

# Education Secretary set improving pupil outcomes as top priority

Improving outcomes for young people – wherever they live – has been hailed by Education Secretary Gavin Williamson as central to the Government's plans for building back better from the pandemic today (16 June).

Speaking at the Festival of Education, he explained how the Government will level up opportunity for young people, through strong multi-academy trusts, high-quality teacher training, good behaviour management and investment to help pupils catch-up.

The Education Secretary reiterated the importance of good behaviour, including his calls to ban mobile phones during the school day. He confirmed that a consultation on changes to guidance on behaviour, discipline and exclusions will be set out later this year.

The speech follows the announcement to boost high-quality tutoring to help pupils catch-up on lost learning due to the pandemic, as part of the Government's long-term plans for education recovery, backed by more than £3 billion so far.

Strong multi-academy trusts have proven their ability to secure the best outcomes for young people as they recover from the impact of the pandemic. The department is continuing to strengthen the oversight and governance of trusts, including by reinforcing expectations about the role of parents and carers on boards.

Speaking at the Festival of Education, Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

We are just as determined as ever to make sure that every child gets the world-class start in life that we expect and that they deserve.

I want to be clear – improving outcomes for pupils is our number one priority and as we build back better from Covid, it's more critical than it has ever been.

He went on to set out the achievements of top state schools rivalling independent schools, saying:

Our leading academy trusts and free schools now deliver an unrivalled education (...) but we must go further and faster if we are to complete the revolution, end the postcode lottery and truly level up the whole nation.

The Education Secretary also confirmed his intention for exams to go ahead in 2022, with plans being developed to ensure grades are fair for students, and restated confidence that grades determined by teachers this summer will reflect the abilities and hard work of young people.

Young children's development has been particularly affected by the pandemic, and Gavin Williamson confirmed plans for an exceptional Year 2 phonics screening check in the autumn term to help ensure all young pupils grasp the basics of reading, as part of the full return of primary assessments in the next academic year.

He also praised the work of teachers and staff during the pandemic, and outlined the Government's ambitious long-term plans and investment in teacher training and development. These include reforming early career development support, providing half a million teacher training opportunities and introducing Teaching School Hubs alongside a new Institute of Teaching.

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## Shaping the future of our facilities management

There will be big changes made by DVLA as we come to the end of our Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract in 2025 and with this there are opportunities to learn and grow. This exciting programme of change means we've been recruiting people to help us, with more new roles emerging over the life of the programme. These roles are critical in helping us shape the way we'll manage our site and services as we exit the current PFI contract.

Back in 2005, DVLA awarded the integrated PFI contract to Telereal Trillium. Their goal was to refurbish our main site, provide a full range of facility management (FM) services and conduct some additional building work around our estates.

We're now in the final 4 years of the contract, so we're looking at our next steps.

### **How our services are currently managed**

There are many different facilities, vital to DVLA's everyday operations, which are split into soft and hard services. Soft services are cleaning, bus services and catering with hard services covering building maintenance and the provision of furniture.



## Why our services are changing

In the 2018 autumn budget, the [Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that government would no longer use the current model of PFI](#) for new government projects. DVLA will be one of the first to exit a PFI contract following closely behind DWP and HMRC, the first two central government bodies to go through the expiry process. We'll be working with the [Infrastructure and Projects Authority](#), the government's centre of expertise for infrastructure and major projects, to take forward any lessons learned from the exit of the PFI contracts.

Our facilities management team has started to look at ending some of our soft services contracts early, by March 2023. This includes cleaning, waste management, pest control, catering and transport services. One of the first changes has been the removal of the lease of our staff minibuses which happened in March 2021.

## Next steps

My team's role will be to ensure a seamless transition from old to new service providers. We'll make sure the services are tendered and procured correctly and continue the safe, secure running of the agency.

When the PFI contract expires, we can manage our services differently. We'll look for improvements in value for money and quality through a more distributed approach. It allows us to look at smaller contracts, enabling us to work with a varied range of smaller businesses, specialist suppliers and service providers.

