

News story: Windrush compensation scheme consultation extends

Following a recommendation from Martin Forde QC, the independent adviser appointed to oversee the development of the scheme, the decision was made to extend the period of time that people have to respond. The consultation will now close on 16 November 2018.

Based on his engagement with community groups and the roadshows he is undertaking across the country, Martin Forde advised that it was clear people needed more time to respond.

The Home Secretary has committed to listening to the widest possible range of voices, including those affected and their families, community groups and specialist legal representatives and extending the consultation will ensure that this is possible.

In addition, the Home Secretary has announced that a framework will be developed to make individual payments ahead of the compensation scheme in urgent and exceptional cases.

Martin Forde QC said:

I have travelled around the country to seek the views of those affected and it became very clear to me that people need more time to engage with the consultation.

With that in mind, and on my advice, the consultation has been extended. This will help us get as many views as possible and make sure we can design an effective and fair compensation scheme.

Home Secretary Sajid Javid said:

I've been clear that we must right the wrongs experienced by the Windrush generation and the compensation scheme is a key part of that.

It is absolutely vital we get the scheme right and give everyone who wants to participate in the consultation the chance to input their views.

In the meantime, we will ensure that individual payments are made in urgent and exceptional cases

Following the consultation, the priority of the Home Secretary is to establish a compensation scheme which will start making payments as soon as

possible.

There are already several measures and initiatives in place to help those of the Windrush generation who are concerned about benefits, housing or employment. A dedicated team for vulnerable people has been set up within the Windrush Taskforce, it has already assisted over 450 people where an urgent need for support or advice was identified.

In addition, a Fast-Track service with the Department for Work and Pensions has been established to arrange access to benefits; steps to secure accommodation with local authorities for those identified as homeless; and interim guidance to employers and landlords. An agreement with Citizens Advice has also been put in place to provide bespoke professional advice to anyone experiencing immediate financial problems.

[News story: Damian Hinds: Autonomy leads to progress in our schools](#)

The freedom and autonomy of the academies programme has driven innovation and standards have risen in our school system, the Education Secretary Damian Hinds said in a speech today (Thursday 11 October).

[Speaking at the launch of the Confederation of School Trusts](#) at the British Library in London, the Education Secretary pointed to the many successes of the academies system and the increasing number of schools making the positive choice to convert as examples of the benefits of backing school leaders.

Mr Hinds said that it is a “fundamental point” that heads and school leaders should have the freedom to make decisions in the best interests of their schools. This has seen:

- More than half a million children now studying in good or outstanding sponsored academies that typically replaced underperforming schools;
- The number of state-funded schools in academy trusts grow from around 3,200 in 2015 to around 6,200 this year – and receiving 600 applications to convert to an academy in the last 12 months; and
- Of the almost 1,400 multi-academy trusts, three quarters (76%) have between 1 to 5 schools, working together to share best practice.

[Building on the principles for a new, clearer school accountability system which Mr Hinds set out earlier in the year](#), the Education Secretary

reiterated his commitment to holding MATs to account in a way that is transparent and fair. This will aim to give schools and parents easy access to vital information about a particular trust, and the performance of the sector as a whole.

The department is undertaking a listening period with multi-academy trust leaders, school heads and school leaders to help shape the system. This follows [the announcement to deliver even more transparency over academy finances](#), with academy accounts having to detail all staff earning over £100,000, declare contracts given to family or friends, and seek approval for all related-party transactions over £20,000 from next April.

The Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

It's when you give good people the power to make their own decisions that you unleash their creativity and allow them to drive improvements based on what they know works.

Today I want to re-make the case for freedom...for diversity...and for accountability in our school system...for going forwards not backwards, as we strive to achieve a world-class education for every child, whatever their background.

Trusts clearly have an increasingly important role in our system and we need to make sure our system of oversight and decision-making keeps up with this.

I want to make sure that schools and parents can easily access vital information about a particular trust, and the performance of the system as a whole.

