

Scotland needs more vocational colleges

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The Scottish Conservatives are calling for Scottish Government to get behind community efforts to promote vocational education, Ruth Davidson said on a visit to Newlands Junior College in Glasgow today.

The brainchild of entrepreneur and philanthropist Jim McColl OBE, the college supports young 14-16 year-olds who are not learning well in the mainstream education sector – and instead gives them a chance to develop and learn new skills.

The college is the only one of its kind in the country – but the Scottish Conservatives are now calling on ministers to work with both the private and voluntary sectors, as well as other philanthropists, to set up similar colleges across Scotland.

Such a network would ensure thousands of youngsters who are in danger of dropping out might instead learn skills and be re-motivated.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said:

“Too many youngsters across Scotland either drop out of mainstream education, or leave without the skills needed to make the most of their lives.

“Newlands Junior College is a shining beacon which shows that, with the right ideas and support, we really can ensure every child makes the most of their abilities.

“Jim McColl is to be applauded for the extraordinary work he has begun.

“But it is hugely regrettable that it took such a fight to make Newlands Junior College happen, and that it is the only example of its kind in the country. This simply must change.

“After years of under-performance and a stubbornly persistent attainment gap, I believe Scotland’s failed one-sized-fits-all education system needs reform.

“We simply cannot allow Scottish education to continue to stagnate. It is time to open ourselves up to new ideas and bring in the support of Scotland’s business community and voluntary sector where they can contribute.

“The Scottish Government is putting together its governance review as we speak.

“We would encourage it to consider great initiatives like Newlands Junior

College and focus on what works.”

[News story: Local alcohol action areas will tackle alcohol related harms](#)

On the 27 January the Home Office launched a new phase of the programme to tackle alcohol-related crime and health harms and create a more diverse night-time economy. The programme initially launched in February 2014 covering 20 areas.

Each area will be supported by the government to implement their plan which will see local agencies including licensing authorities, health bodies, and police coming together with businesses to address problems caused by alcohol in their local area.

Sarah Newton, Minister for Vulnerability, Safeguarding and Countering Extremism, said:

Local alcohol action areas demonstrate the government’s commitment to work with industry, police, local authorities and other partners to make our streets safer.

Violent crimes involving alcohol have fallen over the last decade – but it is clear that alcohol misuse has a significant impact on communities across the country.

Our pubs, bars and restaurants make a valuable contribution to our economy and our society and it is important that people are able to enjoy them without the fear of becoming a victim of crime.

Alcohol-related crime and disorder costs an estimated £11 billion per year in England and Wales, and the government wants to support local communities in reducing the scenes of drunkenness and violence that blight communities, particularly at night.

The first phase of LAAA saw a variety of interventions introduced to reduce street drinking, vulnerability and violence. These ranged from club hosts patrolling bars to offer help to those who are vulnerable, to mandatory safeguarding training for taxi drivers, increased trading standards activity on underage sales of alcohol, to a triage service for street drinkers, and even a non-alcoholic bar for teenagers.

The 33 new areas will be supported in developing and implementing their plans by specialist support managers. They will receive support and expertise in crime prevention, licensing and public health from the Home Office, Public

Health England, the Welsh government and Nightworks, a company that specialises in diversifying the night-time economy.

Sarah Hanratty, Interim Chief Executive for the Portman Group said:

We warmly welcome the second round of the LAAAs; and the opportunity to support local communities in reducing alcohol-related harm and creating safe and thriving night time economies.

Drinks producers and retailers have an important role to play and are committed to reducing the harms related to alcohol misuse through their support of the local alcohol partnership schemes; a range of initiatives that work to make local communities safer and create great places for people to live, work and socialise.

The programme will run for 2 years and LAAA areas will also be put in touch with mentors who have successfully tackled the issues that they face and will come together to problem solve and share best practice.

The 33 local alcohol action areas are:

- Barnsley
- Bedfordshire
- Camden
- Colchester
- Cornwall
- Derbyshire
- Doncaster
- Exeter
- Fareham
- Hastings
- Havering
- Hull
- Isle of Wight
- Islington
- Merton
- Northumberland
- Norwich
- Nottinghamshire
- Peterborough
- Shropshire
- Southwark
- Surrey
- Swansea
- Swindon
- Wakefield
- Wandsworth
- Westminster
- Weston-super-Mare
- Weymouth

- Wirral
 - Wisbech
 - Wolverhampton
 - Wrexham
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[Press release: Greater Manchester and London handed new disability powers](#)

The 2 cities will receive around £100 million to develop, procure and deliver localised versions of the new Work and Health Programme to fit the needs of their residents.

In the last 3 years, the number of disabled people in work has increased by almost 600,000. However, the gap between the employment rates of disabled people and non-disabled people remains too large at 32%.

By devolving these powers, participants – including homeless people and long-term unemployed people – will receive more intense, tailored support based on local expertise that will give them the best chance to move into long-term employment.

Work and Pensions Secretary Damian Green said:

This is a significant step to help thousands of disabled and vulnerable people get the support they need to move away from benefits and find lasting work.