We are currently working with some expert consultants to review our current practices and consider in detail all the potential options. We're exploring all possibilities available from a fully in-house service provision managed by DVLA, to a total facility managed service through a new supplier contract.



## Roles and recruitment

The programme will involve multiple projects to manage the exit and expiry of current service provisions. This will include the development of a new operating model and finding suitable new service providers.

If you have a background in facilities management, we're currently looking for [senior FM governance and project managers](#) and would love to hear from you. You can register for vacancy alerts through [Civil Service Jobs](#).

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## [Eviction protection extended for businesses most in need](#)

- New rules to be established to ringfence COVID-19 commercial rent arrears and guide tenants and landlords to agree repayment plans
- Measures to protect commercial tenants extended until new rules come into force
- Announcement welcomed by the hospitality sector

Businesses that have had to remain closed during the pandemic and are unable to pay rent on their commercial property will continue to be protected from eviction, giving them the breathing space they need and helping to protect jobs, the government has announced today (16 June 2021).

In order to give places such as nightclubs and other hospitality businesses the help they need to recover from the pandemic, Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick has announced that legislation will be introduced in this session to ringfence outstanding unpaid rent that has built up when a business has had to remain closed during the pandemic. Landlords are expected to make allowances for the ringfenced rent arrears from these specific periods of closure due to the pandemic, and share the financial impact with their tenants.

The legislation will help tenants and landlords work together to come to an agreement on how to handle the money owed – this could be done by waiving some of the total amount or agreeing a longer-term repayment plan.

This agreement should be between the tenant and landlord and, if in some cases, an agreement cannot be made, the law will ensure a binding arbitration process will be put in place so that both parties can come to a formal agreement. This will be a legally binding agreement that both parties must adhere to.

In order to ensure landlords are protected, the government is making clear that businesses who are able to pay rent, must do so. Tenants should start paying their rent as soon as restrictions change, and they are given the green light to open.

The existing measures in place to protect commercial tenants from eviction will be extended to 25 March 2022. This is to ensure that the sectors who are unable to open have enough time to come to an agreement with their landlord without the threat of eviction.

Statutory demands and winding up petitions will also remain restricted for a further three months to protect companies from creditor enforcement action where their debts relate to the pandemic.

Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick said:

We have provided unprecedented support to businesses to help them through the pandemic. However, as we continue to lift restrictions and start to return to business as usual, tenants and landlords should be preparing to pay rent or come to an agreement if they have not done so already.

This special scheme reflects the unprecedented nature of the pandemic and responds to the unique challenges faced by some businesses. It strikes the right balance between protecting landlords while also helping businesses most in need, so they are able to reopen when it is safe to do so.

They will ensure many viable businesses can continue to operate and debts accrued as a result of the pandemic are resolved to mutual benefit swiftly. The government has committed £350 billion to keep businesses running, people in jobs and ensure we can build back better from the pandemic.

Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said:

Sorting out commercial rent debts will be key to enabling businesses to plan ahead with certainty and ultimately build back better from the pandemic.

The new arbitration process will be underpinned by law, providing commercial tenants and landlords with peace of mind that Covid-related rent debts will be settled fairly, and with finality. In the meantime, I encourage landlords and tenants to keep working together to reach mutually beneficial agreements.

Extending the ban on commercial evictions is a necessary measure to help businesses through the final stages of the pandemic, and comes on top of our generous £350 billion package of support that has been available throughout the pandemic.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury Steve Barclay said:

We've helped businesses and landlords to get through the pandemic with our £350 billion plan for jobs, including the furlough scheme, generous grants and business rate support – and this support is continuing through the summer months.

We welcome ongoing negotiations between landlords and tenants about accrued rent as we continue to recover from the pandemic. To support these, we're now providing a new backstop to help businesses and tenants to return to normal. This will help preserve jobs and livelihoods as we build back better.

Today's announcement follows the call for evidence which sought views from a broad range of stakeholders on how we can move forward after the pandemic. Responses from businesses, landlord groups, lenders and investors has helped the government to develop this new approach which will support businesses to reopen and allow commercial landlords to continue to operate.

