

## [News story: Funding boost to improve and expand school buildings](#)

Over £500 million has been announced today (Thursday 29 March) to improve and expand school buildings across the country and create more good school places.

The announcement builds on the 825,000 new school places created since 2010, with 1.9 million more children now in good or outstanding schools thanks to the hard work of teachers and the government's reforms.

The £514 million is being allocated as part of the Condition Improvement Fund. It will support 1,556 projects across almost 1,300 academies and sixth-form colleges in England to help improve the condition or expand their facilities.

The announcement includes £38 million for projects supported by the Healthy Pupils Capital Fund, which is drawn from the Soft Drinks Industry Levy. This fund helps to improve children and young people's physical and mental health by enhancing the quality of, and access to, facilities such as changing rooms, playgrounds, kitchens and sports halls.

### **Minister for the School System, Lord Agnew, said:**

All children deserve the best possible education and state of the art facilities are a big part of that. This funding will transform the condition of school buildings and help our best schools to expand, creating more good school places for families and raising standards for pupils. This will build on the hard work of teachers and our reforms, which have resulted in 1.9 million more children being taught in good or outstanding schools than in 2010.

The Condition Improvement Fund is an annual funding allocation that academies and sixth-form colleges are invited to bid for. In addition to improving the quality of school facilities, the fund also enables Good or Outstanding schools to expand where there is a need for them to do so.

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## [Press release: HGV cab's final patrol after catching over 5,000 careless](#)

# drivers

The cab has travelled 99,000 miles on motorways and major A roads since the safety initiative began, spotting an average of one driving offence every 16 miles.

Highways England is now funding three new HGV 'supercabs' after the single cab, which has been used by police forces across the country, stopped a total of 5,408 drivers in relation to 6,257 offences.

Greater Manchester Police was one of the first police forces to use the cab when it was introduced in April 2015, and will be the final force to use it before a new dedicated cab for the North goes on patrol from next month.

New footage has also been released, filmed by Greater Manchester Police officers using the cab last week, which shows a lorry driver making notes on an A4 pad while travelling along the M6 near the junction with the M62.

[The footage is available at:](#)

John Walford, Incident Prevention Manager at Highways England, said:

We began the HGV cab initiative three years ago as part of the work we're doing to improve safety on motorways and major A roads, and we've been impressed by the impact it's had.

Police officers have pulled over more than 5,000 drivers for offences which could have resulted in serious collisions, either because road users have got into bad habits or are simply ignoring the law.

We've found that the vast majority of drivers are sensible behind the wheel but some are putting themselves and others at risk, so we've therefore decided to fund three new HGV cabs to continue to improve road safety.

The three new 'supercabs' will patrol motorways and main trunk roads across England, and have been fitted with wide-angle cameras to capture unsafe driving behaviour.

They also have a derestricted speed limiter which means they can travel at speeds up to the national speed limit, and flashing lights have been installed for use by police forces in an emergency.

The cabs allow police officers to film evidence of unsafe driving behaviour by pulling up alongside vehicles. Drivers are then pulled over by police cars following behind.

Chief Inspector Tariq Butt, who leads Greater Manchester Police's Traffic

Unit, said:

The use of the HGV cab as part of Operation Tramline has been a huge success across Greater Manchester over the last three years.

The 'supercabs' will be a welcome addition and are crucial in raising continued awareness of a driver's responsibilities, improving road safety and more importantly reducing road casualties.

In total, 28 police forces have taken part in the HGV cab safety initiative in its first three years. Over half of the drivers who were stopped were illegally using a mobile phone while driving, despite the latest statistics showing that mobile phone use is a factor in an average of two deaths on the roads every month.

Officers gave verbal advice to 537 drivers, issued 1,014 fixed or graduated penalty notices, and filed 4,180 traffic offence reports – usually requiring drivers to attend a driver education course. There were also 194 prosecutions for more serious offences.

