to, you respond to, you operate in the context and climate around you. And two of the most powerful forces in shaping that environment are the Government and Ofsted.

When I talk to teachers one thing I sometimes hear is this question: are we actually all on the same side?

And that's why I was so keen that today you would see up here Amanda (Amanda Spielman, Chief Inspector for Schools), Geoff and me together, standing together. Because we are all on the same side, and we all need to take collective ownership of the workload burden on schools.

Now I do realise, of course, that I am not the first person to talk about this – I'm not the first person probably to stand here and talk about this.

A lot of work has already taken place, and including in your schools.

But, clearly, we need to go further.

The issue of teacher workload is not new. It is one of the great unsolved issue in schools for well over a decade.

Eight years ago, just before I became an MP for the first time and before the change in government in 2010, I spent a week in a secondary school in my constituency. Now you could make the very legitimate criticism that it wasn't a typical school and it's absolutely true that my constituency is a

relatively affluent area.

But this was a comprehensive intake, local authority maintained secondary school.

I learnt a lot there. I learnt a lot in that week.

Now I know in the intervening years a lot has changed. But I am also struck by what hasn't changed in those intervening years; what I hear in schools today, compared to what I heard then, before the change in government in 2010.

And one of the things that hasn't changed is how often the subject of workload can come up in conversation.

Teachers then were also having to spend too much time on non-teaching tasks out of proportion to how much those things would help children improve.

So as we all know, it isn't a problem with a quick fix.

It is not as simple as going around searching for bits of bureaucracy that day by day you can cross off.

It is a deep-seated, endemic issue and multiple forces play a part in it – and I want to go through some of those now.

First, I do want to acknowledge the government's part in this – because the pace of change has been fast these past 8 years, as indeed, to be fair, it was pretty quick in many of the preceding years as well.

These changes have been important and necessary and we are now seeing their positive impact. As I've said, schools and teachers have risen remarkably to the challenge and raised standards. But I recognise that you now need a period of greater stability.

That is why – beyond those changes already announced and which are working their way through the system – apart from those, for the rest of this parliament there will be:

- No new additional statutory tests or assessment for primary schools;
- No further changes to the national curriculum; and
- No more reform of GCSEs and A levels.

I will also look at the accountability system and how it can drive unnecessary workload.

I know that the current accountability regime can feel very high stakes for school leaders – and this does then filter down to all staff.

Now, I don't think anybody can argue that we should dispense with accountability – it is crucial. And we must continue to hold schools to high standards – because children only get one chance at their education and they deserve the best.

But I'm also clear accountability must also lead to the right support, at the right time.

I want the default assumption to be firmly and increasingly about effective support for headteachers, so that they can receive the tailored help they need to help turn their schools around and move them further forward.

I also know that schools can at times feel accountable to multiple masters, and even subject to multiple 'inspections'. That is why I will be making a statement – following consultation with ASCL and others – to clarify the roles of the different actors in the system.

We do need to ensure that headteachers have clarity about how the system works. We need a transparent, supportive system, where schools know the rules, but they also know the roles, of every player within it.

That is why I want us to work together – government and the Regional Schools Commissioners, Ofsted, local authorities, teachers and unions – to make this a reality.

But what about the immediate challenges in schools?

I think we need to confront the fact that there are practices that have developed and spread based on beliefs about what Ofsted or what the government want to see, or required to see happening in our schools. And that, at their worst, these simply don't help to improve outcomes for children, but do make life more difficult for teachers.

And so you hear things like:

- we need to colour code our marking like this in this way;
- we need to fill in all these repeated forms or make these data entries about who is making progress and who is not; and
- we need to give the senior leadership team extensive lesson plans every week.

Why? Because Ofsted and others demand this of us.

Yet, Amanda – who you'll hear from in a moment – and Ofsted are clear that they don't need all of this. And we'll hear a little more on that later on.

School leaders are increasingly rejecting these practices and developing more effective strategies.

Such as 15 schools in Wigan which replaced various forms of deep marking with verbal feedback instead, leading to a reduction in workload and improvements in pupil outcomes.

Or Whitley Bay High School which, working with two schools in the North East, have created coherent long-term curriculum plans, making it easier for teachers to share high-quality lesson resources, reducing the time teachers spend making their plans.

