

Thousands more school and sixth form places to be created

Thousands of new school places will be created for children in England, including for those who are living in disadvantaged areas, have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), or require alternative provision.

The government's 55 Education Investment Areas, the local authorities where outcomes for pupils are currently weakest, will be prioritised for up to 15 new mainstream free schools. This will include a targeted number of high-quality, standalone sixth forms, designed to help children from disadvantaged backgrounds fulfil their potential.

The first of the new wave of up to 60 special and alternative provision free schools will begin opening from September 2025, creating approximately 4,500 new places, and boosting choice for parents.

The new alternative provision (AP) schools will help keep those who have been excluded, or are at risk of exclusion, engaged with their education, as well as offering more behaviour and mental health support.

These school places build on commitments set out in the government's recent education reforms, including the Schools and Levelling Up White Papers and the SEND and AP Green Paper, which aim to radically raise the national average attainment in English and maths, with investment and energy focused in areas of the country previously left behind, and to end the postcode lottery in the SEND system.

Through these reforms every young person will be supported to gain the education and skills they need to get a good job and help the economy to continue growing.

Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi said:

All children have the right to a high-quality education. Parents should feel confident that their local school works for their child, no matter where they live or their ability.

From mainstream education which can provide for every need, to specialist teachers and equipment in tailored settings, our new schools across the country will continue to make sure that every child, in every corner of the country, gets the support they need to succeed.

Special schools will offer specialist support and education for pupils with needs such as autism, severe learning difficulties or social emotional and mental health conditions. The schools can be built to be more accessible, including with specialist fixtures like ceiling hoists and wheelchair ramps,

or acoustically adapted classrooms.

The government is making sure that talented children from disadvantaged backgrounds have access to a college, school sixth form or 16-19 academy, with a track record of progress on to leading universities, such as Harris Westminster Sixth Form and Sir Isaac Newton Sixth Form Free School in Norwich.

The new special and AP free school waves come as Government consult on ambitious proposals for a more inclusive, consistent, transparent and accountable system for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and for those who require alternative provision.

Part of a £2.6 billion investment of funding for more specialist places and support for children with SEND and who will benefit from AP over three years, the special and AP free school waves follow continued increased investment in local authority high needs funding, worth £9.1 billion overall for 2022-23.

Guidance about the process for applicants has been published on Gov.uk for [special free schools](#), [alternative provision free schools](#) and [mainstream free schools](#).

LAs across England will be able to bid for the special schools and funding will be allocated according to demonstrated need for specialist places, and where new free schools are most needed.

For alternative provision free schools, we will also be prioritising LA areas where none of the existing AP schools are currently rated 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted, or where no AP schools currently exist.

The new special and AP free school waves build upon the 60 schools already in the pipeline, from waves launched in 2018, which launched 37 special and 2 AP free schools.

The [SEND and AP green paper](#) is open for consultation until 22 July.

Applicant groups have until 16 September to register their interest. Further guidance on the mainstream application process will be published in July.

[E3 statement on Iran: 9 June 2022](#)

Press release

The governments of France, Germany and the United Kingdom issued a joint statement on the JCPoA.



E3 spokesperson statement:

We the governments of France, Germany and the United Kingdom have intensely negotiated with Iran, in good faith, since April 2021 to restore the JCPOA, along with other JCPOA participants, as well as the United States. There has been a viable deal on the table since March 2022, which would return Iran to compliance with its JCPOA commitments and the US to the deal. We regret that Iran has not seized the diplomatic opportunity to conclude the deal. We urge it to do so now. We are ready to conclude the deal.

Despite this Iran is now installing additional advanced centrifuges and has confirmed to the IAEA its decision to end all JCPOA-related transparency measures. This jeopardises the ability of the IAEA to restore continuity of knowledge on key parts of the Iranian nuclear programme, including on the production of centrifuges.

We condemn these steps and that it is responding to concerns expressed by the IAEA Board of Governors – in a resolution adopted with overwhelming support – by announcing steps to even further decrease cooperation with the IAEA. These actions only aggravate the situation and complicate our efforts to restore full implementation of the JCPOA. They also cast further doubt on Iran's commitment to a successful outcome. We urge Iran to resume application of the Additional Protocol and of all JCPOA-related monitoring and verification measures, cease its nuclear escalation, and urgently conclude the deal currently on the table to restore the JCPOA, while this is still possible.

