

News story: New measures to support disadvantaged children in schools

The schools admission code will be changed so that the most vulnerable children, such as those fleeing domestic abuse, can access a school place more quickly, Education Secretary Damian Hinds has announced today (17 June).

New analysis lays bare the extent of disadvantage, with every classroom having three children who have come into contact with a social worker and 1.6 million children needing a social worker at some point in the last three years. These children suffer further as they often miss out on education, being three times more likely to be persistently absent from school and four times more likely to be permanently excluded.

In a speech at Reform, the Education Secretary outlined the changing nature of disadvantage and a package of measures to support the most vulnerable in society, including new research on how to tackle persistent absence from school and exploring the expansion of advocates within education so that all children in need of a social worker, and not just those in care, are given the support they need.

Schools will also receive guidance on how to use the Pupil Premium most effectively, with evidence from the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) showing the success of particular methods in improving educational outcomes.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said in a speech today:

We understand children in care have very poor outcomes. Actually the truth is the outcomes for children in need of a social worker are almost as bad but there are five times as many of them.

We also know the effects of this sustain. Overall if you've needed contact with a social worker at any time since year 5, on average you are going to score 20 grades lower across eight GCSEs.

We need to improve the visibility of this group, both in schools and in the system as a whole. We need to make sure in every case that information is passed on to a social worker when a child moves school.

We also need to improve our knowledge of what works to support and help these children. We must not lower our expectations for them – for these children it is more important that they can do their very best to make the most of their talents when they're at school.

Included within the package of measures announced today are:

- Taking forward changes to the School Admissions Code and improving the

speed of the in-year admissions process so vulnerable children can access a school place as quickly as possible;

- Making sure the mental health difficulties of children with social workers is tackled by ensuring both initial teacher training and the social work standards equip professionals with the right knowledge and skills on mental health. The Department for Education will bring together best practice on how to support children who have experienced childhood adversity, including the impact on mental health;
- Better sharing of information between councils and schools, including making sure social workers are informed when a child they support is excluded from school, and closer working between schools and councils to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils;
- Working across Government to tackle the causes of disadvantage, including on domestic abuse, drug and alcohol misuse, mental health, serious violence, and exploitation; and
- Making sure disadvantaged children are in education, by taking forward the [Timpson Review](#) recommendations and tackling off-rolling, absence and exclusions.

While the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers has narrowed by at least 9.5% since 2011, disadvantage continues to lead to poorer outcomes that the Education Secretary today said need to be confronted head on.

Sir Kevan Collins, Chief Executive of the Education Endowment Foundation, said:

Giving every young person the best start in life, whatever their background and wherever they come from, is a mission that unites teachers. By acknowledging the relationship between family income and educational success, the Pupil Premium cuts right to the heart of the reason most of us became educators.

The Pupil Premium is the key lever for closing the attainment gap and greater security of funding supports schools to plan ahead with confidence. We know that it has enabled headteachers to focus attention and make a difference for their most disadvantaged pupils. This is achieving results in schools across England, but there is undoubtedly more to do to.

We've published new guidance to help schools spend their Pupil Premium to maximise the benefit for their students. Crucially, we want to strengthen the ways the Premium can be spent to recruit, retain and develop great teachers for all children.

Amanda Spielman, Ofsted Chief Inspector, said:

The Pupil Premium provides welcome additional funding for schools, recognising those with some of the biggest challenges. The EEF's new guidance on how to spend it rightly emphasises recruiting,

retaining and developing great teachers.

In order to be effective, the Pupil Premium must not become a cause of unnecessary work for teachers. Ofsted does not require any school-generated data on the Pupil Premium beyond the school's Pupil Premium strategy, and does not require schools to track eligible pupils or provide evidence of closing within school attainment gaps.

To further improve standards in schools the Government is targeting extra support at some of the poorest areas of the country, through its £72 million Opportunity Areas programme and £12 million Opportunity North East. Up to £26 million is also being invested in the National Schools Breakfast Programme, which will kick-start or improve breakfast clubs in over 1,700 schools.

The Department for Education is providing more support for early learning than ever before and has a new focus on the home learning environment, providing £3.5 billion this year alone in free early years education and the 30 hours free offer which already supports many families from lower incomes.

[News story: New global resettlement scheme for the most vulnerable refugees announced](#)

At the start of World Refugee Week, Sajid Javid confirmed the UK plans to resettle in the region of 5,000 of the world's most vulnerable refugees in the first year of the new scheme, once the flagship Vulnerable Person's Resettlement Scheme concludes next year.

