

More support for schools to tackle bullying

Thousands of schools in England are set to benefit from further support and training to help pupils combat bullying, learn to value each other's differences, and improve wellbeing for staff.

As Anti-Bullying Week gets underway, the Department for Education has today (Tuesday 16 November) confirmed funding for five leading organisations, worth over £1 million in total, to support schools and colleges in championing tolerance and respect as part of their responsibility to tackle all forms of bullying.

Over £3.5 million has already been provided to charities and organisations to prevent bullying, with the latest funding boost going towards projects and programmes that tackle bullying including LGBT, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and victims of hate-related bullying.

This will build on the Government's new relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) curriculum, which has been designed to reflect a diverse range of views and backgrounds, whilst fostering respect for others and the understanding of healthy relationships. Subjects include teaching about bullying, healthy friendships, equality and the risks of stereotyping.

A new support scheme for school leaders is also being launched today, backed by £760,000 to promote good wellbeing across pupils, teachers and school and college staff. The scheme will provide one-to-one counselling and peer support to around 2,000 school leaders, helping those at deputy head level and above with their mental wellbeing.

Children and Families Minister Will Quince said:

Bullying in any form is unacceptable and can have a devastating effect on children, young people and their families. It is so important that we all take a stand against bullying so we can help create safe and inclusive places for young people both in schools and online.

It's crucial that our children and young people know how to treat one another with respect and celebrate one another's differences. That's why we are supporting organisations leading the way with providing schools with specialist support and training for thousands of teachers to help respond to any concerns and to make sure bullying never prevents any young person from fulfilling their potential.

An updated Education Staff Wellbeing Charter will also be published this week, which sets out commitments from the government, Ofsted, education

unions and charities, to promote and protect the mental health of the education workforce. Through the charter, the department pledges to work with the sector to drive down unnecessary workload, improve access to wellbeing resources, and champion flexible working, among a range of actions to support staff wellbeing. The department is now encouraging all state funded schools and colleges to sign up to the charter to create a united approach to supporting staff.

The Government's Online Safety Bill will also deliver a ground-breaking new system of accountability which will require internet companies to protect its users from online abuse, and will make it easier to report harmful activity. Online safety should also be included in a school's child protection policy and the Department for Education's [Teaching Online Safety in Schools guidance](#) aims to support schools in teaching pupils how to stay safe online within new and existing school subjects, such as RSHE, Citizenship and Computing.

Today's announcement comes ahead of the UK government hosting its first global LGBT conference in June 2022. As announced by the Government earlier this year, the theme of the event will be 'Safe to be me', with an aim to make progress on legislative reforms against violence and discrimination, and protect and promote the equal rights of LGBT people from around the world. The global event will bring together elected officials, policy makers, and the international LGBT community to protect and promote the rights of LGBT people around the world.

Minister for Equalities, Mike Freer, said:

Bullying, especially when it targets an innate characteristic like being LGBT, is particularly damaging and distressing to children. It is vital we stamp it out and equip our brilliant teachers to do so effectively.

Every child has the right to be themselves and thrive at school. I look forward to meeting some of these organisations to hear more about their work.

[Foreign Secretary launches campaign to tackle sexual violence in conflict around the world](#)

- Liz Truss to drive new global agreement to condemn use of rape and sexual violence as weapons of war as a 'red line' on a par with chemical weapons.

- UK will host global summit to unite world around action to prevent sexual violence in conflict next year.
- Foreign Secretary announces women & girls will be at the centre of her foreign policy priorities, with more than £20 million of new funding to help stop violence against women and girls around the world.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss today (Tuesday 16 November) launches a major global campaign to stop sexual violence against women and girls in conflict around the world.

Speaking at an event for the Gender Equality Advisory Council (GEAC) – established under the UK’s G7 Presidency to support women and girls around the world – the Foreign Secretary, who is also the UK’s Minister for Women and Equalities, will kick start a major new push by the UK to shatter the culture of impunity around the use of rape and sexual violence as weapons of war.

She is bringing together close partners to condemn rape and sexual violence in conflict as a “red line”. All options are on the table, including an international convention, to end such heinous acts once and for all.

