

## Statement to Parliament: Grenfell Tower fire 6 months on

Today marks 6 months since the Grenfell Tower tragedy and my thoughts very much remain with those affected.

A national memorial service will take place at St Paul's Cathedral today to mark 6 months since the Grenfell Tower tragedy which the Prime Minister, ministerial colleagues and I will attend. This will provide the opportunity for us to remember those who tragically lost their lives, comfort the bereaved, and for all of us to reflect on how, together, we move forward.

I am determined those who lost their lives, their families and friends, the survivors and the community will not be forgotten and are supported in getting the help they need and deserve.

On 11 December I wrote to all colleagues with an update on some of the work being undertaken to support those affected and I plan, with Mr Speaker's permission to make an Oral Statement to the House before recess.

Above all, I am determined that the lessons of the Grenfell fire are learnt and never forgotten so that a tragedy like this can never, ever happen again.

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## News story: Plan to boost social mobility through education

An ambitious plan to provide opportunity on every young person's doorstep and help make Britain a country fit for the future has been unveiled today (Thursday 14 December) by Education Secretary Justine Greening.

In a speech at the inaugural [Reform social mobility conference](#), the Education Secretary pointed to the success of government reforms in raising school standards and creating more opportunities.

This includes 1.9million more children in good and outstanding schools than in 2010, record numbers of young people in education or training and more disadvantaged pupils going to university. And earlier this month [a new study](#) revealed that England is rising up the international literacy league table, with English 9yr olds now significantly better readers than their American, Canadian and Australian counterparts.

But she made clear that if we are to make this a country that truly works for everyone, there is much more to be done to deliver equality of opportunity

for every child, regardless of where they live.

The plan [Unlocking Talent, Fulfilling Potential](#) will deliver targeted action where it is needed most, focusing £800 million of government investment on overcoming these challenges.

One overarching ambition will focus on places and communities across the country that feel they have been 'left behind', because they have not yet seen the improvement that other parts of the country have already benefited from. A further four ambitions will cover the key life stages of people's education.

#### **Ambition 1: Closing the word gap**

Boosting access to high quality early language and literacy, both in the classroom and at home, ensuring more disadvantaged children leave school having mastered the basic of literacy that many take for granted.

#### **Ambition 2: Closing the attainment gap**

Raising standards for every pupil, supporting teachers early in their career as well as getting more great teachers in areas where there remain significant challenges.

#### **Ambition 3: Real choice at post-16**

Creating world-class technical education, backed by a half a billion pounds in investment, and increasing the options for all young people regardless of their background.

#### **Ambition 4: Rewarding careers for all**

Boosting skills and confidence to make the leap from education into work, raising their career aspirations. Building a new type of partnership with businesses to improve advice, information and experiences for young people.

Education Secretary Justine Greening said:

In modern Britain, where you are born, where you live, where you go to school and where you work directly affects where you get to in life.

Talent is spread evenly across this country; the problem is that opportunity isn't. We need systemic change and we need everyone – government, employers, education professionals and civil society – to work together so that social mobility runs through everything we all do.

[A recent study](#) has revealed that if disadvantaged pupils in all English regions performed as well as disadvantaged pupils in London, this would lead to an overall economic benefit of around £20 billion in present value terms.

Today's plan focuses government reforms and funding on the people and places that need it most to level up opportunity and ensure no community is left behind, helping to make Britain a success as it prepares for life post-Brexit.

It sets out action and investment in a range of areas including:

- £50million to boost school nursery provision in some of the most challenging areas, so more children benefit from early education support before they arrive at primary school.
- A consultation on proposals to enhance early careers support and professional development for teachers, in particular those working in challenging schools and areas. This will help to further drive up standards in schools by retaining the best teachers and attracting the best individuals to the profession with a 'gold-standard' training and development offer.
- A new £23 million Future Talent Fund to trial a range of new teaching approaches to support the education of the most-able children from less well-off communities.

