

## **News story: 1,500 extra medical undergraduate places confirmed**

The department has published the [government response to the recent consultation on expanding undergraduate medical education](#).

The government will increase the number of student places at medical schools in England by 1,500.

From next year, existing medical schools will be able to offer an extra 500 places to future doctors. Another 1,000 places will be allocated across the country, based on an open bidding process.

The bidding process will be supervised by Health Education England and the Higher Education Funding Council for England.

The extra places will be targeted at under-represented social groups such as lower income students, as well as regions that usually struggle to attract trainee medics.

The government has also pledged to ensure the places are allocated to medical schools who will work closely with their local communities to help talented students from disadvantaged backgrounds become doctors.

Alongside the plans to train 1,500 more medical students, the government will also fund 10,000 additional training places for nurses, midwives and allied health professionals. Some of these places will be available to students next month.

---

## **Press release: UK Foreign Office Minister Lord Ahmad concludes visit to Bangladesh**

Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Minister for the Commonwealth and the United Nations, left Bangladesh today following a two day trip.

As the first UK Minister to visit the country following June's election, Lord Ahmad met the Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, and the State Minister for Foreign Affairs, Shahriar Alam and reinforced the UK's commitment to deepening relations and co-operation with Bangladesh across a wide range of issues including trade, development, migration, and the shared challenge of

combating terrorism and extremism. He reiterated the UK's hope that the next parliamentary elections would be free, fair and inclusive. His message to Bangladeshi political parties was:

"Number one, please participate and secondly let's have a free, fair and transparent election, because those are foundations for ensuring sustainable democracy for the long term."

Ahead of the Commonwealth Summit in London next year, Lord Ahmad called on Bangladesh to play a leading role. He said:

"The Commonwealth has huge potential to increase its global influence. Britain will be looking at ways to re-invigorate and re-energise this unique institution when London hosts the Commonwealth Summit next April. Bangladesh has a great tale to tell, which should be shared with our partner Commonwealth countries, about the work it has done to empower women and girls through education and employment."

He also discussed the role of the Commonwealth in promoting values such as tolerance, human rights and the rule of law.

Lord Ahmad visited a textile factory to witness a skills development programme for workers in the ready-made garment industry, which is being carried out with UK assistance. The Minister acknowledged the role the garment industry plays in Bangladeshi women's emancipation:

"It's marvellous to see millions of women in Bangladesh becoming self-reliant through employment. This is a driving force behind the country's progress towards middle income status."

Lord Ahmad also addressed a reception for Bangladeshis who had studied in the UK on Chevening and Commonwealth Scholarships. Launching the UK's Chevening scholarship for 2018-2019, Lord Ahmad welcomed the four-fold increase in the number of scholarships since 2014.

## **Notes for Editors**

- Lord Tariq Mahmood Ahmad is a British businessman, appointed Minister of State for the Commonwealth and United Nations at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office on 13 June, 2017.
  - On January 13, 2011, he was created a life peer, taking the title Baron Ahmad of Wimbledon.
  - There are more than 230 Chevening alumni in Bangladesh working in a variety of sectors.
  - Over 1600 Commonwealth scholarships have been awarded to Bangladeshi citizens since the programme began in 1960.
-

# [News story: New £48m contract for workboat fleet will support UK carriers and UK jobs, Defence Minister announces](#)

The fleet of up to 38 workboats will assist Royal Navy ships from UK bases and on operations all over the world.

With Britain's flagship [HMS Queen Elizabeth Carrier set to enter her new home in Portsmouth in under two weeks time](#), tasks to be carried out by the boats will include transferring personnel to and from both of the UK's carriers. Able to carry up to 36 passengers at one time, the workboats can be stowed inside the Carriers and winched to and from the water using on-board lifting equipment, allowing them to support the enormous ships either in port or on operations.

Building and supporting the boats will also sustain 60 British jobs, including 15 at Atlas Elektronik UK near Dorchester in Dorset where the boats will be built. A further 45 jobs will be sustained across the supply chain, including at E P Barrus in Bicester, KPM-Marine in Birmingham and Mashfords in Plymouth.

## **Defence Minister Harriett Baldwin said:**

From the south coast to the banks of the Clyde, British shipbuilding is ensuring that our growing Navy has the reach it needs to protect our interests around the globe. These cutting-edge workboats will support the likes of our iconic new aircraft carriers and the Type 26 frigates, as well as sustaining 60 British jobs. This is another step in our £178 billion plan to provide our Armed Forces with the very best equipment to keep our country safe.

The £48m contract will support UK carriers and UK jobs.

Ranging in length from 11 to 18 metres, the boats will also perform other tasks including officer and diver training, Antarctic exploration and explosive ordnance disposal.

They are highly adaptable to operational demands thanks to their cutting-edge modular design elements. For example, if the Royal Navy wished to quickly redeploy a boat from hydrographic survey duties to support diving for explosive ordnance, the survey module can be quickly lifted out of the boat and replaced with the diving module containing the high pressure air required for that task.

The contract will enable the design and construction of up to 38 boats as well as in-service support for the fleet for a further two years after the final boat is accepted. The first boat will enter service next year.

**Chief Executive Officer of Defence Equipment and Support, the MOD's procurement organisation, Tony Douglas said:**

These boats use modern materials and have been designed from the keel up to provide the Royal Navy with unparalleled flexibility and adaptability.

DE&S is proud to maintain excellent working relationships with partners across UK industry, ensuring our Armed Forces continue to be provided with the equipment they need while also maintaining vital British skills and jobs.

The boats will all feature glass-reinforced plastic hulls and advanced twin waterjet propulsion. Despite their varying roles, they will all have the same steering and control system, reducing the need for training and making them simpler to operate.

---

## **[News story: Are you a current Functional Skills maths teacher?](#)**

Ofqual is looking to recruit current Functional Skills maths teachers to take part in an online research study.

Participants will be asked to compare the likely difficulty of multiple pairs of maths questions – in terms of which question in each pair is likely to be most difficult for a Functional Skills student to answer fully. To do this we are looking for current Functional Skills maths teachers, or people who have taught Functional Skills maths in the last 3 years. You must not have been involved in developing assessment materials for Functional Skills maths.

Each question will be isolated from its usual context of a whole paper; and you will be making a judgement of difficulty considering all the factors that may affect a student's response. You won't need to complete the work in a single sitting, but will need an internet connection while you're doing it.

We plan to run the study in late August/early September over a 2 week window. Participants will be paid for their contribution.

If you're interested in taking part, please email your contact details, along with your experience in Functional Skills maths to

functionalskillsreform@ofqual.gov.uk by 21 August 2017. We will then provide further details about the work itself and what you need to do next.

---

## **News story: Norovirus associated with the World Athletics Championships**

Public Health England (PHE) statement about an outbreak of norovirus associated with the World Athletics Championships in London.

Dr Deborah Turbitt, PHE London deputy director for health protection, said:

PHE has been notified of a confirmed outbreak of norovirus among people associated with the World Athletics Championships.

We have so far been made aware of approximately 30 people reporting illness and 2 of these cases have been confirmed as norovirus by laboratory testing.

PHE has been working closely with the London 2017 organisers and the hotel to provide infection control advice to limit the spread of illness.

Norovirus is often caught through close contact with someone carrying the virus or by touching contaminated surfaces or objects.

Norovirus can be very unpleasant but is rarely serious. Most people make a full recovery within 1 or 2 days, without treatment. It is important that people with diarrhoea and vomiting drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration.

More information about norovirus is available on [NHS Choices](#).