The Foreign Secretary will also announce today that the UK will host a global conference next year to unite the world in action to prevent sexual violence in conflict. The conference will bring together Foreign Ministers from all over the world in support of the campaign to end impunity for violence against women and girls.

The announcements are the start of a wider move by the Foreign Secretary to ensure women & girls are at the centre of the UK’s foreign policy priorities.

The UK is already a world leader in tackling violence against women and girls, and supporting their rights internationally. While Foreign Secretary, the Prime Minister signed the UK up to the Safe Schools Declaration, committing to protect schools during military operations and armed conflict. Under the UK’s Presidency, G7 countries have committed to get 40 million girls into education and this year the UK hosted the Global Partnership for Education Summit, raising £2.9bn to get children into school. This included £430m pledged by the UK.

The Foreign Secretary will step up the UK’s commitment to women and girls around the world today, announcing:

- £18 million of new funding to end child marriage through partners UNICEF and UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund). This funding will benefit women and girls in 12 countries, including Sierra Leone, Uganda, Ethiopia, Bangladesh and Yemen. UK support for this work has already helped avert 25 million child marriages over the last decade.
- A £3 million boost to organisations on the frontline of tackling violence against women and girls. This will help survivors access health and counselling, as well as helping to prevent violence, including by educating men and boys. This funding will also support work with governments to improve policies and legislation.

- £1.4 million of new funding for the Global Survivors Fund, which help support survivors of sexual violence, including through financial support and education.

Foreign Secretary and Minister for Women & Equalities, Liz Truss, said:

In conflicts around the world women and girls continue to face horrific sexual violence, with rape repeatedly used as a weapon of war.

I am absolutely clear the UK must lead the way to shatter the impunity and indifference in which these acts are carried out. I will make it my mission to work with countries and international partners to establish a new agreement to condemn them as a 'red line' and end them for good.

Women and girls across the world should live without fear of violence, with access to education and employment, and the chance to reach their full potential.

The Foreign Secretary's campaign will build on years of work carried out by her predecessor William Hague, who set up the Preventing Violence in Sexual Conflict Initiative with UN Special Envoy Angelina Jolie in 2012. Lord Ahmad, the Prime Minister's Special Representative, works directly with the Foreign Secretary on this initiative.

After the last UK-led summit in 2014 the International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict was launched, which has been used by the International Criminal Court, the UN and by lawyers, police, medical personnel and NGOs to gather evidence and investigate crimes to help strengthen prosecutions in at least a dozen countries in Europe, Africa, Asia, the Middle East and South America.

Globally, one in three women will experience physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetime. A UK-funded study in South Sudan found that up to 73% of women had experienced domestic abuse and one in three experienced conflict-related sexual violence.

The announcements come following a report by the GEAC, an independent group of experts convened by the Prime Minister under the UK's G7 Presidency, which sets out the scale of the challenge of making progress on gender equality in the age of Covid. It recommended to G7 leaders that global action is needed to end violence against women and girls through increased investment in prevention and response.

Chair of the GEAC Sarah Sands said:

It is very good news that the Foreign Secretary has pledged that the UK will not look away when confronted by these war crimes.

We had to call for sexual violence in conflict zones to become a red line after hearing the testimony of our council member Dr Mukwege, who has seen first-hand the casualties and the consequences for women, families and communities. As he asked: 'When does this end?' We must work to make sure it does.

- The GEAC's report included a recommendation that the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war be condemned as a 'red line'. [It can be found here](#).
- The GEAC is an independent group of experts who were convened by Prime Minister Boris Johnson under the UK's G7 Presidency. The GEAC is responsible for championing the core principles of freedom, opportunity, individual humanity and dignity for women and girls around the world. Against the backdrop of recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, the GEAC's recommendations focus on education, economic empowerment and ending violence against women and girls.
- £18m will be invested in the UNICEF-UNFPA Global Programme to End Child Marriage (UNGP), the largest multi-donor programme on child marriage. The UNGP works in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique, Niger, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Zambia and Yemen. This will be the second phase of UK support to the UNGP. Phase I supported almost 8 million adolescent girls with life-skills education, skills training, comprehensive sexuality education and girls' clubs to prevent and respond to child marriage.
- The UK has committed an additional £3 million for the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women, which supports small civil society and women-led organisations to end violence around the world bringing our total contribution to £25m since 2014.
- Since 2013, UK aid programmes have helped over 10,000 communities, representing over 27 million people, pledge to abandon female genital mutilation (FGM).
- The UK's flagship What Works to Prevent Violence Programme has established new approaches around the world that have shown reductions in violence of around 50%. In the Democratic Republic of Congo, a project with faith leaders halved women's experience of domestic abuse and led to a more than five-fold reduction in non-partner sexual violence. The second phase of this programme began this year with the aim to drive down rates of violence globally by increasingly using methods which have already delivered results.