Sir Peter Lampl, Founder and Chairman of the Sutton Trust and Chairman of the Education Endowment Foundation said:

We welcome today's social mobility action plan. It will play an important role in enabling less advantaged young people to get on in life. We particularly welcome the Future Talent Fund, which will support bright young people to fulfil their potential and the new role for the Education Endowment Foundation to evaluate early years practice.

Melanie Richards, Deputy Chair at KPMG UK said:

We have heard the Secretary of State's call to arms today for all sectors to work together to ensure future generations of young people have the skills, opportunity and support they deserve. We strongly support the Department's Unlocking Talent, Fulfilling Potential action plan; it is the right thing to do for the good of our society and it is also vital if the UK is to remain competitive on the global stage.

It will take the best efforts of all of us – working together – to stamp out the social immobility that currently stops too many people in this country from reaching their full potential.

David Hughes, Chief Executive of Association of Colleges said:

This is an important statement of intent and focus for the DfE. The plan sets out an ambitious agenda to tackle longstanding and deep-seated inequalities which the education system struggles to overcome. It is a brave step to establish this as a goal for the Government and I know that colleges across the country are already working on this ambition in everything that they do. Colleges are drivers of social mobility and will want to work with the Secretary of State to help transform the life chances of children, young people and adults.

The plan builds on wider government work to boost social mobility including the publication of an Industrial Strategy to boost productivity across the UK to create more jobs and increase earning power. In addition, the government has introduced the National Living Wage, investing £9 billion in affordable housing and creating more full-time, permanent jobs.

It will sit alongside work already underway via the [Opportunity Areas](#) programme, and comes after the Education Secretary hosted a [Skills Summit](#) for Britain's top employers at the DfE last month.

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## **Notice: ED & AD Cooke, Bourne (Farms) Limited: application made to abstract water**

The Environment Agency consult the public on certain applications for the abstraction and impoundment of water.

These notices explain:

- what the application is about
  - which Environment Agency offices you can visit to see the application documents on the public register
  - when you need to comment by
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## Notice: Yorkshire Water Services Limited (YW): application made to abstract water and impound water

The Environment Agency consult the public on certain applications for the abstraction and impoundment of water.

These notices explain:

- what the application is about
  - which Environment Agency offices you can visit to see the application documents on the public register
  - when you need to comment by
- 

## Press release: Child maintenance consultation launched

The government is asking for views on options to give the Child Maintenance Service (CMS) stronger compliance, collection and enforcement methods to make sure parents are meeting their responsibilities towards their children.

The Child Maintenance Service was established in 2012 to replace the old Child Support Agency (CSA). Steps have already been taken to strengthen the action taken against parents who don't pay the child maintenance they owe, including consulting on [seizing unpaid maintenance from joint bank accounts](#).

The consultation proposals today include:

- removing passports – parents who persistently do not pay the child maintenance they owe could face being banned from holding or obtaining a UK passport for up to 2 years
- improved calculations – income from capital, foreign income, notional income from assets and unearned income could all be taken into account when the CMS works out how much maintenance a parent owes
- deductions from business accounts – the CMS could seize funds from sole trader and partnership accounts to pay off a parent's unpaid maintenance bill.

The consultation also outlines proposals to address historic unpaid child maintenance built up under the old CSA, and options for writing it off. New analysis shows that it would cost the government £1.5 billion to collect the debt, most of which is owed on CSA cases where the children are now adults.

Minister for Family Support, Housing and Child Maintenance Caroline Dinenage said:

Our priority is to make sure parents meet their responsibilities to their children so we have been replacing the old CSA – which failed children over the decades – with a new system that is already working better for families. But we need to go further to ensure children get the support they need. That's why we are consulting on a range of options, including tougher powers against parents who do not pay the child maintenance they owe.

The consultation opened on 14 December 2017 and closes on 8 February 2018.

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