Good work has huge benefits for physical and mental health and we are committed to helping all those people who can work to find work.

By devolving powers we are sending our clearest message yet that we are serious about making changes for the better, and believe this can be found in the expertise of local providers who know their residents best.

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, said:

I am delighted that funding and responsibility for the new Work and Health Programme is to be devolved to London government.

This is a great example of how we can put party politics aside and work closely with the national government in the best interests of all Londoners.

Delivering this programme at a local level will result in greater integration of employment support with other local services. This will lead to better outcomes for Londoners, with those who need support receiving it at the right time.

Councillor Sean Anstee, Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Lead Member for Skills and Employment said:

In Greater Manchester we know that when we create local solutions to help people back in to work they are much more effective. Through intensive, tailored support from local key workers our Working Well programme has helped people right across our city-region get back in to the workplace.

These new devolved powers will help us expand Working Well and make a real difference to people's lives. More people will now get the support they need to find a job and be successful in Greater Manchester.

Chair of London Councils, Councillor Claire Kober, said:

This is a significant moment in London's call for further devolution and gives us the opportunity to create local schemes better tailored to meet Londoners' needs. Boroughs – who can already demonstrate significant success in this area – are delighted to be able to get on with the important job of helping residents with complex needs back into the workplace.

Devolving powers to London and Greater Manchester is the latest in a series of steps taken by the government to strengthen local support for disabled people.

The [Work, Health and Disability Green Paper](#) is currently seeking views from disabled people, stakeholders and the public.

It includes a new Personal Support Package that will recruit around 200 Community Partners around the country into Jobcentre Plus, and extend 'Journey to Employment' job clubs to 71 Jobcentre Plus areas with the highest number of people receiving Employment and Support Allowance with limited capability for work.

In addition, the number of Disability Employment Advisors to provide specialist and local expertise in jobcentres will be increased to around 500 nationally.

The Work and Health Programme will start from late 2017 in England and Wales. In line with the Scotland Act, employment support for the long term unemployed and disabled people are to be devolved to the Scottish Government.

Over the life of the contract current estimates are that DWP would devolve around £72 million to London and around £28 million to Greater Manchester, subject to Her Majesty's Treasury (HMT) approval.

The [Work, Health and Disability Green Paper](#) closes on 17 February 2017.

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 3267 6118

Follow DWP on:

£83.7m International Convention Centre Wales will be game changer and major asset

NatWest's local corporate team will provide a £51.5m loan facility to the joint venture company which will construct and manage the new convention centre as a 50/50 partnership between Welsh Government and Celtic Manor Resort.

Contracts have been signed by the Welsh Government and Celtic Manor Resort to establish a shareholders' agreement and project management agreement to build and run ICC Wales.

Ken Skates said:

"This will be a major asset for Wales, enabling us to compete with any venue in the UK and indeed Europe to attract and host key events that make a huge contribution to the economy.

"The development will provide a very real long-term boost for the entire economy of South Wales. It will create direct and indirect jobs during the construction and operational phases, provide new business opportunities for a wide range of supply chain companies and deliver extensive knock on benefits for tourism throughout the region.

"A facility of this calibre, quality and size is absolutely essential if we are to compete effectively in what is a highly competitive international market. It will place Wales firmly at the forefront of business tourism destinations and I am delighted it is being delivered in partnership with the Welsh Government."

Celtic Manor Resort Chairman Sir Terry Matthews said:

“The Celtic Manor Resort has already established a reputation as the UK’s No 1 Conference Hotel but this new centre will be a real game-changer. In the past, we’ve been forced to turn away hundreds of millions of pounds of business because we did not have the capacity to hold the largest conferences. Not any longer.

“This International Convention Centre will allow us to attract the biggest and most lucrative business events to Wales, as well as high-profile summits and party political conferences. ICC Wales will rival any convention facility in Europe and will act as a magnet for major events, bringing huge benefits to the Welsh economy.”

ICC Wales, which is projected to open for business in June 2019, will be capable of accommodating up to 5,000 delegates with a total floor space exceeding 26,000 square metres. It will house a 1,500-seat auditorium and separate exhibition hall which, at 4,000 square metres, will provide the largest pillar-free ballroom in Europe, capable of hosting 2,400 people for a gala dinner.

Other facilities include five divisible meetings rooms that will create a further 12 flexible spaces meeting rooms, breakouts at all levels to outdoor networking spaces, state-of-the-art technology with fully integrated audio visual facilities and fully serviced client offices, green rooms and production facilities.

A 2,500 square metre plaza will welcome visitors to the new centre and provide additional networking and exhibition space. There will be HGV loading bays direct to both the auditorium and main hall, and 700 car parking spaces under the facility with direct access to ICC Wales arrival atrium.

Banking and debt facilities were structured and delivered locally by Stuart Allison, Relationship Director at NatWest and David Moxham, Director of the bank’s Structured Finance team.

[Press release: MHRA warns athletes to avoid potentially dangerous DMAA](#)

As many people embark on a new-year fitness boost, athletes at all levels of sport are being urged to steer clear of the potentially dangerous ingredient DMAA.

