

[News story: Funding boost to give more children healthy start to the day](#)

More children across the country will get a healthy and nutritious breakfast to set them up for the school day, thanks to an investment of up to £26 million and the appointment of two leading charities to run morning clubs, the Education Secretary announced today.

The boost to breakfast provision will be funded through the Government's soft drinks industry levy and will benefit over 1,770 schools across the country. This investment will be targeted at the most disadvantaged areas of the country – including the Department for Education's [Opportunity Areas](#) – to help make sure every child gets the best start in life.

Family Action, in partnership with Magic Breakfast, have both been named as the charities that will run the clubs. Family Action supports 45,000 of the most vulnerable families each year, while Magic Breakfast – which ran the department's previous breakfast club programme – has supported the provision of breakfasts to over 31,500 children across 550 schools.

Research shows that a healthy breakfast can help boost children's attainment by improving their memory and concentration. Thanks to Government reforms and the hard work of teachers, academic standards are rising in England, with 1.9 million more children in good or outstanding schools than in 2010, but there is more to do.

As part of the funding, experts at Family Action and Magic Breakfast will also look at how they can encourage more children to attend these programmes and improve collaboration and sharing of best practice across schools.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

A healthy breakfast can help fuel children's concentration so they can get the most out of their school day.

Children only get one chance at an education and they deserve the best, whatever their background. That is why we are giving more pupils in some of the country's most disadvantaged areas the chance to go to a breakfast club.

Paid for by the Government's soft drinks levy, this investment will help raise education standards further and will make sure young people have happy, healthy childhoods.

The new clubs are due to start this spring. As well as providing a healthy and nutritious meal, many will also offer children the chance to be more active and develop their knowledge and skills through extra-curricular activities to improve their learning.

David Holmes CBE, Chief Executive of Family Action, said:

Breakfast clubs play a key role in ensuring children have a healthy start to their day. Family Action is delighted to be working with the Department for Education and Magic Breakfast on this ground-breaking programme – changing lives and life chances by preventing thousands of children from being too hungry to learn.

Carmel McConnell MBE, Founder of Magic Breakfast, said:

Magic Breakfast is delighted to work alongside the Department for Education and Family Action to deliver this programme. Crucially, it will ensure a nutritious breakfast reaches many more thousands of hungry schoolchildren, unlocking up to four hours of learning each morning to support their education. This is an excellent investment in these children and in the future of this country.

Fiona Pickering, Headteacher, Windsor Community Primary School, Toxteth, Liverpool, said:

Our free breakfast club is absolutely vital for our school! Children now start the day having had a healthy breakfast and time to socialise and chill, meaning that they are emotionally and physically equipped for the day ahead. It is, without doubt, one of the best parts of the extended provision we offer.

Today's announcement is part of the government's drive to support an active and healthy childhood through the Childhood Obesity Plan. It builds on the recent doubling of the Primary PE and Sport Premium to £320 million a year to improve PE and sport in schools, alongside the £100 million Healthy Pupils Fund to help young people live healthier lifestyles.

The announcement today follows wider support for the most disadvantaged families provided by the government, including the provision of free school meals to 1.1 million of the most disadvantaged children, the launch of new pilots to support disadvantaged families in the holidays and the £2.5 billion funding given to schools through the Pupil Premium to support their education.

The breakfast provision will be focused in areas of disadvantage, with a particular focus on in the Department for Education Opportunity Areas. The 12 Opportunity Areas are receiving a share of £72 million to help create opportunities and raise education standards in parts of the country where children and young people face greater challenges.

[Press release: Delivering for Wales: Alun Cairns marks two years as Secretary of State for Wales](#)

Two years ago today (19 March), Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns took his seat at the Cabinet table in Westminster and outlined his ambitions to create a nation which is more ambitious, confident and more outward looking than ever before.

The Welsh Secretary has overseen a number of key achievements for Wales since March 2016, including:

Abolition of the Severn Tolls

Following the return of the Severn Crossings to public ownership on 8 January 2018, the tolls were reduced for all drivers ahead of their complete abolition by the end of the year. This sends a direct message to businesses, commuters and tourists alike that we are committed to strengthening the links between England and Wales

The Great Western Powerhouse and the Severn Growth Summit

Over 300 guests from both sides of the Severn estuary attended the inaugural Severn Growth Summit at the Celtic Manor Resort to explore how links between the South Wales and South West England economies can be strengthened following the announcement of the abolition of the Severn Tolls later this year.

State of the art trains for south Wales

The new fleet of Intercity Express Trains to be introduced on the Great Western Main lines from London will significantly enhance the travel experience of passengers in South Wales.

Wales Act 2017

The Wales Bill received Royal Assent in January 2017, setting in stone a strong package of powers for Assembly members with stability and accountability at its heart.

Fiscal Framework

A new fiscal framework setting out how the Welsh Government will be funded following the devolution of some taxes represents a significant milestone for Wales. The deal provides secure long-term funding for the Welsh Government and gives Cardiff Bay greater visibility when looking at spending decisions.