The UK will aim to resettle refugees at current levels, adding to the nearly 16,000 refugees who have already found safety here since 2015 under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme and the many thousands resettled under other routes.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Since 2016, Britain has resettled more refugees from outside Europe than any other EU state – and it's vital we continue to do all we can to help the world's most vulnerable.

Under our new scheme, thousands more people fleeing conflict and persecution will have the opportunity to build a new life in the UK.

I'm proud of the world-leading work we have done in the Middle East and Africa so far – but there is so much more to do.

Rossella Pagliuchi-Lor, UK Representative for UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, said:

We are delighted by this announcement from the UK, which is extending its commitment to offer international protection to a meaningful number of refugees from wherever the need is most acute.

Resettlement is a crucial component of international solidarity for those states bearing the greatest burden and gives refugees the possibility of rebuilding their lives.

We hope this serves as a signal for other countries to provide more routes to safety for those forced to flee as the international community moves to make the global compact on refugees a reality.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, said:

The resettlement of thousands of the world's most vulnerable refugees over the past four years is something the UK can be proud of. I am pleased to hear that the government intends to continue this life-saving programme.

I am delighted that the government recognises the value of communities welcoming refugees through community sponsorship, a scheme I am privileged to have been involved with.

From 2020 refugees resettled through community sponsorship will be in addition to the government's commitment. I call on faith leaders and communities to make the most of this opportunity to change the lives of more refugees, and transform communities in the process.

The Home Secretary outlined the new plans at a roundtable with faith leaders on resettlement, asylum, and faith-based persecution in Parliament today (Monday 17 June). The immigration minister also met resettled refugees in Lambeth and those who support their integration into communities.

From 2020, the new resettlement scheme will consolidate the Vulnerable Persons' Resettlement Scheme, the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme and the gateway protection programme into one global scheme.

The new programme will be simpler to operate and provide greater consistency in the way that the UK government resettles refugees. It will broaden the geographical focus beyond the Middle East and North Africa.

A new process for emergency resettlement will also be developed, allowing the UK to respond quickly to instances when there is a heightened need for

protection, providing a faster route to resettlement where lives are at risk.

The community sponsorship scheme, which enables community groups to directly welcome and support refugees in the UK, will continue. Refugees resettled under this new community-led scheme will be in addition to the government commitment.

The success of resettlement in the UK has been achieved working in partnership with over 300 local authorities who are participating in delivering the current schemes.

The global humanitarian need continues to grow with over 68.5 million people around the world forced from their homes and nearly 25.4 million refugees, over half of whom are under the age of 18. Like its predecessors, the global resettlement scheme will be based on need. We will work closely with the UNHCR to identify the most vulnerable refugees from around the world.

Press release: Technical guidance note released following subsidence event

Coal Authority releases technical guidance note following subsidence event in north-east England.

Press release: Technical guidance note released following subsidence event

The Coal Authority has today issued a technical guidance note, following completion of its review of findings into a large subsidence event in north-east England.

The government body, which manages the effects of past coal mining across Britain, said it had issued the note following successful completion of the engineering works and following a sustained period of monitoring

James Lowth, Operations Director at the Coal Authority, said: "Following the release of our initial recommendations last year, we have published further details to ensure awareness of the risks posed by historical coal mining legacy.

"Our technical guidance note builds on our initial recommendations, and is

relevant to local authority planners, surveyors, developers and geotechnical and engineering consultants, for when they are considering coal mining legacy issues.”

Mark Bettney, Head of Engineering, Coal Authority, confirmed that this subsidence event was caused from roof and pillar failure within the mine workings.

He added: “The weak, laminated, weathered and fractured sandstone, which formed the roof of the workings had progressively deteriorated since the mine workings were abandoned. As the deterioration increased, it redistributed the loading on the remaining coal pillars.

“The coal pillars would have been of marginal stability at the time of mining due to the high degree of extraction, and the resulting failure of the remaining coal pillars led to the ground movements and subsidence at the surface.”

The Coal Authority also reiterated its earlier statement that “caution must be adopted in assuming that the absence of a record means the absence of mining”.

Whilst its historical plans in this case did not reveal the coal workings, they are a vital part of any site assessment prior to development.

It added that in future “we may ask for more information, or for more works to take place, to reduce the likelihood of a similar subsidence event happening again”.