Or Linton Village College which replaced onerous and ineffective whole school data drops, empowering subject leads instead to only collect data when it fits with their subject-specific curricula and teaching.

I want all school leaders to be able to trust your teachers and make decisions you think, that you know, are in the best interests of children.

My department has worked with Ofsted on their positive myth-busting work on inspections. And I want to build on this today with the launch of a video, making clear the things that we – and they – do not expect, because there is no evidence that they work.

We want to demonstrate a clear, united approach on tackling workload. And our key message is that you have our backing to stop doing those things that add to workload but don't actually help children to do better.

No one should be asking you for those things, and no one else should be telling you it is what Ofsted or government expect.

And to anyone who says otherwise – please play them that video.

I am also working with teachers, school leaders, Ofsted and unions to create an online workload reduction toolkit.

This will help schools identify what is eating up teachers' time away from the classroom and offer practical solutions.

In particular, we need to tackle the propensity of schools to collect more and more data, even when there's no clear benefit to pupils.

So I am going to bring together a high level group of sector experts and teachers to look at the kind of data and evidence schools are collecting and look at what, and who, is driving that. And they will work with me on a set of actions, which we will publish by the end of the summer term.

As part of this, I also want to look at the role of technology, which Geoff also talked about. In so many other walks of life, modern technology has been a time-saver. But I know for many teachers it can sometimes feel like technology has had the opposite effect – actually adding to the work that needs to be done.

Of course, technology can never replace the role of the teacher in a classroom. And we know that there have been times in the past when technology has been used to promote some of the fads and gimmicks that have spread around the school system – despite a lack of evidence on how this will help children learn.

My goal is to support schools to use technologies in ways that actually

reduce the workload burden, while supporting teachers to deliver great lessons.

I understand that if we want to really tackle workload, then we also need to look at the broader questions around teacher recruitment and, particularly, retention.

This needs to begin by setting out an overarching strategy on both.

So, my Department will develop this plan, working with the profession – including ASCL and the teaching unions – identifying clearly what steps we will take. This strategy will cover areas like workload, professional development, career progression, flexible working and entry routes into teaching.

In particular, I recognise that teachers need additional support and the highest quality development in the early years of their career, when the learning curve is inevitably at its steepest. This is what can attract more of the best graduates into teaching, set them up for success and keep them in the profession.

That is why our plans to strengthen Qualified Teacher Status are so important. Our consultation has just finished – with over 2,000 responses – and I'm very grateful to all those of you who took the time to respond.

We will be taking these plans forward, working hand in hand with the profession, and we will set out the next stage of this process by the summer.

I also think it is particularly important that we do more to make sure teachers have ready access to high quality teaching materials that they can choose to draw on, with the confidence that they are used and approved by their peers.

At the heart of great professions is the concept of building on the best practice and body of knowledge that has gone before. And I want to make it easier for teachers to do that throughout their careers.

That is why, as a starting point, I intend to use our new Curriculum Fund to make it easier for schools and teachers to share and access high quality teaching resources.

And I will work with the profession to help teachers to access a broad set of quality curriculum and teaching materials that teachers and leaders can adapt for their schools and classes, without having to write them from scratch.

Finally, we will continue to work on making flexible working more possible, and easier for schools and teachers. The modern world demands this, and if teaching is to remain attractive to the next generation, it is a challenge we will all have to meet.

As part of this, my department will be launching a new recruitment website that will help schools to recruit teachers and reduce costs – and we will adapt this specifically to help teachers to pursue flexible working,

including job shares.

Conference, I certainly do not think we're going to fix all of this overnight – but I do promise to stick with it. I commit to you that I will work with all of you, I will work with ASCL, I will work with the other unions, I will work with Ofsted, I will work with the Regional Schools Commissioners, with teachers up and down country – with every part of our education system.

I think between all of us we have the opportunity to do something materially different here: to change the culture in schools and to reduce workload for the long-term.

As I said at the start, ultimately education is all about people. And my top priority must be to support you as a profession, helping to build on your successes, and making sure that all children get the world-class education they deserve.

And I very much look forward to working with you.