

News story: UK Space Agency backs campaign to inspire girls

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The initiative aims to help girls understand the breadth of careers open to them in the space sector by introducing them to role models who are working in the field. The women featured in the campaign come from different backgrounds and work in different areas across the space sector.

[People Like Me: space sector careers pack](#)

Alice Bunn, International Director at the UK Space Agency, said:

Like every other high-tech sector, space needs talented scientists and engineers, but with fewer women in science, we are missing out on half of the talented people on the planet.

The UK Space Agency is delighted to support the WISE Campaign's People Like Me – Careers in the Space Sector, and to highlight the range of great opportunities there are for girls and young women to use and develop their skills in creative and innovative ways within the space sector.

We want to spread the word that the space sector is a brilliant place for your students to apply the subjects they enjoy and develop skills that will enable them to follow their dreams.

Girls remain under-represented across core science, technology, engineering and maths subjects. Recent research by the University of Roehampton has revealed that 30,000 fewer girls are studying key stage four level computing subjects compared to when the computing curriculum was introduced in the UK in 2014.

People Like Me is unique in its twin aspirations as a strategy for both schools and industry engagement. It encourages employers to raise aspiration by delivering careers advice to girls, in schools or on their premises, by professionals in STEM occupations who can challenge gendered stereotypes about these careers.

Since its launch in 2015, People Like Me's resource has been delivered to over 6,500 girls around the UK by a range of partners. The new training platform, launched in July, will make it easier for businesses to subscribe to the programme and start delivering sessions to girls and helping to inspire them.

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[News story: Education Secretary launches £24 million programme for North East](#)

Opportunities and job prospects for young people in the North East of England are to be addressed by a multi-million pound government investment to boost social mobility and raise aspirations for children, announced today (Monday 8 October) by the Education Secretary Damian Hinds.

Launching Opportunity North East, the Education Secretary has pledged £24 million to tackle issues holding young people from all communities back and that can risk areas feeling "left behind".

While the North East has some of the best performing primary schools in the country, secondary school performance is significantly below other regions, and fewer 18-year-olds attend the country's top universities than those from any other part of the country. The North East also has one of the highest proportions of young people not in education, employment or training after year 11.

Opportunity North East will aim to tackle these issues by:

- Investing £12 million in targeted approaches to improve the transition from primary to secondary school, drive up standards – particularly at secondary level – and improve outcomes for pupils post 16;
- Working with secondary schools and colleges to encourage young people to consider university, degree apprenticeships and other high quality technical education options;
- Partnering with local businesses to improve job prospects for young people across the region; and
- Investing a further £12 million to boost early career training for new teachers and help improve the quality of teaching and raise standards in the region's schools, ahead of roll-out in other regions.

During his visit later today, at a roundtable discussion in Gateshead, Mr Hinds is also expected to challenge education experts, head teachers, business leaders and university leaders by asking each group what more they can do to "raise aspirations among all working class communities, including white British disadvantaged children".

He will cite research by the Institute for Fiscal Studies, which found white British disadvantaged boys are the least likely of any ethnic group to progress to university. It found groups with the next lowest progression rates – disadvantaged black Caribbean males and males from a mixed ethnic background – are around twice as likely to progress to higher education compared with their white British disadvantaged peers.

Addressing the roundtable at Cardinal Hume Secondary School in Gateshead, Mr Hinds will say:

Talent and potential are evenly spread, but opportunities sometimes aren't. With Opportunity North East I am going to work with schools, colleges, businesses and universities – including those beyond the area – to redress the balance.

There are today too many education measures on which the North East is listed ninth in the list of nine English regions. It doesn't have to be like that. In fact the North East has a lot of really outstanding education – especially so at primary level. The job now is to spread that through more of the secondary level and beyond.

It's absolutely right that we challenge ourselves to do things like increasing access to university for young people from black and minority ethnic communities but we must remember that disadvantage is not limited to a single group.

White British disadvantaged boys are the least likely of any large ethnic group to go to university. We need to ask ourselves why that is and challenge government, universities and the wider system to change that.