That is why I am working with the sector to figure out how this will work. In particular I want to hear proposals from MAT and school leaders; your views are crucial.

The Education Secretary also backed the freedom of heads and school leaders to make decisions in the interests of staff and pupils – be it banning mobile phones or deciding on their marking policies.

Mr Hinds said:

We heard a couple of months ago how France would be banning mobile phones in schools. Please be in no doubt what I think about mobile phones.

I firmly believe that kids in schools should not be on their phones. I strongly support schools that ban phones.

But when people asked me if I was going to follow the example of France and impose a national ban – I said no.

Because that's autonomy in practice. Heads know best how to run their schools and achieve the objectives they want without any unintended consequences.

There are other areas where I want to proactively stress schools' autonomy.

Too often schools get told that my department or Ofsted expect them to follow the latest fads and fashions in the sector.

That's why Amanda Spielman, myself and others recently made a video stressing that schools are free to follow their own judgement when it comes to lesson plans, the data they collect, the marking policies.

In his speech at the National Association of Head Teachers' annual conference in Liverpool in May, the Education Secretary set out his vision for a clearer school accountability system. This included:

- replacing the current system of having both below the floor and coasting standards for performance; and
- emphasising that only an Ofsted Inadequate judgement will result in school forcibly being turned into an academy.

A consultation on these principles will be launched shortly.

[News story: Damian Hinds: Autonomy leads to progress in our schools](#)

The freedom and autonomy of the academies programme has driven innovation and standards have risen in our school system, the Education Secretary Damian Hinds said in a speech today (Thursday 11 October).

Speaking at the launch of the Confederation of School Trusts at the British Library in London, the Education Secretary pointed to the many successes of the academies system and the increasing number of schools making the positive choice to convert as examples of the benefits of backing school leaders.

Mr Hinds said that it is a "fundamental point" that heads and school leaders should have the freedom to make decisions in the best interests of their schools. This has seen:

- More than half a million children now studying in good or outstanding sponsored academies that typically replaced underperforming schools;

- The number of state-funded schools in academy trusts grow from around 3,200 in 2015 to around 6,200 this year – and receiving 600 applications to convert to an academy in the last 12 months; and
- Of the almost 1,400 multi-academy trusts, three quarters (76%) have between 1 to 5 schools, working together to share best practice.

[Building on the principles for a new, clearer school accountability system which Mr Hinds set out earlier in the year](#), the Education Secretary reiterated his commitment to holding MATs to account in a way that is transparent and fair. This will aim to give schools and parents easy access to vital information about a particular trust, and the performance of the sector as a whole.

The department is undertaking a listening period with multi-academy trust leaders, school heads and school leaders to help shape the system. This follows [the announcement to deliver even more transparency over academy finances](#), with academy accounts having to detail all staff earning over £100,000, declare contracts given to family or friends, and seek approval for all related-party transactions over £20,000 from next April.

The Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

It's when you give good people the power to make their own decisions that you unleash their creativity and allow them to drive improvements based on what they know works.

Today I want to re-make the case for freedom...for diversity...and for accountability in our school system...for going forwards not backwards, as we strive to achieve a world-class education for every child, whatever their background.

Trusts clearly have an increasingly important role in our system and we need to make sure our system of oversight and decision-making keeps up with this.

I want to make sure that schools and parents can easily access vital information about a particular trust, and the performance of the system as a whole.

That is why I am working with the sector to figure out how this will work. In particular I want to hear proposals from MAT and school leaders; your views are crucial.

The Education Secretary also backed the freedom of heads and school leaders to make decisions in the interests of staff and pupils – be it banning mobile phones or deciding on their marking policies.

Mr Hinds said:

We heard a couple of months ago how France would be banning mobile phones in schools. Please be in no doubt what I think about mobile phones.

I firmly believe that kids in schools should not be on their phones. I strongly support schools that ban phones.

But when people asked me if I was going to follow the example of France and impose a national ban – I said no.