Last year, government introduced legislation to prevent landlords of commercial properties from being able to evict tenants for not paying rent. This measure will be in place until 25 March 2022 alongside the restrictions on landlords' abilities to recover rental arrears through the seizure of goods. Restrictions on the service of statutory demands and winding-up petitions, implemented through the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act

2020, are also set to be extended.

Kate Nicholls, UKHospitality's CEO, said:

We welcome these measures as they will banish a grim shadow that has hung over hospitality since the Covid crisis began. This legislation will form a strong bedrock for negotiated settlements that can help heal the damage that the pandemic has wrought, and we are pleased that the government has listened to our sector, and acted to ease its plight by bringing in an equitable solution where both landlords and tenants share the pain.

The extension applies to all businesses, but the new measures that will be introduced by primary legislation will only cover those impacted by closures. This means that rent debt accumulated before March 2020 and after the date when relevant sector restrictions on trading are lifted, will be actionable by landlords as soon as the tenant protection measures are lifted.

The arbitration process will be delivered by private arbitrators but in accordance with guidelines which we will set out in the legislation, and they will have to go through an approval process to prove their impartiality.

A government response to the call for evidence on commercial tenancies will be published in due course.

The review of commercial landlord and tenant legislation will be launched later this year and will consider a broad range of issues including the Landlord & Tenant Act 1954 Part II, different models of rent payment, and the impact of Coronavirus on the market.

The Ministry of Justice have confirmed that the restriction on the use of the Commercial Rent Arrears Recovery (CRAR) process by landlords will also be extended. The total number of days' outstanding rent required for CRAR will remain at 544 days. This measure will continue to provide protection to tenants of commercial leases with rent arrears accumulated during the coronavirus period, while protections from forfeiture for business tenancies are in place under the Coronavirus Act 2020.

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## **Non-exam assessment proposals receive strong support**

Changes made to some GCSE, AS and A level qualifications this year will continue in 2022.

We have decided to carry forward some of the changes to non-exam assessment

and fieldwork agreed for 2021 for students entering qualifications in summer 2022.

There was strong support for these proposals, as the [Analysis of consultation responses: Arrangements for non-exam assessment and fieldwork requirements for students entering qualifications in 2022](#) shows. This was particularly the case for respondents who work in schools and colleges. For most subjects, 70% to 92% of respondents supported the proposals for GCSE subjects, and between 60% to 89% for GCE AS and A levels.

Of those who responded, 9 out of 10 said they could not identify any impact that would affect students because of their protected characteristics.

Simon Lebus, Ofqual Interim Chief Regulator, said:

“I am pleased there was such broad support for the proposed approach to non-exam assessment next year.

“These decisions provide certainty for school and college leaders, teachers and students if they cannot undertake assessments as normal, and now students can forge ahead.”

The changes mean that we will allow adjustments to the assessment and evidence requirements for non-exam assessment in a range of subjects including dance, design and technology, food preparation and nutrition, music and physical education. In the main, we are giving exam boards the opportunity to allow teachers to decide how to support and assess their students, in light of any public health restrictions.

We have also decided to remove the requirement for schools and colleges to confirm that they have given students the opportunity to carry out a specified number of fieldwork activities in geography, geology and environmental science qualifications. Schools can, of course, organise fieldwork for their students and we recognise the benefits of doing so – fieldwork is an important part of these qualifications. But we know from consultation responses that the pandemic will make it difficult, or impossible, for some centres to organise off-site fieldwork. In GCSE and AS geography, students will still be required to answer questions on fieldwork more generally, rather than fieldwork they have done themselves. At A level, geography students will continue to undertake an independent investigation but exam boards will be flexible in their requirements for use of primary data.