PM speech to the Lord Mayor's Banquet: 15 November 2021

My Lord Mayor, My Late Lord Mayor, Your Grace, My Lord Chancellor, Your

Excellencies, My Lords, Aldermen, Sheriffs, Chief Commoner, ladies and gentlemen.

If I seem a little hoarse tonight, it's nothing more epidemiologically serious than the well-known consequences of sending an 18 month old child to nursery.

Fourteen days ago this country hosted the biggest gathering of world leaders since the foundation of the UN at the end of the Second World War. In fact it was far bigger: there were more than 120 heads of state and government.

There has never been anything like it in our history. They came in such numbers not just because Glasgow is the place for a party, though clearly it is – glad we've got a good contingent of Glaswegians here tonight – not just because they wanted to be in the UK in November, famed for its good weather though it is.

They came in those numbers because the scale of the crisis is unlike anything we have ever seen – an existential threat of manmade climate change that promises to destroy our environment as we know it, to rob our children and descendants of beauty and species and habitat at an unprecedented pace and to plunge humanity into a new dark ages, and I'm not joking, with warfare for basic resources such as water and vast and uncontrollable mass movements of people.

They came to Glasgow because they have seen the ineluctable link between concentrations of carbon in the atmosphere and rises in temperature, and they came because they have all of them learnt the pure folly of disregarding the warnings of the scientists.

And on Saturday night after years and months of work the nations of the earth came together and they forged the Glasgow Climate Pact. And of course that deal will and must have its critics and detractors from one side of the argument or the other, and we must be honest with our children, and we must confess that this deal this pact won't do it alone.

Glasgow won't stop climate change, Glasgow won't prevent the heating of the planet that is now baked in, but Glasgow can still help us to slow that warming down.

What we have in our hands is now a road map: detailed, waymarked with milestone after milestone, and for the first time in history humanity has agreed to move beyond coal. I want to thank Alok Sharma for everything he did and for what he is going to do.

Because our COP presidency didn't end on Saturday, we are the "world COP-holders" for another year. We will build on the historic Glasgow Climate pact, which calls for countries to do better next year – accelerating the five-year cycle set out in the Paris agreement. We will push for more ambitious goals, stronger plans and better implementation, and so we further narrow that gap to 1.5 degrees.

We will work from now on with partners across the world, because this is

Global Britain in action. And I know how frustrating it was – as we stood on the verge of agreeing to phase out coal – to see that commitment weakened.

But I tell you this: I have been watching politics a long time and human nature, and I know when a tipping point is reached. The language does matter, of course it does, whether you are talking about phasing down or phasing out, the day is now not far off when it will be as politically unacceptable, anywhere in the world, to open a new coal fired power station as it now is to get on to a plane and light a cigar.

That is the social change that is afoot. We agreed to stop the terrible destruction of the forests, not just teeming with life and beauty, but the indispensable organs for fixing carbon and releasing oxygen.

We signalled the global death knell for the fossil fuel driven internal combustion engine, and the developed world has started to wake up to its responsibilities, and showed that we understand the fundamental unfairness of asking the poorest and most vulnerable countries to make huge sacrifices to get to net zero, when they are by and large innocent of pumping carbon into the air.

And if Glasgow has been on the whole a success, if we have made important progress, then it is worth pausing and asking ourselves why? What has changed since Madrid and Katowice and Paris and Copenhagen?

And you can see how all sorts of things have come together in the minds of the leaders of the world. There is the data about what is actually happening: the storms, the floods, the fires, the swarms of locusts. There is the ever growing clamour from their electorates.

