

# News story: Plans launched to drive social mobility in Opportunity Areas

Ambitious plans to raise education standards and broaden the horizons of young people in areas struggling with social mobility have been unveiled today (9 October) by the Education Secretary Justine Greening.

The Opportunity Area programme is a key part of the Education Secretary's priority of tackling social mobility and improving opportunities for young people across the country. These 12 areas, identified as social mobility 'coldspots' – areas with both poor social mobility and schools that face challenges – will receive a share of £72 million to boost opportunities for young people in these communities.

Publication of plans for the first six Opportunity Areas – Blackpool, Derby, North Yorkshire Coast, Norwich, Oldham and West Somerset – mark the first anniversary of the programme, following a year of collaboration between local educators, employers and voluntary and community organisations to set out the key areas for improvement. Plans for the remaining six areas, announced more recently, will be published by the end of the year.

Local independent partnership boards – made up of school leaders, business owners, council leaders and other local partners – will work to boost attainment from the early years of a child's education right through to university. Other initiatives include projects to raise aspirations, by providing all young people in Opportunity Areas with at least four inspiring 'encounters' with the world of work, for example through work experience or mentoring.

Education Secretary, Justine Greening, said:

For too long, young people in these areas have been at a disadvantage because of where they are growing up.

I want young people living in these areas to have access to a world-class education, that's why we are setting out our ambition in these first six opportunity areas. As we prepare for Brexit, it is vital that we raise the horizons of young people and give them the opportunity to go as far as their talents and hard work will take them.

The government has also announced today that £22 million will be shared among all 12 Opportunity Areas through a new Essential Life Skills programme, to help disadvantaged young people have access to the same opportunities as those in the top-performing schools. The aim is to help them develop wider skills such as resilience, emotional wellbeing and employability. The programme will complement the individual Opportunity Area plans by providing extra-curricular activities, such as sports, volunteering and social action

projects, which give pupils the opportunity to develop leadership skills.

The six regional plans also outline how the transition to adulthood will be improved by working with local 'cornerstone' employers to provide young people with experience of the world of work. These include EDF Energy, GCHQ, Barclays and Lloyds Banking Group, Burberry and Rolls Royce. This work is being led by the Careers and Enterprise Company (CEC) to create programmes for young people aged 11 to 18 that raise their career aspirations.

Claudia Harris, CEO of the Careers and Enterprise Company, said:

We know that providing young people with exposure to the world of work while in education is one of the most effective ways to improve their employment outcomes.

That is why we are proud to be leading the charge with over 40 of our economy's leading businesses. This scale of collaboration with more than 260 schools and colleges in the Opportunity Areas will help ensure young people have flourishing futures and workplaces can access the talent they need.

The Education Endowment Foundation will also support schools in Opportunity Areas to improve outcomes for young people, particularly those from disadvantaged homes, by sharing best teaching practice.

Sir Kevan Collins, Chief Executive of the Education Endowment Foundation and 'evidence champion' for the Opportunity Areas, said:

It's good to see local partners, schools and organisations joining together to improve outcomes for young people. Only through a concerted effort will we be able to make a difference to social mobility in these 'coldspots'. The need now is to move swiftly from planning to action so that children and young people experience the benefit of this investment.

To really have an impact, change has to be informed by evidence. Our Research Schools will be crucial in doing this in each of the Opportunity Areas. They will help to break down barriers so that research does not stay in the pages of academic journals but has a real impact on classroom practice. Allowing teachers to use lessons from what's worked to inform their practice can make all the difference to attainment.

The National Citizen Service (NCS) is also working in each area to help young people benefit from a programme of personal development and volunteering.

Jonathan Freeman, localities lead for the National Citizen Service, said:

The National Citizen Service is a powerful vehicle that brings young people from all communities together, contributing to more integrated communities. The independent evidence is clear that the programme boosts confidence and leadership, well-being and young peoples' ability to succeed in later life.

It is also getting them involved in social action in their communities; in Scarborough alone last year, 2800 hours of volunteering was made possible through NCS and 93 young people participated in the programme – our aim is to triple this by 2020, ensuring that young people from all backgrounds can benefit.

Jim Whittaker, a member of the West Somerset Opportunity Area Partnership Board member and Managing Director of Channel Training Ltd, said:

The Opportunity Area plan for West Somerset represents a unique and exciting move to make a lasting change in our community. As an educationalist, local business owner and parent, I'm very pleased to be involved in the project.