It's vital that we do this to make sure that no part of our country feels as though it has been left behind, and that every community feels like this is a country that works for everyone.

Today's announcement is part of a government drive to improve education and boost productivity in the North of England, and follows on from investment in the Northern Powerhouse strategy.

The programmes delivered through Opportunity North East build on the Government's efforts to create more good school places in the areas that need them most through the free schools programme.

Opportunity North East will tackle issues that are specific to the North East, which had the lowest percentage of young people going to top universities in 2017.

It will:

- Build on good primary school performance to ensure more children continue to achieve at secondary school;

- Unlock the potential of key secondary schools in the region by encouraging collaboration with schools, high performing academy trusts and local authorities;
- Working with partners such as Teach First to ensure there are more great teachers where they are needed most. The North East will be the first region in England to implement more support for newly-qualified teachers to encourage them to stay in the classroom, with £12 million for early roll-out of the Government's improved offer from September 2020 – and more details set to be announced in the Department for Education's recruitment and retention strategy. This will form part of the Teacher Development Premium, creating an enhanced offer of professional development for teachers in challenging areas throughout their careers.
- Raise aspirations and tackle the barriers that prevent young people in the North East from attending the best universities; and
- Make the most of young people's skills and talents in the North East – harnessing the pioneering work of local enterprise partnerships – to help them find a rewarding, secure job.

The Government will also ensure that the North East benefits from other programmes including: a new investment to spread good practice in behaviour management; through the National Citizen Service programme to build character and resilience in young people; greater recognition of young people's achievements through the Lord Glenamara Memorial Prize; and improved Careers and Enterprise education.

Projects funded through the Opportunity North East programme will be in place in 2019 and will look to build on the work already underway in the region. Education, business and council leaders in the North East, among others, will form an executive board to drive the project forward and raise education standards – reporting directly to Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the School System Lord Agnew. The board will be appointed shortly, following the roundtable hosted by the Education Secretary.

Edward Twiddy, Chief Innovation Officer at Durham-based Atom bank said:

Atom bank is delighted to offer its wholehearted support to this exciting and very welcome initiative. As a business with national ambitions but founded and headquartered in the North East, Atom is determined to be a positive influence across the region. We are especially focused on enhancing opportunities and education for young people growing up in the region.

Atom is already the Prince's Trust lead partner for STEM in the North East as well as establishing many research and training links with the region's universities. The Secretary of State's decision to establish Opportunity North East is a huge opportunity to change the future for hundreds and thousands of young people in the region and ensure that they have the chance to meet their own – and the region's – full potential.

Nick Hurn, head teacher at Cardinal Hume Secondary School, Gateshead, said:

I'm really excited about the opportunities that this new exciting initiative and significant investment will bring to our region. Everyone now needs to work closely together to create, develop and implement a coherent and effective plan that harnesses this initiative in a way that will improve progress, raise attainment and add value to our young people's life chances.

We have some fantastic leaders, teachers and young people in the North East who I know will fully embrace and use the enhanced resources and support that this transformational strategy will provide. I cannot wait to get started.

Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen said:

We have some fantastic schools in the Tees Valley that are driving up standards so more young people develop the knowledge they need to succeed, and attain the skills our businesses need to thrive. We're working hard to develop home-grown talent to support our growing economy, but there's still much more to do.

This additional investment from government will go an exceptionally long way to help our schools tackle the challenges that they face, raise student aspirations and good quality education. Working with local authorities and business leaders, we will ensure our young people are given every opportunity to fill the high-quality jobs of tomorrow.

Andrew Hodgson, Chair, North East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) said:

The North East LEP is committed to reducing the gap between our best and lowest performing secondary schools and to improving social mobility for our young people.

Across primary and secondary schools, we have the second highest proportion of outstanding schools. We also have the second highest number of schools rated less than good after Yorkshire and the Humber. It's this disparity that we are tackling by supporting teachers, governors, schools and leaders. Ensuring the next generation has a clear pathway to achieving their full potential is a fundamental part of our Strategic Economic Plan.