Perhaps we were also helped in Glasgow by a collective sense of embarrassment at the way internationalism failed us during Covid: the squabbles about PPE, the crazy decisions of some countries, naming no names, to try to stop the export of vaccines to others, something we were victims of at the start of this year.

And let me say – given all the speculation – that we would rather find a negotiated solution to the problems created by the Northern Ireland Protocol, and that still seems possible.

But if we do invoke Article 16 – which by the way is a perfectly legitimate part of that Protocol – we will do so reasonably and appropriately, because we believe it is the only way left to protect the territorial integrity of our country, and meet our obligations to the people of Northern Ireland under the Belfast (Good Friday) Agreement.

And I believe Glasgow worked because it was the first COP that brought the solutions with a new formula for beating climate change. And in that bee-like way of human beings we all started to swarm around the same intellectual hive.

And the idea is that we can help individual countries to tackle decarbonisation, not just with taxpayers' cash or loans, not just with the

largesse of the multilateral development banks, but rather using that state funding to trigger the private sector to invest, so that we drive a green industrial revolution with millions of high wage high skill jobs at home and abroad.

And perhaps the most striking example of this model a “country platform” with a specific agenda of green projects – was created through the leadership of Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa, who ran the National Union of Mineworkers during the apartheid struggle, because he came up with a proposal to decarbonise his country with a just transition for the workers.

This attracted a cluster of countries, including the UK, to offer a total of \$8.5 bn as seed funding. And we are investing because we have seen how the model works here in the UK.

Government sets the parameters, a government auction determines the strike price for – say – wind power and the private sector then has the confidence to invest in what the evidence now shows can be an immensely profitable business.

And the UK will soon publish ten separate roadmaps showing exactly how we will deliver our green commitments – side-by-side with many of you here tonight – covering electric vehicles, hydrogen and much else.

Everyone has now seen the vital importance of the market and private finance and innovation and there is now a decent crop of very similar initiatives.

We want to repeat this model everywhere, throughout Africa, throughout South East Asia and the Indian subcontinent, throughout Latin America. Using guarantees and all our innovative financial expertise to help create markets and get private capital flowing, and investing more as our economy recovers from Covid and we can afford to get back to 0.7% to help create a global green industrial revolution.

The US has Build Back Better World, the UK has the Clean Green Initiative, the French have their One Planet initiative, the EU has its Global Gateway.

It strikes me that we need to concert our activities, just as we forged new institutions after the Second World War.

And I believe this concept of coalitions coalescing around science, and security, and values, finance and diplomacy and above all people, should be at the heart of what Global Britain is doing.

Because it is clear that some countries are simply not going to evolve towards free market democracies and we should be clear eyed about that. We have to deal with it, we have to manage it, we must have relations that are as friendly and pragmatic as possible.

But the consequence is that we work ever more closely with those who do share our values and instincts.

So when we say that we support the sovereignty and integrity of Ukraine, that

is not because we want to be adversarial to Russia, or that we want in some way strategically to encircle or undermine that great country.

And never let it be forgotten, in this season of remembrance, that it was Russian blood that enabled us to defeat Nazism.

It is because we have a commitment to democracy and freedom that is shared now across the vast mass of the European continent. And when our Polish friends asked for our help to deal with a contrived crisis on their border with Belarus, we were quick to respond.

And we hope, I hope, that others may recognise, other European countries may recognise, that a choice is shortly coming, between mainlining ever more Russian hydrocarbons in giant new pipelines, and sticking up for Ukraine and championing the cause of peace and stability – let me put it that way.

And on the same principle we do not send our Carrier Strike Group 8,000 miles to the South China seas because we are in any way hostile or adversarial to China, not at all, but because we want to show our commitment to the peace and stability of the whole Indo-Pacific region, and that's why we exercised and operated with 36 of our friends, because freedom of the seas and open supply chains, are the lifeblood of the world economy.

And that is the logic of the Indo-Pacific tilt that you will have read in the Integrated Review published earlier this year, and the Aukus arrangement.

And this is not just a deal between friends: it is the beginning of cooperation on the defence and security aspects of technology of many kinds – from AI to Quantum to cyber.

