

# Education Secretary: Do more for disadvantaged students

Universities must deliver on plans to improve access and participation for disadvantaged students and put an end to the high rates of students dropping out of courses, the Education Secretary has said today (26 September).

While the number of people from disadvantaged backgrounds going to university has risen, new data from the Office for Students shows that mainstream state school pupils from the most advantaged areas are 2.4 times more likely to go to higher education than those from the most disadvantaged areas.

There also remains a stubborn disparity in drop out levels with students from less well-off backgrounds more likely to drop out of university. Data published earlier this year showed that in 2016/17, disadvantaged students were more likely to drop out of university in their first year (8.8% of full-time first degree students under-21) compared to their better off peers (6.0%) – a figure that slightly widened from the previous year.

Ahead of a visit to Kings College London, which offers a range of initiatives to help disadvantaged students, and the publication of new statistics on access and participation by university regulator the Office for Students, Mr Williamson has underlined his determination to take action and ensure every student choosing to go to university – regardless of background – is supported to get the most out of the experience.

Mr Williamson will write to Universities UK to acknowledge the work being done in the sector but to say that more needs to be done to make progress on access and participation at our world-class institutions. He will urge all universities to follow in the footsteps of institutions like Kings College and improve their offer for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

It is not good enough that white working class boys are far less likely to go to university and black students are far less likely to complete their courses than others. We cannot let this wasted potential go unchecked any longer.

I am pleased to see the work that some universities are doing. It was a privilege to address vice-chancellors on this important issue at the recent UUK conference, but disparity remains a problem.

I want all universities, including the most selective, to do everything they can to help disadvantaged students access a world-class education, but they also need to keep them there and limit the numbers dropping out of courses. My message is clear – up your game and get on with it.

Universities Minister Chris Skidmore said:

Progress is being made to ensure that more disadvantaged young people are going to university than ever before, but it's not enough to get students through the door – they must then get the right support to complete their courses too.

Dropouts will be a key focus of mine as Universities Minister and I will be watching carefully to see how universities respond to this challenge. I fully support the OfS in taking action if providers fail to do all they can to deliver their commitments.

Mr Williamson's challenge follows a recent speech he made at the [Universities UK annual conference](#), where he addressed vice-chancellors from across the country, and called for more to be done to ensure wider access to universities for students from all backgrounds.

The latest UCAS figures show that a record rate (21.2%) of disadvantaged English 18-year-olds are starting university this year, up from 19.9% at the same point last year.

The Government's wide-ranging reforms to higher education has led to the publication of access and participation plans for 41 universities so far. The remaining providers which are required to have plans and have not yet published them will be asked to in due course. The OfS will closely monitor all these providers to make sure they follow through on their plans.

The Education Secretary welcomed the plans set out by universities and wants all institutions to deliver on the commitments they have made, with the support of the ongoing work by the Government in driving up standards and closing the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers at school to make sure students are getting the grades they need to go on to university.

Mr Williamson praised Kings College London for blazing the trail through a number of projects to widen participation for under-represented groups, such as the K+ Attainment Raising programme which offers intensive revision sessions for disadvantaged students.

It also partners with charities like IntoUniversity which aims to raise aspirations among young people who may not have thought university was for them, and Parent Power which educates parents about their child's post-18 choices so they can help them choose the best option for them.

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# Matthew Rycroft speech on impact investing to unlock more capital for the Sustainable Developments Goals

UK highlights role of private sector for meeting Global Goals at UN General Assembly side event in New York.

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# Matthew Rycroft speech on impact investing to unlock more capital for the Sustainable Developments Goals

Thank you very much Gillian [Tett, FT journalist] for facilitating us today. Thank you to my friend and colleague Anthony Phillipson, in whose home we are having this meeting. He is the British Consul here in New York, whom some of you will no doubt know and thank you to all of you for coming along, particularly in the circumstances of it being me rather than the Secretary of State Alok Sharma who is kicking this off. He was very interested in doing this event. We initiated this event because of his interest.

We put it on because this is an absolutely existential issue for us as we seek to deliver the Global Goals. In my previous role I was the British Ambassador to the UN, living a couple of blocks down the road and in the three years that I was here, the agreement of all 193 countries to that [Global Goals] framework was the single best thing to happen while I was here by a very long way. That was 2015. We are four years out of 15 through the process and we have nowhere near done four fifteenths of the work toward 2030, so we have got to accelerate and one of the really big things we have got to accelerate is the private sector and even if every country in the world was as generous as the UK and the Nordics we all know that Official Development Assistance would be a drop in the ocean of roughly a tenth-ish of the total amount needed for all of those SDGs to be met in all the developing countries in the world.