The plan works across business, education and community to create and maintain more opportunity for our young people. The work done and relationships built during the project will be making a positive difference here for many years to come.

#### Further information

The full list of Opportunity Areas are as follows: Blackpool, Bradford, Derby, Doncaster, Fenland and East Cambridgeshire, Hastings, Ipswich, North Yorkshire Coast, Norwich, Oldham, Stoke on Trent and West Somerset. The areas chosen were amongst the weakest in both the 2016 Social Mobility Commission's index and the Department for Education's data on school standards and capacity to improve.

The Essential Life Skills programme will be targeted at all 12 Opportunity Areas. The Department will work closely with local partners in each of the Opportunity Areas as well as high quality providers to offer schools and local authorities extra-curricular activities in order to meet the specific needs of each area. The programme will focus on offering children greater access to the same opportunities as are available to those attending the highest achieving schools.

The [Careers and Enterprise Company](#), established in 2014, works to transform the provision of careers education and advice for young people and inspire them about the opportunities offered by the world of work.

The [National Citizen Service](#) is open to all 16 and 17-year-olds in England, providing them with the skills and experience that they need to thrive as active citizens.

Eleven Research Schools named by the Education Endowment Foundation and the Institute for Effective Education will act as local centres of excellence, working with schools in the Opportunity Areas to deliver evidence-based approaches to tackling social mobility and provide resources for teachers. This will support local teachers to be the best they can be and tackle the regional inequalities surrounding educational outcomes for local pupils.

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## **Press release: New Minister for Trade and Export Promotion starts at the Department for International Trade**

As a former Business Ambassador for UK Trade and Investment with a strong background in global business, Baroness Fairhead brings a wealth of business and economic experience to the department.

Her responsibilities will include building strong relationships with UK exporting companies, helping smaller businesses export to the global market and overseeing the GREAT campaign to boost the UK's global trade.

Baroness Fairhead will also bring together expertise from across government and the private sector to create a new export strategy that establishes a renewed culture of exporting across the UK.

The strategy will ensure the government puts the right financial, practical and promotional support in place to allow businesses to make the most of global opportunities and generate wealth for the whole of the UK.

As lead Minister for [UK Export Finance](#), her work will put finance at the heart of trade promotion, and improve support for businesses to take advantage of new opportunities when we leave the EU – a key aim of the government's Industrial Strategy.

Baroness Fairhead starts her new role at DIT as the UK's trade deficit narrowed by £2.4 billion in the second quarter of 2017, this largely being driven by a narrowing of the trade in goods deficit.

International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox, said:

As an international economic department our role is to promote the huge benefits of trade and help businesses make the most of global opportunities.

Baroness Fairhead's wealth of business experience will help the UK boost exports, forge closer trading links with new markets, and

ensure more companies can respond to the enormous appetite for British goods and services.

Minister for Trade and Export Promotion, Baroness Rona Fairhead, said:

I'm honoured to be appointed as the Trade and Export Minister at a time of unprecedented new opportunities for UK trade.

There is huge potential for growth as UK businesses meet the global demand for their world-class goods and services; I look forward to working with businesses of all sizes so we can forge a new culture of exporting.

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## **News story: Baroness Anelay's speech at the Polish Social and Cultural Association**

I am delighted to be able to speak to you briefly, after what I understand has been an extremely productive day.

As the Minister of State for the Department for Exiting the EU, I spend a lot of time travelling and speaking to Governments about the negotiations, so I value highly the opportunity to speak directly to members of our Polish community at an event such as this.

First, I'd like to thank the Polish Social and Cultural Association for hosting the event today and for what I hope will be the beginning of an ongoing partnership to bring together the British Government with the Polish community. Secondly, thank you to all of you who have taken the time to attend today's event.

The very objective of today is to bring you, the Polish community's leaders and representatives, together with Government to discuss the issues that matter most to you.

I know that many of you will be concerned about what Brexit means for your future in the UK. I hope that the Prime Minister's speech in Florence last month offered some reassurance.

In no uncertain terms she stated to all EU citizens who have made their lives in our country – that we want you to stay; we value you; and we thank you for your contribution to our national life.

You in this room – as members of the one million strong Polish community in the UK – are incredibly valued members of our communities. You make a significant contribution to Britain's economic, cultural and social life.