DMAA can be found in unlicensed medicines marketed as sports supplements and it has been linked with high blood pressure, tightening in the chest, strokes, heart attacks and even death.

The warning has been issued by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) as a significant number of products containing DMAA continue to be found on sale in the UK.

MHRA has launched a 'Week of Action' between 30th January and 5th February supported by a number of leading national organisations to alert people to the potential dangers.

The Week of Action aims to improve awareness and will include an animated social media campaign, health & fitness bloggers sharing their stories and a video featuring Team GB Olympic weightlifters at the National Sports Stadium in Crystal Palace.

People who either suspect a product contains DMAA or want to check whether it is present are being encouraged to check online. If you find products on the market, immediately contact us via our dedicated mailbox dmaa@mhra.gsi.gov.uk

Named on the World Anti-Doping Agency's (WADA) Prohibited List, DMAA is banned during sports competition and the safety concerns are well documented.

When MHRA find unlicensed medicinal products containing DMAA on the market, urgent action is taken to remove them from sale. Last year MHRA took urgent action to remove a number of products containing DMAA from the market.

Dr Chris Jones, MHRA Medicines Borderline Section Manger said:

As always, we will continue to take robust action when unlicensed medicinal products containing DMAA come to our attention.

We first removed these products from sale in 2012, and will protect public health by continuing to do so. Although the sale of DMAA products has dropped since 2012, any companies selling this unlicensed medicine is one company too many.

Ashley Metcalfe, British Weight Lifting CEO said:

Weightlifting is a fantastic sport, not least because of the health and wellbeing benefits associated with strength training. However, as with all sports, it is very important that lifters participate in a safe and controlled manner, and are aware of the dangers of taking anything that could be potentially harmful – as has been proven with DMAA.

We are proud to support this campaign and hope that it encourages lifters that wish to use sports supplements to choose only those that are properly regulated, and remain well-informed about the dangers of using unlicensed medicines.

Dr Adam Carey, Chair of the European Specialist Sports Nutrition Alliance

(ESSNA) said:

We fully support the MHRA's efforts to raise awareness of the dangers of supplements which contain DMAA. MHRA has classified such products as medicinal products and they have no place in legitimate sports nutrition supplements.

The dangers of consuming DMAA are significant and well-proven. We urge all sportspeople to avoid it at all costs – and emphasise that sportsmen and woman can only do this by making sure they're only buying their sports supplements from responsible and reputable retailers.

Nicole Sapstead, UK Anti-Doping Chief Executive said:

Any athlete who takes supplements containing DMAA in-competition – either deliberately or inadvertently – is not only risking their career, but is also risking their health.

If you are considering taking a supplement make sure you assess the need first by speaking to a qualified nutritionist. If you need to take a supplement, make sure you understand the risks and consequences by undertaking thorough research.

This 'Week of Action' is part of the FakeMeds campaign aimed at young adults and highlights the pitfalls of buying unlicensed medicines online.

Visit [here](#) for more information about the 'Week of Action'.

Background

1. The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is responsible for regulating all medicines and medical devices in the UK by ensuring they work and are acceptably safe.
2. All our work is underpinned by robust and fact-based judgements to ensure that the benefits justify any risks. MHRA is a centre of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency which also includes the National Institute for Biological Standards and Control (NIBSC) and the Clinical Practice Research Datalink (CPRD). The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency is an executive agency of the Department of Health.
3. The approach for the classification of Borderline products is set out in Part 9 of the 2012 Human Medicines Regulations (as amended). A borderline product is a product which does not have a relevant authorisation or registration that the Licensing Authority regards to be medicinal product. Unless exempt unlicensed medicines may not be placed on the UK market without the appropriate authorisation.
4. MHRA classifies products (not substances) according to the definition of a medicinal product.

5. MHRA's Medicines Borderline Section reaches a determination on whether a product is or is not a medicinal product on a case by case basis, and in the light of:
 - the definition of a medicinal product
 - following an assessment of all the available evidence
 - relevant European Court Judgments and domestic Court precedents.
6. MHRA first classified a product containing DMAA to be [medicinal products in 2012](#). MHRA has since determined a number of products which contain DMAA to be medicinal products and may not be placed on the UK market without the appropriate authorisation.
7. DMAA is regarded as being capable of significant modification to human physiology. Products containing DMAA have already been subject to regulatory controls in various countries around the world following a series of suspected links to serious adverse effects. It is MHRA's view that the uncontrolled sale and supply of products containing DMAA poses potential risks to public safety.
8. MHRA is responsible for ensuring that medicinal products work and are acceptably safe and is not responsible for the licensing of products such as sports supplements which are used by athletes to improve their performance. MHRA will investigate instances of the sale and supply of unauthorised medicinal products, including those that may be present in sports supplements.
9. We have been working with British Weightlifting, UK Anti-Doping, ESSNA, UK Active, National Food Crime Unit (FSA) and Sporting Integrity Ltd for the DMAA 'Week of Action.