

News story: Innovative firms capitalise on emerging technologies



Technology businesses in London are helping the city outperform every other European capital, Minister Jo Johnson has heard.

The Minister for London visited Amazon Web Services to host a roundtable meeting of tech start-ups, which was told that the city attracted £13.8 billion of investment between 2012 and 2016, more than Paris, Berlin and Amsterdam combined.

Among the attendees were Goodbox, a firm developing contactless devices to help charity and non-profit sectors raise money by making it easier for people to donate.

Minister for London Jo Johnson said:

London has always been at the forefront of developing emerging technologies.

The city's technology sector will continue to flourish for years to come and it was great to see so many companies which are leading the way, using new innovations to help make people's lives easier.

The [Digital and Industrial Strategies](#) sets out how the government will build on the success by building a world-leading digital economy that works for everyone including supporting the social sector to become digitally confident.

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News story: Transparency of academy system leads to greater accountability

Thousands of schools' accounts have been published today (Tuesday 6 November), demonstrating the transparency of the academy system and the Government's commitment to taking action against those not following the rules.

Accounts covering around 7,000 academies have been published online and laid before Parliament for the second year running – allowing the public and Parliament to scrutinise the accounts of any academy school.

New information published today shows that 97% of academy trusts submitted financial returns to the Department for Education on time, proving they are using public money responsibly and complying with the clear rules set out in the Academies Financial Handbook.

The data also shows that only 88 academy trusts – equivalent to 3% nationwide – submitted two or more financial returns late in the 2017/18 academic year. Those trusts have been named publicly to improve compliance and help the department hold those schools to account and make sure every pound is spent as efficiently as possible.

The publication of this information is the latest step taken by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) to ensure academy finances are in good order, and trusts are more accountable for the public money they spend.

This comes after Education Secretary, Damian Hinds, announced a clampdown on related-party transactions – supplies to academy trusts from linked individuals or organisations – with trusts required to seek approval from the ESFA for all payments over £20,000 from next April.

Minister for the School System Lord Agnew said:

Since expanding the academies programme we have made sure that increased autonomy is supported with increased transparency. And this transparency means that we know and can take action where trusts are not following the clear rules we have laid down.

Providing financial returns on time is just one example of how we monitor and scrutinise academies to ensure their financial health is robust and they continue to be more transparent in their reporting than local authority schools.

It's encouraging that the overwhelming majority reported on time, and we are taking action in the small number of cases where we find that this has not happened.

Other new accountability measures introduced for this academic year (2017/18), mean academies must notify the ESFA of:

- Their total salary expenditure, broken down into teachers, leadership, administration and support;
- The job title and role description of all staff whose full time pay package exceeds £100,000 per year; and
- Whether each role is focused on curriculum and education leadership, or school business management leadership.

All academy trusts must abide by the Academies Financial Handbook, which outlines the Department's expectation in how they should operate and examples of best practice.

The information on academies' financial reporting and the Academy Sector Report and Accounts (SARA) coincides with an additional publication from the Department for Education to make the system more transparent.

A new, dedicated webpage for Headteacher Boards – advisory committees that provide support to Regional Schools Commissioners – has been designed to give a greater insight into the decisions taken by Regional Schools Commissioners. The webpage will give parents, teachers and school leaders easier access to information about decisions taken to raise standards across the country. The new page will include:

- a clear explanation of the role of Regional Schools Commissioners;
- meeting minutes and agendas – published with six weeks of a meeting;
- schedules of meetings; and
- meeting templates to clarify the information and data Headteacher Boards consider.

News story: Teachers to benefit from £8 million initiative to boost skills ahead of T Levels roll-out

Teachers and staff across the country will benefit from a new £8 million professional development offer, being developed by the Education and Training Foundation (ETF), to help them prepare for the roll-out of new T Levels.

Teaching professionals will be offered the opportunity to participate in the new T Level Professional Development Programme to help them to develop their skills and knowledge so they are ready to deliver T Levels – the technical equivalent to A Levels – from 2020.

The first T Levels courses in education & childcare, construction and digital

will be taught in over 50 further education and post-16 providers from September 2020. A further 22 courses will be rolled out from 2021 onwards covering sectors such as finance & accounting, engineering & manufacturing, and creative & design.

Bespoke training will focus on making sure teachers understand the pioneering new qualifications and will be an opportunity to update their subject and industry knowledge so it is relevant to the needs of business. The funding will also help teachers and leaders to prepare for this significant change.

Apprenticeships and Skills Minister Anne Milton said:

T Levels will widen the choices for young people, offering them more than one route to a rewarding career. T Level will equip young people with the knowledge and skills for further study in education or in the workplace.

It's a big and important change, and we know we have to be prepared if we want our technical education system to be first class.

This new programme will help teachers to build on their skills and gain the additional knowledge they need to make new T Levels a success as soon as the starting pistol is fired.

David Russell, Chief Executive of the Education and Training Foundation, said:

The introduction of the first T Levels in 2020 signals a significant and positive change to technical education in this country. Ensuring providers are properly equipped to deliver the new qualifications will be vital to their success, so it is important they are ready from day one.

We are pleased to have been given the responsibility of meeting the T Level-related professional development needs of teachers, trainers and leaders, which include those from the whole of the education sector. We bring to this role our experience, expertise and partnership ethic in supporting the workforce to deliver the technical education our learners, employers and country need and deserve.

The T Level Professional Development Programme is being developed with the ETF, the Gatsby Charitable Foundation and the wider FE sector to understand the skills needed to teach and deliver T Levels.

Jenifer Burden, Director of Programmes at the Gatsby Charitable Foundation said:

Gatsby is working with several local areas to support the implementation of T Levels. We're delighted to be working with ETF to build on this work and to shape the professional development offered to T-level teachers, including building subject-specialist pedagogy.

The ETF will work with individual providers to determine what specific training needs they have before creating tailor made packages that will build on the excellent skills and practice that already exists within the sector. Training is expected to be available from Spring 2019.

Press release: Communities Secretary sets out vision for high streets as vibrant community hubs

The Communities Secretary, James Brokenshire will today (7 November 2018) set out his vision for tackling social problems linked to declining high streets – such as crime, unemployment and loneliness.

Speaking at the Locality Convention in Bristol the Communities Secretary will launch the government's flagship Open Doors project, linking landlords with vacant retail units with community groups offering vital services to young and old.

Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP will say:

We need to be imaginative in tackling the social and economic challenges our communities face.

This includes seizing the enormous opportunity before us to transform our high streets into vibrant community hubs where people work, live and shop.

That is why I'm delighted to be launching the new Open Doors project that will see empty shops being opened up to community groups offering services to the most vulnerable in our communities.

Reflecting on the scale of the opportunity offered by converting empty retail units into homes and community hubs the Communities Secretary will point to new figures showing that there are currently over 27,000 premises lying vacant in England's town centres.

If just a fraction of these vacant premises were turned into homes, thousands

more people could have a roof over their head.

Research also shows that higher numbers of residents on our high streets can generate higher footfall and, in turn, higher demand for shops and services.

The Communities Secretary will also launch a new Community Roadshow, which will see him and his ministerial team travelling across the country to learn from and celebrate the work being done by community groups.

The first of the Roadshow visits will see the Communities Secretary visiting a winter shelter and a community-led housing project in Bristol.

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