And that is how to express power and influence, that is how to win friends and win markets, not by encouraging others to run up unrepayable debts, not by bullying, but by creating these coalitions of the willing to fix the most urgent problems, and by staying at the forefront of technological advance.

And if you have a problem around the world and you need help then let me suggest some reasons why this country, the UK, is the one to have in your coalition.

It's not just because we have record defence spending, the heavy lift capabilities that enabled us to help 36 other countries in Op Pitting from Afghanistan, the special forces, the intelligence services, and the diplomats, so well represented in this room, who by the way as Glasgow has shown us again, are pretty nifty at getting people in a room and finding the language to build a consensus.

What we also have are the coders and the software engineers, the scientists and digital entrepreneurs, oh and by the way – we have the bankers too and the lawyers – and the regulators.

You want a country that can do scientific breakthroughs, come to us: there is a reason why we have more tech unicorns than anywhere else in Europe. It's because on the whole people like to come and live and work in the UK, they

like the freedom of thought and expression and the rule of law and the nightlife and the museums, and the fact that provided they do no harm to others, on the principle of JS Mill, they can live their lives here as they please.

And that is broadly why we have so many outstanding universities and so many Nobel Prizes. And we mean now to turbo-charge that, if you can turbo-charge a non-hydrocarbon engine.

The other day I met Demis Hassabis of Deep Mind, which is an extraordinary company located near King's Cross, and he told me about AI which is not a two toed sloth you use in Scrabble by the way, but artificial intelligence and he more or less blew my mind, because AI transcends the limits of our poor mammalian brains, crunches problems with astonishing speed, but also somehow creatively and intuitively, so that DeepMind has beaten all comers at Go.

It is already being used to predict where the wind will blow and therefore where is the optimal place to locate your turbines and to predict any maintenance issues before they arise. And the cost of offshore wind power has already fallen by 60 per cent in the last ten years, partly thanks to AI, and you can see the potential of AI to drive it down still further.

We are already using AI to rationalise energy use in the vast data storage centres that are so important to the global economy, and DeepMind has worked out how to cut the use of energy in Google data centres by 40 per cent. Imagine if we could make the same economy in the national grid.

And Demis Hassabis told me how they could now use AI to predict the plasma waves inside a fusion reactor, so as to harvest the energy while controlling the extraordinary temperatures, and I know – fusion may still be a few years away: it was 20 years away 20 years ago.

But when you look at what AI is already achieving, we should have the humility to accept that he might well be right and that AI could be bigger than the internet. And so the right thing for the UK to do now is to recognise this progress and support these amazing industries.

We will develop our own coders and bioscientists. We will train up young people in this country, but we will also welcome the brains of the world. We will roll out the red carpet, and kill the fatted calf for the maths Olympiad victors, and the physics geniuses and anybody happens to be watching this while proving Fermat's last theorem with one hand, and doing the washing up with the other, then get on to our Office for Global Talent and we will sort you out with a visa.

And we will take advantage of our new legislative freedoms to regulate with a light touch with minimum bossiness about the management of data. The new Advanced Research and Invention Agency will pursue the search for the things we don't know we don't know.

And we will set particular targets and ambitions: last year we took a risk and invested in satellites called OneWeb; we now have 358 in orbit and they

are on the way to providing high speed internet access to people everywhere.

And we know that our national security and prosperity depend on this country's technological prowess, and we also know that by placing our national advantage at the service of addressing common problems, we will strengthen our friendships around the world.

Having talked to Demis Hassabis and to Eric Schmidt, formerly of Google, it is clear that we need to go big on Quantum Computing. If AI can mimic the intuitive flair of the human brain, then Quantum computing will enable us to process information so fast that we can process an almost infinite number of solutions at once.

And if we could perfect it there are so many problems we could solve: including how to turn nitrogen into fertiliser and feed the world without creating so much CO₂.

So I am setting the ambition that the UK will aim to build the first general purpose quantum computer, and secure fifty percent of the global quantum computing market by 2040.

And that is why this country is determined to become once again a science superpower.

We know that is the way to create 100,000s of jobs in the green industries of the future. Indeed it is at present levelling up across the whole country, as you rightly said my Lord Mayor. It is the way to ensure that we are not dependent on the technology of others in a way that could ultimately compromise our national security.