ENDS

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First waste removed from old nuclear Sellafield store

Standing in the oldest part of the Sellafield site, the Magnox Swarf Storage Silo has stored nuclear waste in its water-filled chambers for the last 60 years.

Once a vital part of the nation's nuclear energy generation, the building stored the casings removed from used fuel rods from Magnox reactors so that the fuel inside could be reprocessed.

The Magnox Swarf Storage Silo under construction back in the 1960s

Now, due to the age of the building, the contents held inside, and the fact that it was never built with decommissioning in mind, it is one of the most hazardous nuclear facilities on the Sellafield site and in the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's (NDA) estate.

Today, teams at Sellafield are starting to remove the waste held inside, putting it into purpose-built stainless steel waste containers and moving it to modern storage on the site.

The Magnox Swarf Storage Silo

Head of programme delivery for Magnox Swarf Storage Silo, Chris Halliwell, heads up the team and explains some of the challenges they have faced. He said:

This is the culmination of decades of preparation by hundreds of people across our Sellafield Ltd and supply chain.

As well as maintaining the original concrete structure of the building, we have designed and are installing purpose-built retrieval machines.

The first of our 3 retrievals machines has now started the job which will take another 20 or so years to complete. Our teams use this machine to reach down into the compartment of the silo, grab waste from inside, and put it inside containers that have been designed and manufactured for the job.

Eventually those metal waste boxes will be held safely inside a new highly engineered store currently being built on site. So that we can get waste out as soon as possible, we are making use of existing stores at Sellafield until the new one is ready.

All of the waste will eventually be sent to a geological disposal

facility when that becomes available.

Once empty of waste, our attention will turn to decommissioning and ultimately knocking down the silo building.

David Peattie, group chief executive of the NDA, said:

The start of retrievals from Magnox Swarf Storage Silo is a major milestone in our decommissioning mission and an excellent example of the pioneering work taking place on our sites.

It is testament to the years of hard work to safely, securely, and cost-effectively manage the UK's nuclear legacy.

Sellafield Ltd chief executive, Martin Chown, said:

This first step towards emptying the Magnox Swarf Storage Silo is a huge step towards delivering our purpose of creating a clean and safe environment for future generations.

Everyone involved, whether they are at the front line of this retrieval work or building the new facilities that we need to safely store the waste retrieved, should be proud of what they have achieved. I am proud of them.

[Consultation on primary legislative changes to reform our railways](#)

Today (9 June 2022), my department launches a [public consultation on the primary legislative changes required to deliver structural reform of our railways](#).

This follows publication of the [Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail](#) ('Plan for Rail') in May 2021 which heralded the start of the biggest transformation of Great Britain's railways in 3 decades, and announcement in the [Queen's Speech](#) on 10 May 2022 to introduce a Transport Bill to Parliament which will modernise rail services, put passengers and freight customers first, deliver for taxpayers and combine the best of the public and private sectors.

The Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail highlighted the need for change. It was

clear our railways had become fragmented, the system was complicated, and passengers deserved better. This alongside spiralling costs, delays to upgrades and commercial failures pointed to a railway in need of fundamental reform. Getting this right means we can ensure this historic industry delivers for its users, setting it on a more sustainable and secure footing. It also means delivering a stronger, more levelled up and increasingly green economy, of which the railways are a crucial part.

Many of the commitments set out in the Plan for Rail do not require legislation in order to take forward, and the government is already working in close partnership with the rail industry to deliver rapid improvements for passengers and freight customers. For example, new [flexible season tickets](#) went on sale last summer and we continue to work with train operators to roll-out digital ticketing to make journeys easier. We are also undertaking a comprehensive accessibility audit of stations across Great Britain, continuing to cut the costs and time of infrastructure work through [Project SPEED](#) and developing a 30-year [whole industry strategic plan](#).

In addition to this, we have launched the [Great British Railways Transition Team](#) (GBRTT), under the leadership of Andrew Haines, to drive forward reforms and develop the model for a new arms-length body, Great British Railways, including its initial structure, leadership and people.