Polish entrepreneurs have set up approximately 30,000 companies in the UK. There are about 6,000 Polish students studying at our universities.

And centres like this one help bring communities together, build bridges and understanding, and make Britain the inclusive and diverse society it is. So I want to stress, as our Home Secretary Amber Rudd said just last week during a visit to Warsaw, you are an important part of our community and we very much want Poles to continue staying in Britain.

We recognise the uncertainty that the referendum result has caused. But we want to make sure that everyone here is welcome – and that you're able to carry on living your lives as before.

I hope that today's event, as well as the British Embassy's ongoing work with Polish Diaspora in the UK, goes some way to demonstrate that commitment.

Let me stress – the guarantee we are giving on your rights is real. We have also committed to incorporating our agreement fully into UK law and make sure the UK courts can refer directly to it.

We are determined to get on with the job and deliver certainty to people as soon as possible. Both parties in negotiations want to achieve the best possible outcome and the strongest possible partnership – one that works for the UK and for the EU.

As we set out in more detail earlier today, the negotiations in Brussels have been constructive and we are encouraged at the progress made on the following main issues:

- Significant progress has been made on citizens' rights. Around two-thirds of the outstanding issues have now been resolved.
- We have made good progress on Ireland, including on respecting the Belfast Agreement and maintaining the Common Travel Area.
- And we have also reached agreement on a host of lower-profile separation issues.

As you will have read in the papers, the financial settlement is a key aspect of the negotiations for Member States – we are working with our partners across Europe to give them the certainty they need.

It's clear that there is further to go but, thanks to the constructive and determined manner with which both sides have conducted these negotiations we are making decisive steps forward. We are confident that we can resolve the outstanding issues.

Even while we're leaving the EU, we want to continue to deepen the strong relationship we already have with Poland, after decades of cooperation.

Britain's relationship with Poland has gone from strength to strength. Next

month, Sir Alan Duncan will host a reception launching the new Belvedere Civil Society Forum in the UK. This forum will bring our civil societies together – business, universities, think tanks, parliaments, media and cultural institutions – to swap ideas, make new connections and contacts.

And the Prime Minister will travel to Poland in December to the second Inter-Governmental Consultations, where we will look to strengthen our comprehensive programme of collaboration in defence, foreign policy, security, the economy and business, science and innovation.

Poland is the first country the UK has met in this format. Last year, we agreed a set of actions that have enhanced the UK-Poland relationship.

British troops are now in Poland, and we have increased our cooperation to tackle modern slavery and organised crime.

This year, we will continue to deepen and broaden our relationship by agreeing a new set of actions.

We want to continue working together to face our shared security threats, for instance. We are unconditionally and completely committed to maintaining Europe's security. That is why we are proposing a new security treaty between the UK and the EU.

This would be part of a strategic agreement that provides a comprehensive framework for future security, law enforcement and criminal justice co-operation. And it would complement the extensive and mature relationships that we already have with European friends to promote our common security.

I know that many of you will be concerned about what Brexit means for these relationships in future. But when we leave the EU we will not leave. We want to continue to be close friends, committed trading partners and unwavering allies to the EU even after we have left.

So I hope that you leave today more informed by the steps we're taking to secure your future. I also hope that, as community leaders, you leave today feeling more empowered and able to share this information with your friends and relatives in the Polish community.

Reassuring and informing, however, will be a shared endeavour. That's why we plan to run more events such as this with Polish diaspora across the country – we're looking at continuing the programme in Edinburgh and the Midlands.

We would therefore be very interested in your feedback in how today went and want to hear from those of you who would like to be involved in future events.

Please do get in touch with my department, or speak to the officials here, to share your thoughts. Thank you.

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# Press release: Highways England working with West Midlands Combined Authority to improve journeys

Traffic officers are to help combat congestion on roads surrounding the M5 Oldbury viaduct as Highways England and the West Midlands Combined Authority join forces to improve journeys.

The two organisations have signed a partnership agreement that involves closer communication and sharing working arrangements to provide better journeys and reduce congestion.

Meanwhile, the Highways England traffic officer service will, for the first time ever, provide additional support to motorists that encounter vehicle breakdowns on key roads near the M5 as part of a 13-month pilot scheme.

The service, which normally only patrols motorways and key trunk roads, will work closely with Sandwell Council as well as West Midlands Police to assist motorists and clear obstructions from incidents to keep traffic flowing in and around the Sandwell area.