So, mobilising private capital to come into developing countries is absolutely crucial.

And yet it isn't happening. Indeed, there is a net flow of capital out of developing sub-Saharan Africa.

So, we've identified three big things, that need to be happen to turn that around.

Firstly, getting a pipeline of investible deals. Secondly, developing the

right products to mobilise the money. And thirdly, responding to savers' demands.

I just want to say briefly a word about each of those.

So, on the investible deals, in Ethiopia last month DFID launched the International Development Infrastructure Commission.

That's 10 global experts on infrastructure, who will come together to advise my Secretary of State Alok Sharma on how the UK can turbo-charge investment in green, sustainable infrastructure.

And it will also make recommendations on how the UK can improve financing and delivery of infrastructure projects in developing countries.

The chair, I am delighted to say is going to be Gregory Hodkinson, who has got forty years' experience in civil infrastructure and transportation projects and was previously Chairman at the global infrastructure firm Arup.

Another member Jennifer Musisi, who is an infrastructure specialist and former Executive Director of Kampala Capital City Authority in Uganda, is here with us today.

I don't think any of the other members of the Commission are here today, but I did want to tell you who they are. And what we have sought to do in the creation of this Commission is to bring together the best and the brightest of both British and international individuals with infrastructure backgrounds, within industry companies and banking.

So, the Commission is going to comprise the following:

- The Chief Executive Officer of the London Stock Exchange Nikhil Rathi;
- Subhash Thakrar, who is the former partner of Blackstone Franks
- Mark Hoban Chairman of FloodRe;
- Julia Prescott, Partner at Meridiam Fund;
- Richard Threlfall, Global Head of Infrastructure at KPMG;
- Kathie Painter, with a strong infrastructure background within industry companies and banking;
- Jo da Silva, Director of International Development at Arup;
- And the Chairman of Global Infrastructure Partners investment fund Adebayo Ogunlesi

Those are the Commissioners and as I say they've got decades of experience between them and their job is to help us boost opportunities for businesses while promoting lower-carbon, better value for money infrastructure that will deliver not just for the developed world but for the poorest people in the poorest countries in the world.

On the second thing, on products, the UK Government is working closely with the City of London and developing country capital markets.

We're developing innovative new financial products.

And yes, we need new structures and funds to share risk. So, for instance developing the Masala bond market has allowed Indian issuers to raise \$7.5 billion in rupees in London.

We want to build on that blue-print.

And there is significant potential, we think, in offshore local currency bonds.

It's a scandal frankly that so many structures are passing forex risk through to poor consumers. UK aid is changing that.

Next is Green bonds. The UK has been working to build green bond markets in Africa.

We have put in place the listing rules which will allow Kenya and East Africa's first certified green bond, raising funds for sustainable student accommodation.

We also have to deepen capital markets, with local and international markets working side by side.

And then thirdly, and this was a point which one of my previous Secretaries of State Penny Mordaunt really pushed us on, which was about listening to savers in our countries.

And over the last year, as a result of her initiative, we have been consulting UK savers about what they want from their savings, their pensions. The report is released this week. It's important reading.

Nearly 70 per cent of UK savers want their investments to consider people and the planet.

And it rises above 70 per cent for younger people. But they don't trust the system.

They need simple solutions for knowing which financial products offer what impact – and that, at the moment, is where we fall down.

We need to sort out measuring impact – with proper standards and frameworks in place. That's work the Impact Management Project is leading, and the UK is supporting.

So those are the three big things we think and if we could get all of your advice, and input and experience and recommendations and concrete deliverables on any or all of those three I think we'd be in a position of strength.

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## PM meeting with President Rouhani: 25 September 2019

Prime Minister Johnson met President Rouhani of Iran.

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## PM meeting with President Rouhani: 25 September 2019



The Prime Minister met President Rouhani of Iran at the UN General Assembly in New York today.

The Prime Minister called again for the immediate release of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe and other dual nationals illegally imprisoned in Iran.

He raised our deep concern about Iran's destabilising activity in the region, including the attacks on the Aramco oil facilities, and insisted this must stop.

The Prime Minister confirmed our continuing support for the JCPoA and stressed the need for dialogue, including on a comprehensive successor deal.

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