GBRTT is focused on establishing a new, customer-focused, industry culture, driving revenue recovery efforts and establishing an Interim Strategic Freight Unit to work collaboratively with the sector, ensuring an immediate focus on delivery of the government's ambitions for rail freight. GBRTT is also currently overseeing a [competition for the location of a national headquarters for Great British Railways](#), to be based outside of London, in line with this government's commitment to levelling up.

However, primary legislation is required to deliver key elements of structural reform set out in the Plan for Rail. This includes providing Great British Railways, with the powers and authority it needs to act as the single guiding mind for the railways, ending years of fragmentation. The consultation launched today seeks views of all those with an interest in our railways, to help shape these reforms.

The consultation is focused across 3 key areas as outlined below.

The first is on the establishment of Great British Railways, including its proposed functions and duties and how we propose to legislate and work with stakeholders to enable Great British Railways to become the single guiding mind for the railways.

The second is focused on how we will ensure clear accountabilities in the rail sector through a new governance framework, including the regulator's role in providing independent scrutiny and challenge.

The third centres on reform of wider industry structures and processes that are needed to deliver transformation of the railways and a new industry culture, including a new Passenger Champion role for [Transport Focus](#) and

proposals for open data sharing.

Great British Railways is key to delivering a customer-focused railway. The plans outlined in this consultation will deliver a rail system that is the backbone of a cleaner, greener public transport system, offering passengers and freight customers a better deal and greater value for money for taxpayers.

The private sector has played an integral role in improving our railways over the past 25 years – these plans are designed to take the best of the private sector and fuse it with a single guiding mind that can drive benefits and efficiencies across the system as a whole.

I hope that all of those with an interest in our railways will find the time to participate and share their views through this consultation. Sharing your views will help to ensure the legislative changes we enact will deliver the vision set out in the Plan for Rail, securing our railways so that they are able to flourish into the future and as we approach their bicentenary in 2025.

British Embassy in Argentina selects six “Ambassadors for a day”

After a careful selection process, the British Embassy in Argentina has announced that six Argentine young women aged between 18 and 22 are the winners of the “Ambassador for a day” competition, which will give them a first-hand experience of diplomatic work and enable them to join a network of female leaders from different countries in the region.

The programme aims to promote women’s inclusion in different areas of work and society as a whole and contribute to their empowerment by providing more tools for them to fully develop their potential.

In the area of Democracy and Human Rights, the selected candidates who will become “ambassadors for one day” are Abril Gargiulo (21, law student at University of Buenos Aires) and Macarena Vergara (22, political science student at Argentine Catholic University). In the area of Economic Relations and Trade, the winners were Federica Miriani (21, international relations student at National University of Rosario) and Lara Milewicz (20, international relations student at University of San Martín). In the area of science and innovation, the winner was Paloma Rieznik (18, data science student at University of Buenos Aires), and in the area of Climate Change the selected candidate was Florencia González (22, environment and renewable energy student at Universidad Empresarial Siglo 21).

The winners of the competition will have the opportunity to join British

Ambassador Kirsty Hayes and other members of the diplomatic mission in activities relevant to their chosen area of interest, attend meetings of the Embassy's work teams, get to know some of the organisations and experts that the Embassy works with, join the Latin American network of Ambassadors for a Day and take part in virtual or in-person meetings with British ambassadors and deputy heads of mission, access increased opportunities to attend courses or talks on women's empowerment and participate in future British Embassy events and activities relating to their field of interest.

After hearing the results, British Ambassador to Argentina Kirsty Hayes, said:

"We are delighted with the great reception that this competition has had and the huge potential shown by the candidates. The Embassy is proud to have launched for the first time an initiative of this kind, which aims to promote women's inclusion and increased participation in society.

"I really look forward to welcoming the ambassadors for one day and including them in some of the activities we do. I will be delighted to hear their views and contribute to their training."

More than 110 women took part in the competition, aimed at university students or recent graduates. As part of the selection process, candidates were required to send a video reply to the question: "Why do you want to be ambassador for a day?", answer an online questionnaire and, in the final round, have an interview with Embassy officers. The winners will be contacted in the next few weeks to agree on a date for their participation in Embassy activities.