And with our lead in the technologies of tomorrow we can help spread our values, just as we helped to distribute 1.5 bn low cost Astra Zeneca vaccines, and help to fix the problems of humanity.

And that is how Global Britain can influence things for the better, not with gunboats, or not solely with gunboats, not with usurious loans, but with public billions leveraging private trillions to drive the expansion of new technological solutions, from bioscience to carbon capture and storage and the production of green hydrogen.

I am finally optimistic tonight because COP has shown us that climate change may still be terrifying and complacency would be fatal, but we in the UK have the tools, we have the science, we have the finance, and the expertise, and we certainly have the global reach and we want to be your partner.

Not just because it will drive jobs and growth in the UK, though it certainly will, but for the good of all humanity and all other species – including unicorns – and for the air that gives us life.

Skills and Post-16 Education Bill: Second Reading Opening Speech

I beg to move, that the Bill be now read a Second time.

Mr Speaker,

In my previous role as the vaccines minister, I set out how we as a nation were going to work our way back to normality, by delivering on an incredible vaccination programme. This would be the product of evidence, expertise, commitment, and collaboration.

I am now here, I'm very pleased to say, as the Education Secretary. But I would like to make clear that my aims, first and foremost, remain the same.

I am determined to focus on evidence, data, and delivery. And on realising the huge potential we have in our very best asset: our people.

I know first-hand how important education is – I came to this country with my family aged 11 without a word of English – and here I am now in this chamber. With the right education, opportunity abounds.

Unfortunately, we are still feeling the aftershocks of the pandemic. And we still have many challenges ahead.

We need to recover economically.

We need to level up our country.

But I'm glad to say we're already making headway in this.

The Chancellor's Budget is putting the money where it needs to be – with £378 billion of direct support for the economy over this year and last.

Our Plan for Jobs is working – with the peak of unemployment forecast to be two million less than previously predicted.

And wages are growing.

We will build on this by having skills at the very heart of our plan.

Skills, Schools and Families – this is our mantra.

And skills are about investing in people, all across our country.

About strengthening local economies.

About productivity, stabilising the labour market, and global competitiveness.

About shoring ourselves up for a better, stronger, more prosperous future.

This is not a pipedream Mr Speaker. We are getting it done right now.

Our Skills for Jobs white paper set out in January what our plan was to reform the skills system.

I'm not going to repeat everything it said – members I'm sure would have familiarised themselves with it– but I hope I am going to show how we have acted upon it.

Firstly, we have significantly increased investment.

We are investing £3.8 billion more in further education and skills over the Parliament by 2024-25. As my right honourable friend, the Chair of the Education Select Committee, said earlier this month, this is “a remarkable amount of money for skills”.

I would note, Mr Speaker, the cross-party support for the measures in this Bill. The Noble Lord, Lord Sainsbury, who led an independent panel on skills on behalf of the Coalition Government, is a big supporter of our plans. As President Truman once said, “It is amazing what you can accomplish if you don't care who gets the credit.” And that is what we are trying to do, Mr Speaker – work together to level up the skills base across our great country

We are delivering an extra £1.6 billion boost by 2024-25 for 16–19-year olds' education, including maintaining funding in real terms per student and delivering more hours of teaching for T Levels. And there's an extra hour a week for all students in this age group, who have the least time to catch up from Covid.

Apprenticeships funding will increase to £2.7 billion by 2024-25 to support businesses of all sizes to build the skilled workforce they need.

We are making vital improvements to the FE college buildings and equipment across England.

We are delivering on our National Skills Fund manifesto commitment, to help to transform the lives of people who have not got onto the work ladder and lack qualifications.

Secondly, we're implementing the policies from the white paper.

For example, we've established 8 trailblazer areas across the country where the first local skills improvement plans are being developed by employer representative bodies.

They are currently engaging employers, education providers and key local stakeholders to begin the development of these plans. The trailblazers, from Kent to Cumbria, will generate valuable learning to inform the wider rollout of these plans across the country.

And finally, this Bill sets out the essential legal framework for our reforms. We're setting ourselves up for success – by giving people the skills and education they need for work.