I am delighted with today's investment announcement and recognition by the government of our ambition to drive up student attainment levels. This funding will allow us to accelerate and build on our existing activity in this area and make a real difference to the lives of each and every young person in the North East.

By challenging universities, local schools and colleges, and innovative local businesses in the North East to work together, the Government will create a network that will raise standards, encourage pupils to aim high when applying to higher or further education, and support schools and colleges to deliver new T Level qualifications from 2020.

A challenge will also be made to employers, and especially top universities outside the region, to ensure they make the most of North East talent.

The announcement of more support to recruit and retain talented teachers comes after the Government launched a free website for schools to advertise vacancies – which currently costs schools up to £75 million a year – with schools in the North East and Cambridgeshire given access to the site ahead of a nationwide launch.

The Education Secretary will also visit Durham University to hear more about its proposals to open the North East's first maths schools to offer specialist teaching for talented A Level students – following in the footsteps of successful schools opened by King's College London and the University of Exeter.

Press release: UK aid tackles wildlife crime with innovative solutions

The Department for International Development today (Sunday 7th October) launches a major push to find new ways of tackling the Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) – providing an additional £6 million to protect some of the world's most iconic and endangered species including rhinos, elephants and pangolins.

The fresh support will be welcomed by the Prime Minister, who will open the landmark IWT Conference being held in London on 11-12 October, the largest conference ever to be held on this issue.

The illegal wildlife trade threatens species with extinction, fosters corruption, threatens stability and the basic security of societies.

The additional new funding for the IWT Challenge Fund, managed by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), will help support the development of cross-border "Green Corridors" for wildlife, by supporting actions that will bring economic and security benefits for communities.

Through efforts to tackle the trade, UK aid is creating sustainable, alternative jobs and working with vulnerable communities, for example, to harness tourism as a driver of economic growth.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

The Illegal Wildlife Trade threatens to make some of the planet's most extraordinary species extinct. It also destroys the livelihoods of some of the world's poorest people, robbing communities of the great economic benefits of wildlife, including tourism.

UK aid is giving fresh life to projects, whose aim is to protect these species and secure the futures of communities. This is a win for those communities and a win for animal lovers across the world. None of us want to see these majestic animals dying out.

Since 2014, Defra's Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund has been supporting a range of projects around the world that combat the illegal wildlife trade. This includes addressing the factors which drive demand for the illegal trade. It also includes supporting action to improve law enforcement and bring criminals to justice and to provide alternative jobs for those involved in the trade.

Environment Secretary, Michael Gove said:

Environmental challenges do not respect borders, and require coordinated international action.

Our Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund is driving change to combat this despicable criminality and highlights our global leadership in protecting wildlife in its natural environment. The fund's priorities reflect our commitment in the 25 Year Environment Plan to work with other nations to stamp out this vile trade.

I look forward to the UK welcoming more than 80 nations next week at the fourth international Illegal Wildlife Trade conference in London. This will be the biggest conference ever on tackling the illegal trade and provides a golden opportunity to work together on this vital issue.

The Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund also supports projects which mobilise the private sector, who will be critical in driving economic growth and economic opportunities like nature-tourism that both protect wildlife and reduce poverty.

Projects the Challenge Fund is currently supporting include:

- Saving Pangolins by Reducing Demand in South East Asia: This project, led by WildAid will dissuade South East Asian consumers, including in Vietnam, from purchasing pangolin products by debunking the false medicinal value of their scales and making the consumption of pangolin meat socially unacceptable.

- Developing law enforcement capability in Malawi to combat wildlife crime: This project, led by RSPCA International with the Department of National Parks and Wildlife in Malawi, is training Malawian officials and supporting them in investigating and prosecuting wildlife crime. This includes establishing a national database on wildlife crime to allow better and more accurate intelligence gathering.
- Counter Poaching Training Programme for Sub-Saharan Africa: This project, led by the Tusk Trust, aims to reduce poaching of rhinos and elephants by significantly improving law enforcement capacity in wildlife protection zones. Training is being provided to rangers, including proven tracking tactics. The project is also providing training in information gathering and analysis to improve coordination of national and international efforts to disrupt poaching and trafficking.