The most common offences filmed using the unmarked HGV cab included:

- using mobile phones – 2,971
- not wearing seatbelts – 1,227
- speeding – 331
- not in proper control of vehicles – 310

One driver pulled over by Devon and Cornwall Police was found to have sent 10 replies to 10 texts within one hour; a driver in Surrey was seen trying to put toothpaste on a toothbrush; and a driver in the East Midlands was spotted steering with his knees while he ate his lunch and used his mobile phone.

Last year, the government doubled the penalty for drivers caught using their phones at the wheel. Motorists now receive 6 points on their licence and a £200 fine – up from the previous 3 points and £100 fine.

[Find out more details about the law on mobile phone use.](#)

## **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

## **Media enquiries**

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

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## [Corporate report: Environment Agency corporate scorecard quarter three 2017 to 2018](#)

The Environment Agency has 12 corporate measures. These are:

- the water environment is healthier
- we protect people, the environment and wildlife by reducing serious pollution incidents
- we create new habitats
- we reduce the number of high risk illegal waste sites
- we reduce the risk of flooding for more households
- we maintain our flood and coastal risk management assets at or above the target condition
- we have a first class incident response capability
- we manage our money efficiently to deliver our outcomes
- we respond to planning applications within 21 days
- we reduce our carbon footprint
- we have a diverse workforce
- we provide a safe place to work

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## [Press release: Innovators across the North East get a multi-million pound Industrial Strategy boost](#)

The Business Secretary Greg Clark has today (29 March 2018) announced that, as part of the [Industrial Strategy](#), 3 projects across the North East of England have been awarded almost £15 million to help improve local universities, businesses and entrepreneurs produce new products and services and bring them to market.

Ensuring the UK is the best place for innovators is at the heart to the modern Industrial Strategy and key to the government's plan of building a Britain fit for the future. The new investment, part of the £100 million Connecting Capability Fund, will support a range of activity aimed at growing the North East economy, creating jobs and delivering major environmental benefits for the region.

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

The North East has some of the most innovative people, businesses and organisations and I am determined to build on its success.

Improving our ability to bring new innovations and products to market is crucial to the success of the UK economy and the new set of projects announced today will further strengthen the link between our world leading universities and businesses.

Through our Industrial Strategy we are determined to improve people's lives. By increasing investment in research and development by an extra £7 billion over the next five years we will ensure the UK remains one of the best places in the world to innovate, do business and create the high value, high skilled jobs of the future ensuring we build a Britain fit for the future.

The new projects announced today include £5 million of funding for a project led by Durham University which includes Newcastle University, Northumbria University and the University of Sunderland to deliver a step change in commercialising research and drive economic improvement in support of the North East's technology and industrial sectors. Called Northern Accelerator, the project will build on an existing project of the same name and establish a seed capital investment fund to help turn concepts into new businesses or products.

The bioeconomy is worth over £36 billion to the UK and is one of the key growth areas for the economies. To take advantage of the growing sector, £5 million is being invested to build the bioeconomy sector across the Tees Valley, Yorkshire and Humberside.

In collaboration with regional industry, Local Enterprise Partnerships and the wider community, Teesside University will work with the University of York and the University of Hull to deliver projects focused upon 3 areas: transforming bio-based waste into new products; converting industrial sites by re-purposing them for bio-based manufacturing and growing the productivity of the region's bioeconomy as a whole by bringing together research and commercialisation capabilities within the three universities. The new investment is expected to grow the region's economy, create new jobs and have major environmental benefits.

David Sweeney, Director of Research and Knowledge Exchange at HEFCE and Executive Chair Designate of Research England, said:

Today's announcement is a first for Research England, which comes into existence on 1 April. These projects exemplify our aims – to work in partnership with universities, support innovations and deliver benefits for the economy and local communities.

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## [News story: The Northern Ireland Assembly Members \(Pay\) Act 2018](#)

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