Traffic officers will provide additional support to:

- motorists exiting at junction one and travelling northwest on the A41 towards Wednesbury
- motorists exiting at junction two and travelling northwest on A4123 towards the Dudley to Burnt Tree junction, which is six miles from the strategic road network
- motorists when necessary using the A4034, A457 and A4252

Highways England recently started using rapid assistance motorcycles carrying emergency fuel to combat breakdowns and ease congestion on the M5 at Oldbury, while the essential repairs take place. It is the first time fuel bikes have been used by Highways England.

The Oldbury scheme, valued at more than £100 million, includes concrete repairs and waterproofing on the ageing viaduct. It is the largest concrete repair project, by value, ever carried out in Britain.

The partnership agreement was signed by Highways England chief executive, Jim O'Sullivan and West Midlands Mayor, Andy Street.

Mr O'Sullivan said:

We want our customers to experience safer and better journeys.

Working more closely with our partners means our traffic officers can now support those who break down near the main motorway network



while the Oldbury viaduct repair scheme continues.

West Midlands Mayor, Andy Street, said: "It's important that people have confidence that every step is taken to minimise disruption when essential repairs and upgrades take place.

Firstly, this means closer working between the WMCA and Highways England around planning, so that we can ensure these works go as smoothly as possible.

And secondly, measures such as introducing traffic officers to local roads means we can act more quickly when there are breakdowns to clear the way and get traffic flowing.

A huge amount of investment is going into the network in the coming years. This needs to be planned, communicated and managed as well as possible to keep disruption to a minimum. This partnership agreement will help us achieve this.

Sandwell Council's cabinet member for highways and environment Councillor David Hosell, said:

I'm looking forward to seeing Highways England traffic officers on our roads. Anything that will help to keep the traffic moving while work is being done on the viaduct will help commuters and our residents.

To keep the M5 open, a contraflow system is in place with traffic currently using the northbound carriageway and two lanes operating in each direction, along with a 30mph speed limit.

Motorists are reminded to consider using alternative routes while the vital work takes place.

At the link between the M6 and the M5 southbound, one lane leads onto the M5, with three lanes continuing onto the M6, to encourage drivers to take the alternative route around Birmingham.

On the M5 northbound at junction 4a one lane continues onto the M5 through the junction while still providing two lanes to the M42.

The dynamic hard shoulder sections on either side of the M42 and on the M6 are currently being opened much earlier than usual and left on later to see if this helps traffic. The dynamic hard shoulder is used by traffic when the motorway is at its busiest.

Slip roads at junctions 1 and 2 on the M5 are being kept open, to ease effects on the local network.

## General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

## Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

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# [News story: The Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport appoints two new Members to the Board of the Sports Grounds Safety Authority \(SGSA\)](#)

Dr Rimla Akhtar MBE became the first Muslim and Asian woman on the FA Council in 2014, in addition to her role on the Inclusion Advisory Board at the FA, and in 2015 was awarded an MBE for her contribution to equality and diversity in sport. She is a developer, communicator and strategist best known for her work as an Inclusion and Diversity specialist in sport, which led to her being ranked 15th in the 2015 list of The Independent's Most Influential Women in Sport. Rimla has over 17 years' experience in the sports industry across the UK, Middle East and Asia as well as a number of accolades to her name, including most recently the Sky Sports and Sunday Times Sportswomen of the Year Community Award in 2013. Her strategic and boardroom roles include being Independent Director and Trustee of Kick It Out, and Council Member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Scotland.

Janet Johnson is a chartered town planner by background, having specialised in regeneration and economic development in the North East of England. In a local government career spanning almost 40 years, Janet has enjoyed senior management positions for a number of councils. She is an experienced board member, having served on the boards of a number of organisations in the education and development sectors. In addition to being a specialist in regeneration Janet is experienced in modernising local government, managing change and driving service improvement. Janet was Chief Executive of District of Easington Council from 2004 to 2009 before moving to Sunderland City Council as Deputy Chief Executive where she led the Council's major regeneration programme. Janet took early retirement in 2015. She is married with three children and is a keen follower of football and cricket.

The roles are remunerated at £265 per day. This appointment has been made in accordance with the Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments. The appointments process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Under the Code, any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years must be declared. This is defined as including holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation, or candidature for election. Rimla and Janet have declared no such political activity.