By improving the quality of what they learn.

And by protecting our learners from the disruptive impact of provider failure – reducing the risk that they miss out on vital learning because the training provider they are studying with goes bust.

I've seen first-hand the transformative power of education. I'd like to take a moment to re tell an experience I had whilst on a visit to Barnsley College. The college was the first in South Yorkshire to roll out T Levels and while I was there, I met several of their students.

I'd like to tell you about one of them. Honestly, I have rarely met a more inspiring individual. He told me that with his T Level, and I am quoting him word for word here... "I am looking at unis now and thinking which one I am picking, not which one is going to pick me". Greg is living proof of the transformative effect our skills programme is having.

I also met students at Barnet and Southgate college in my first week in post and saw how state of the art facilities were helping those with learning difficulties or disabilities to realise their ambitions.

Barnet College is going further by strengthening its ties to local businesses. The college has worked closely with its local Chamber of Commerce to provide a range of services for local businesses.

So, Mr Speaker, our reforms are working.

They are changing people's lives now.

They are levelling up the country.

And this Bill will help to secure these reforms for the years to come.

Skills are about getting people fulfilling and productive jobs and helping them to improve their lot. That is why one of the key parts of this Bill is Local Skills Improvement Plans.

They place employers, through representative bodies, at the centre of local post-16 skills systems. Only through understanding what is needed in a local area and working in a holistic way with employers, education providers, and key local stakeholders, can we develop credible local plans to ensure that skills provision meets local needs.

Mayoral Combined Authorities, who have certain devolved responsibilities for adult education, are also critical stakeholders who will be closely engaged in this process. So, I am pleased to say we will introduce an amendment to place the role of MCAs on the face of the Bill.

Local Skills Improvement Plans will help ensure the skills system is responsive to labour market skills needs and supports local innovation and growth, with every part of the country able to succeed in its own unique way. This is levelling up in action.

And as the Prime Minister set out at COP 26 two weeks ago: when it comes to tackling climate change, words without action, and without deeds, are pointless. So, within this Bill we're taking that action, by setting out the need to consider skills that support our path to net zero as part of the Local Skills Improvement Plans.

Another priority for our skills agenda is for lifelong learning and delivering on our commitment to the Lifelong Loan Entitlement – LLE for short.

This will help provide people with a loan entitlement, to the equivalent of four years of post-18 education at levels 4 to 6, for use on modules or full courses, in colleges or universities, over their lifetime.

I cannot emphasise how much this is a step-change in our system and will revolutionise how we see education, retraining, and upskilling.

80% of 2030's workforce are already in work, so we need to be able to adapt to the future economy and those skills needs.

The LLE will give us the flexibility to be responsive and agile and enable people to succeed at any stage in their lives. It will also give people the option to build up their qualifications over time, within both further education and higher education providers. They will have a real choice in how and when they study to acquire new life-changing skills. The LLE will help to create that parity of esteem between further education and higher education that we so desperately need.

And I am pleased to inform you, Mr Speaker, that since this Bill's introduction, the government has introduced further measures to help eradicate that scourge of honest and faithful academia: essay mills.

I'd like to thank my right honourable friend, the member for Kingswood, for his work on this topic and I know he'll appreciate it is high time we stamp out this dishonest practice, that both undermines our further and higher education systems and puts students at risk of exploitation.

Any reform of our system must also reform our set of technical education qualifications. To close the gap between the skills gained through a qualification and the skills employers tell us they need.

That is why we're extending the powers of the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education to approve a broader range of technical education qualifications. The Institute will ensure the independent voice of employers is embedded through this process, while working in harmony with Ofqual to ensure quality.

Now, I want to be perfectly clear here. This Bill focuses on the approval and regulation of technical qualifications, rather than the funding of technical or academic qualifications.

But when it comes to both academic and technical qualifications, what we are looking for most is quality. There is no point in a student taking a low-

quality level 3 qualification that doesn't equip them with skills for a job, or help them progress into higher education. And this is even more important when it comes to disadvantaged students.

We have over 12,000 qualifications at level 3 and below. By comparison, the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland, widely regarded as having high performing technical education systems, have around 500 or fewer. Our qualifications review is vital in ensuring what's on the market is the best it can be.