IWT Challenge Fund

The IWT Challenge Fund contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly to: Goal 14 (Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development); Goal 15 (Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss); and Goal 12 (sustainable consumption and production).

Through the IWT Challenge Fund, the UK has so far funded 61 projects with £18.5m to combat the illegal wildlife trade by addressing demand reduction, strengthening enforcement and criminal justice, and providing alternative livelihoods. This includes £4.5 million for 14 new Challenge Fund projects announced in July:

The Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund supports projects looking to tackle IWT through the following actions:

- sustainable livelihoods and economic development, especially by: supporting alternatives to engaging in the illegal wildlife trade; encouraging community-led wildlife conservation, including retention of benefits within local communities; and addressing the challenges of human-wildlife conflict.
- strengthening law enforcement, especially by: addressing corruption; building capacity to prevent illicit financial flows from the illegal wildlife trade; and improving law enforcement and border control in key source, transit and destination countries.
- ensuring effective legal frameworks, especially by: working to ensure that other governments have effective legislation in place; improving judicial prosecution processes in IWT cases; and ensuring there are strong penalties in place for IWT.

- reducing demand for IWT products by: using evidence-based interventions to reduce demand for IWT products; working with businesses to keep IWT products out of the supply chain; establishing partnerships between source, transit and destination countries.

Further information can be found [here](#)

IWT Conference

With over 1,000 delegates, the IWT Conference will be the largest of its kind ever to be held. 84 countries have confirmed that they will be sending delegations, spanning Africa, 26; Americas, 14; Asia and Oceania, 17; Europe, 23 and the Middle East, 4.

The conference will focus on three themes:

1. Tackling IWT as a serious organised crime: strengthening end to end law enforcement.
2. Building coalitions: engaging the private sector, NGOs and academia; harnessing technology and innovation.
3. Closing markets for illegally traded wildlife products: building on the Chinese ivory trade ban.

Wider DFID support

DFID funds a range of activities intended to both tackle the illegal wildlife trade, and to conserve nature and wildlife, including by reducing poverty, strengthening borders and creating green corridors.

£150m for the Global Environment Facility from 2018 to 2022 (as well as £100m from Defra) – this includes the world's biggest fund on tackling IWT, the Global Wildlife Programme, of which the UK has contributed \$17m (approximate £13m) during the same period.

[Press release: Value of location data to be unlocked by government investment](#)

- Government's Geospatial Commission makes first investment from its £80 million two-year budget
- Minister David Lidington says funding will allow British companies to compete in global marketplace and improve people's lives

The Geospatial Commission will invest £5 million to help unlock the value of geospatial data held by its six expert Partner Bodies – the British Geological Survey, Coal Authority, HM Land Registry, Ordnance Survey, UK Hydrographic Office and the Valuation Office Agency.

Location information, or geospatial data, is changing the way we see the world and live our lives – from helping us to avoid traffic jams to easily finding local services or deciding where to buy a house: through cutting edge analysis of GPS, satellite photography and historical data.

David Lidington, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster said:

Our modern Industrial Strategy will secure Britain's position as a world-leader in digital innovation and this government is committed to providing more opportunities for tech businesses – including small firms – to thrive, as well as access public procurement opportunities.

Through emerging technologies, our Geospatial and GovTech funding will elevate British companies onto a global market and help to deliver new services to improve people's lives.

The work of the Geospatial Commission, supported by £40 million of new funding in each of the next two years, will drive the move to use this data more productively – unlocking up to £11 billion of extra value for the economy every year.

Geospatial data is an increasingly valuable tool for businesses and public sector organisations, helping them to make better decisions. That could range from tackling crime hotspots or finding the quickest routes for emergency services to deciding where best to locate supply chains.

By improving the quality of key publicly held data and making it easier to access and use, the government will enable the private sector to develop new innovations and applications.

The announcement comes days before the launch on 9th October of the next round of the £20 million GovTech Catalyst programme, in which public sector organisations are invited to submit challenges they think might be solved by innovative use of emerging technologies. Both the government's Geospatial and GovTech funding is aimed at driving forward Britain as a digital and data leader.