[View the Coal Authority’s Technical Guidance Note TGN01](#)

Notes to editors

Background to the subsidence event

In July 2016, the Coal Authority carried out initial ground investigations at a housing development in the north-east of England after it was contacted by the National House Building Council.

The Coal Authority carried out further extensive ground investigations, including underground camera and laser void surveys, to identify the root cause of the subsidence. It also installed 300 survey points above and below the ground to monitor for ground and property movement.

The Coal Authority’s ground investigations revealed coal mine workings at a depth in excess of 30 metres. The workings dated back around 120 years and had not been recorded on the historical mining plans held by the authority.

The ground investigations proved this specific area had been extensively worked with extraction rates at over 75%, however the plans had showed an area of solid coal. Recorded workings adjacent to this area had typical extraction rates of between 45% and 50%.

This high level of extraction resulted in narrow residual supporting coal pillars and wide extraction rooms in the High Main coal seam, leading to compression on the remaining coal pillars and roof instability.

This, together with a weak, laminated, weathered and fractured sandstone layer above the coal seam, resulted in an underground collapse and subsequent movement at the surface that affected a number of properties and had an elliptical subsidence zone footprint of around 150 metres x 70 metres.

Coal Authority engineers designed a solution to stabilise the ground, and work to drill and grout the voids was completed over a 5 month programme of works. The Coal Authority continues to monitor the ground since the works have been completed to ensure the ground is stable for redevelopment.

About the Coal Authority

The Coal Authority is a non-departmental public body, which is sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. It was set up in 1994, and it manages the effects of past coal mining, including subsidence damage claims and other coal mining legacy issues in Britain.

The legislation relating to coal mining subsidence damage is contained in the Coal Mining Subsidence Act 1991, amended by the Coal Industry Act 1994.

For more information please visit www.gov.uk/coalauthority or to report a coal mine hazard or incident phone 01623 646333.

Press release: Anglers asked to embrace careful catch and release of salmon

The call comes after the release of the 2018 Salmon Stock Assessment report showing that salmon stocks are continuing to decline.

After several years of poor catches on most rivers, the Environment Agency and partner organisations are now asking anglers to take great care in returning voluntarily the salmon they catch this year to the water. Some of the most vulnerable rivers already have byelaws to require all fish to be returned. Even where the rules don't require anglers to release their catch, they are being asked to help secure salmon fishing for the future – by releasing more of the fish they catch using best practice.

With the salmon fishing season underway in England, anglers can play an important role in reviving this species by returning any caught salmon, so they have a chance to return to their headwater streams and spawn. Byelaws

are already in place requiring that any salmon caught before 16 June are returned safely to the water. The Environment Agency also prohibits the sale of rod caught fish.

Current salmon return rates across rivers in England and Wales vary widely and the Environment Agency is asking anglers to increase these rates above 90% and to 100% where stocks are most threatened.

The Environment Agency is taking these actions because of the need to protect salmon stocks that have declined to unsustainable population levels in many of our rivers. The decline in the numbers of wild salmon, seen not just in English rivers but throughout the North Atlantic, is of great concern and the Environment Agency is determined to protect the future of this important species.

Kevin Austin, Head of Fisheries at the Environment Agency, said:

We need anglers to support the recovery of this iconic and endangered fish by adopting 100% catch and release in our rivers.

We know that salmon have good chances of surviving after being caught by a rod fisherman if they are handled with care and returned quickly to the water.

The Environment Agency aims to restore the abundance, diversity and resilience of salmon stocks throughout England working with partners.

Mark Lloyd, Chief Executive of the Angling Trust & Fish Legal said:

We warmly welcome the Environment Agency's voluntary approach to the management of fish mortality from salmon angling.

Now it is up to the angling community to deliver these voluntary targets. We also need to play our part by releasing fish carefully and not taking them out of the water for anything more than a few seconds.

This can make a huge difference to the survival rates of released fish. There is a best practice guide on our web site available to everyone.

The International Year of the Salmon is a collaboration among organisations and countries throughout the Northern Hemisphere. It aims to support the conservation and restoration of wild salmon species, which are under threat worldwide.

The effort to increase catch and release of Salmon in England is part of the salmon five point approach which sets out commitments to restoring salmon in

England.

The 5 points are:

1. Improve marine survival
2. Further reduce exploitation by nets and rods
3. Remove barriers to migration and enhance habitat
4. Safeguard sufficient flows
5. Maximise spawning success by improving water quality