Because that's autonomy in practice. Heads know best how to run their schools and achieve the objectives they want without any unintended consequences.

There are other areas where I want to proactively stress schools' autonomy.

Too often schools get told that my department or Ofsted expect them to follow the latest fads and fashions in the sector.

That's why Amanda Spielman, myself and others recently made a video stressing that schools are free to follow their own judgement when it comes to lesson plans, the data they collect, the marking policies.

In his speech at the National Association of Head Teachers' annual conference in Liverpool in May, the Education Secretary set out his vision for a clearer school accountability system. This included:

- replacing the current system of having both below the floor and coasting standards for performance; and
- emphasising that only an Ofsted Inadequate judgement will result in school forcibly being turned into an academy.

A consultation on these principles will be launched shortly.

[News story: No new inquest into the death of Theresa Biggs](#)

After careful consideration, the Attorney General Geoffrey Cox QC MP has decided not to provide his authority for an application to be made to the High Court for a new inquest into the death of Theresa Biggs. Miss Biggs was 6 years old when she died whilst swimming at Caldey Island, Pembrokeshire, on 18 July 1977.

Miss Biggs' sister submitted an application to the Attorney General for his

consent to request a new inquest into the death of Theresa under the Coroners Act 1988. The original inquest was held by Coroner's Court for Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire in 1977.

An application for a fresh inquest may be made only with the authority of the Attorney General, and he can provide his authority only if he is satisfied there is sufficient admissible evidence that there is a reasonable prospect of the Court being persuaded to order a new inquest.

The Attorney General concluded that none of the grounds of challenge set out in the application had a reasonable prospect of success. As there is no fresh evidence that would likely lead to a different outcome being recorded on the inquisition, he would not be able to provide his authority for the applications to be made to the High Court.

The Attorney General said:

I offer my sincere sympathies to the family of Theresa Biggs for their loss. I have given this considerable thought, but, as disappointing as it will be for them, it would not be right to pass this matter to the High Court when the tests for a new inquest are not met.

News story: £2 million investment to help NHS achieve zero inpatient suicide ambition

The Prime Minister has announced £2 million in funding for the Zero Suicide Alliance (ZSA) over the next 2 years. The funding will help to reduce suicides across the NHS, with the aim of achieving zero inpatient suicides.

It will be used to develop tools for the NHS and public and private partners. The tools will focus on:

- training to prevent suicides
- improving safety
- ensuring lessons are learnt when suicides occur

The ZSA will also develop their digital suicide prevention resource, capturing best practice and learning from across the UK and abroad, and explore the use of analytics to predict suicide risk.

This funding is in addition to the £25 million in suicide prevention funding first announced in 2016. As part of that investment, NHS England is working

with mental health trusts to implement zero suicide policies for inpatients and improve safety on wards.

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Matt Hancock said:

Every suicide is a preventable death and there's so much more we can do to reduce the number of people lost to it. The Zero Suicide Alliance's new training and awareness tools will help health and care staff recognise the signs and step in before it's too late, as well ensuring openness and transparency when suicides do occur.

On World Mental Health Day, this funding is a vital step forward to help further reduce inpatient suicide and underlines our commitment to bring down the number of suicides everywhere.

Joe Rafferty, Chief Executive of Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust and one of the founder members of the Zero Suicide Alliance, said:

Today's announcement of government backing for the ZSA is fantastic news for every person who has ever struggled with suicidal thoughts and everyone left behind by someone who has taken their own life. The ZSA believe just one life lost is one too many.

The ZSA is already acting as a catalyst and focal point for a broad range of suicide prevention activity across the widest possible group of mutually supportive NHS and partner organisations in this country. As part of this work, the Alliance training, which we developed here at Mersey Care, has now been taken by thousands of people with each one of them now becoming equipped to engage with those at risk.

Moving forward, this funding will enable us to broaden our reach to include a range of options to ensure that NHS response to suicide is the very best it can be wherever you are when the need arises.