I am clear that T Levels and A levels should be front and centre of the level 3 landscape.

But I am also convinced that we need other qualifications alongside them – many of which currently exist – that play a valuable role in supporting good outcomes for students. It is quite likely we will see many BTECs and other similar applied general style qualifications continuing to play an important role in 16-19 education, for the foreseeable future.

Our reforms to the qualifications landscape are rightly ambitious, but we know that we would be wrong to push too hard and risk compromising quality. That is why I am announcing today that we have decided to allow an extra year before our reform timetable is implemented.

This extra year will allow us to continue to work hard to support the growth of T Levels and gives more notice to providers, awarding organisations, employers, students and parents so that they can prepare for the changes. I am a firm believer in T Levels – as I have said before, I want them to become as famous as A levels – and I want to make sure we get them right.

As many young people as possible should have the advantage of studying and successfully completing a T Level. We hear consistently that some students are being put off taking a T Level because they are worried that they will fail it if they do not reach level 2 in English and maths. We want to change this and bring T Levels in line with other qualifications, including A levels.

We are absolutely clear that English and maths should remain central to T Level programmes, but we do not want to unnecessarily inhibit talented students from accessing T Levels simply because of the additional hurdle that reaching level 2 in English and maths represents.

That is why I can also announce today that we will remove the English and maths exit requirement from T Levels. This will bring them in line with other qualifications, including A-Levels, and ensure talented young people with more diverse strengths are not arbitrarily shut out from rewarding careers in sectors such as construction, catering and health-care. The Institute is taking immediate steps towards this.

I also want to make sure that all students from the first two cohorts are not unfairly disadvantaged by the ongoing challenges presented by Covid-19 on T Level delivery. We have therefore recently announced a small number of

temporary flexibilities to how Industry placements can be delivered for these groups, including allowing some virtual working.

We're working to improve technical education at all levels, including level 2, which has been neglected for too long. Getting level 2 and below right is key to making sure that students have clear lines of sight to level 3, apprenticeships, traineeships, and for some, directly into employment. We will consult on proposals for reform later this year, but will work at speed.

It is in the interest of learners that we take a fresh look at the system and make it easier to navigate, with better outcomes for learners, employers and the economy. When I was the apprenticeship tsar, I saw how people in other countries understood their systems so clearly – it made a world of difference. Everyone understood it, the student, their family and their employer.

Since this Bill's introduction in May, it has been subject to a thorough and significant scrutiny through the Other Place. I would like to set out my thanks to all those who contributed, and especially to the Minister for the School System, who took this Bill on just before its Report Stage and did so brilliantly.

The minister brought forward some government amendments during Report Stage, including those clauses on Essay Mills. Another amendment was to allow 16-19 colleges to become academies with a religious designation – something I know the member for Blackpool South will be very happy about.

And important sets of issues were raised in the Other Place. I can be clear that the government is listening and taking careful consideration of the proposals made there.

Not all changes are right for legislation, but I whole-heartedly agree with the spirit of many of those proposals.

Mr Speaker, it is a privilege to be able to take this Bill through the House.

I know there are many exciting and thought-provoking debates ahead of us.

But most importantly we must remember why we are doing this. It is to deliver high quality qualifications, designed with employers to give students the skills they need.

With the support of members across all benches of this House, this Bill will signify a major milestone in our Plan for Jobs and our economic recovery.

This Bill will set us up for both the future we want and, crucially, the future we need.

I commend this Bill to the House.

[Liverpool Women's Hospital terror attack: victims' compensation](#)

News story

How to apply for compensation if you were a victim of the terrorist attack in Liverpool on 14 November 2021



We offer our sympathy to those affected by this horrific attack.

If you have been injured in this incident you can apply to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) for compensation.

Compensation is payable to applicants who meet the eligibility criteria of the [Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme 2012](#).

You don't need a paid representative, such as a solicitor or claims management company, to apply for compensation. Free independent advice may be available from the [Victim and Witness Information](#) website or other charitable organisations.

If you have been directly affected by this incident you can find out more about the Scheme and how to apply on [GOV.UK](#). Alternatively, you can call the CICA helpline on 0300 003 3601.

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