As for other decisions outlined in [Decisions on arrangements for non-exam assessment and fieldwork requirements for students entering qualifications in 2022](#):

- for GCSE English language, we will not require teachers to submit an audio-visual recording of a sample of students undertaking their spoken language assessments



- for GCSEs in modern foreign languages (MFL), teachers and students should prepare for spoken language in 2022 to be assessed in the normal way, through formal speaking tests – if it becomes clear that the speaking test cannot take place because of the public health situation, we will implement contingency arrangements using the assessment criteria published for 2021 and a qualification endorsement approach
- we have also removed the requirement for exam boards to use vocabulary outside of that included on their vocabulary lists for GCSE MFL

This consultation, which was open from 14 to 28 May, attracted 2,663 responses.

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## [Government backs Bill banning the use of glue traps for pest control](#)

The use of cruel and inhumane glue traps to catch rodents could be banned under a new law backed by the Government.

Glue traps are a widely available and cheap method of pest control. However the sticky traps can cause immense suffering to rodents, as the animals can remain alive for at least 24 hours after capture and it can take even longer for them to die. Pets and wildlife can also fall victim, with RSPCA rescuing buzzards and cats from the traps in the last year.

Over the last five years alone, the RSPCA has also received over 200 reports of animals not considered to be pests including wild birds, hedgehogs and pet cats being found stuck in them.

The Glue Traps (Offences) Bill has been introduced Parliament by Jane Stevenson MP today (Wednesday 16th June). The new Bill will enable a full ban on the use of glue traps to catch rodents.

The UK has a strong history of leading the way on animal welfare and now that we have left the EU, the Government is committed to improving these standards even further by delivering a series of ambitious reforms, outlined in the [Action Plan for Animal Welfare](#)

### **Introducing the Bill, Jane Stevenson, MP for Wolverhampton North East, said:**

When pest control is needed we have a responsibility to use the most humane methods in order to prevent unnecessary suffering. A

rodent stuck in a glue trap will suffer a slow and painful death, which isn't acceptable when other pest control methods are available.

Glue traps don't just capture rodents. Other animals injured or killed by these traps include pet cats, birds, owls, bats, fox cubs and hedgehogs. It is surely time to end the use of these inhumane and indiscriminate traps.

I thank Minister Goldsmith for backing this important piece of legislation, which is part of the Government's commitment to improve UK animal welfare standards after Brexit. I look forward to working with colleagues to get this ban on the statute books.

### **Animal Welfare Minister Lord Goldsmith said:**

The UK already has some of the highest animal welfare standards in the world and as an independent nation we are now able to raise them even further. We are determined to do so, and are currently engaged in the biggest shake up of animal welfare laws for generations. Part of that involves supporting the banning of these appallingly cruel devices.

Glue traps cause slow and unimaginably painful deaths and there is no way of preventing other types of animals being caught by them, so I am delighted we are able to back Jane Stevenson MP's important Private Member's Bill today. We will do all we can to help her get this new law onto the statute books.

Glue traps are considered by many to be an inhumane method of trapping and the Animal Welfare Act 2006 requires that animals caught must not be subjected to unnecessary suffering.

A recent policy statement by the British Veterinary Association highlighted that rodents stuck in glue can suffer multiple injuries including torn skin and broken limbs, which can result in a slow and painful death.

### **Chris Sherwood, Chief Executive of the RSPCA, said:**

We are absolutely delighted to see the first steps towards a ban of torturous glue traps which cause such suffering and misery to animals.

Our frontline rescuers and hospital staff are sickened by the horrific injuries animals suffer as they struggle to free themselves. Mice and rats are the main victims but other animals such as snakes, robins, owls and even kittens and cats maimed or fatally injured because of these awful traps.

We applaud Jane Stevenson in her mission to ban these traps and are pleased to see this bill has Government support. We believe the public want to see traps like this banned and hope this bill progresses through parliament quickly so we can consign glue traps to the history books for good.

The Bill will complement the Government's wider drive to introduce greater protections for animals through its [Action Plan for Animal Welfare](#). In May the government introduced legislation to formally recognise animals as sentient beings in domestic law through the [Animal Welfare \(Sentience\) Bill](#). In addition to this, earlier this month the Government also introduced [Animal Welfare \(Kept Animals\) Bill](#) to improve welfare standards through a wide range of measures for pets, farmed and kept wild animals.