City and Growth Deals

The Welsh Secretary is overseeing the delivery of the £1.2bn deal for the Cardiff Capital Region – UKG £500m contribution to the deal with provide an investment fund for the region and support electrification of the Valleys Lines railways. He was also a key driver for the Swansea Bay City Region which will deliver almost £1.3bn of investment to the region. The UK Government has also started formal negotiations on a North Wales Growth Deal and are open to proposals for a Mid Wales Growth Deal.

Broadband

The UK Government's £69million investment in delivering superfast broadband across Wales has seen Wales experience a rapid increase in access from 29.4% of homes and businesses in 2010 to 94.2% by December 2017.

Welsh language

Alun Cairns became the first MP in history to make a speech in the Welsh Language in a House of Commons debate after the UK Government brought forward a motion February last year enabling MPs to speak in Welsh in Westminster debates.

Business support

The Government's modern Industrial Strategy has been designed to build on Wales' strengths in fields such as aerospace, technology and life sciences. The Secretary of State is putting Wales' best foot forward to maximise the benefits for Wales from the initiatives and grand challenges it presents.

Export support

Over 80 companies joined the Welsh Secretary in Cardiff at the inaugural Wales Business Export Summit in 2017. The event connected firms starting out on exporting journeys with the expertise and support of the UK Government.

Speaking of his two years in office, Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

Over the last two years I have had the privilege of experiencing the very best of this country – connecting with every corner of Wales, its culture, its history and its people.

The goals we have achieved for Wales over this time take us one step closer to achieving this Government's mission to build a country that works for everyone.

But there is still work to be done. As we prepare to live through one of the most important moments in our country's history, I will not waste a second in getting on with the job. I will provide the leadership to make sure that Wales is in the strongest possible

position to prosper when we leave the European Union, to cultivate an economy that's fit for the future, and deliver a stronger and fairer society for everyone.

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News story: Tick the Gift Aid box on donations so charities don't miss out on £600m extra funding

People giving to charity are being encouraged by the government to declare Gift Aid on their donations, and boost the money that reaches their charity of choice at no extra cost.

The call comes after research showed that charities are losing out on potentially hundreds of millions of pounds in extra funding.

Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, Robert Jenrick MP, said:

The UK has thousands of brilliant charities, all working hard to make people's lives better. Through Gift Aid, we are already giving charities an extra £1.3 billion of funding so they can continue their important work.

We know how crucial this funding is. This is why we've just written to 50,000 charities to tell them about the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme, which makes it even easier for charities to claim a 25% top-up on their donations.

The research, published today by HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC), shows that a third of eligible donations made to many of the UK's 200,000 charities did not add Gift Aid when they could have done. This means that charities are losing out on extra funding worth nearly £600 million a year.

Gift Aid allows charities and community amateur sports clubs (CASC) to claim an extra 25p for every £1 donated. To add Gift Aid to a donation, you must have paid income or capital gains tax that year worth at least the value of the Gift Aid being added and give the charity permission to claim it. Gift

Aid costs no extra to add on to your donation.

HMRC is continuing to work closely with charities to ensure they get the most out of Gift Aid, including making sure their donors understand the rules, and they fully benefit from the support it gives.

The department has also written to 50,000 charities to promote the Gift Aid Small Donations Scheme, introduced in 2013, to explain how easy it is to claim a 25% top-up on cash donations. The scheme does not require a declaration to be made for donations worth up to £20, making it simpler for charities to get extra support through Gift Aid.

Further information

1. [How to donate through Gift Aid](#)
2. [Claiming Gift Aid as a charity or CASC](#)
3. [Claiming Gift Aid through the Small Donation Scheme](#)

[Press release: Government announces major programme to tackle inequalities in youth unemployment](#)

Prime Minister Theresa May has announced the launch of an innovative new programme to address ethnic disparities in youth unemployment and to help disadvantaged young people get into work.

The announcement comes after Theresa May's challenge to society to 'explain or change' disparities in how people from different backgrounds are treated, following the publication of the [Race Disparity Audit](#) – the government's ground-breaking audit of public services, from central government to local communities, launched last October.

The £90 million youth programme, designed jointly by the Big Lottery Fund, DCMS, DfE and DWP, will be shaped by evidence from the Race Disparity Audit, which highlighted the differences in outcomes facing young people from different backgrounds in different parts of England.

It will offer young people the chance to work directly with educators and youth and community organisations – who will consider how their skills can benefit their local communities and businesses.

Young people will feed into the programme's design, working with educators, youth and community organisations and businesses to demonstrate how their skills and talents can benefit their local economies.

Today's announcement marks the start of an engagement phase which will see

the government and the Big Lottery Fund running a series of workshops with young people from across the country to gather evidence about the unique challenges they face in making the transition from education to employment.

The Prime Minister also today announces the Race Disparity Audit Advisory Group, chaired by Simon Woolley. The Advisory Group will challenge, steer and support government departments to develop interventions to tackle disparities found in the Audit – and will drive civil society, businesses and local government to take action.

Figures from the [Ethnicity Facts and Figures website](#) show that young people from ethnic minorities between the ages of 16 and 24 are almost twice as likely to be unemployed (23%) as their white peers (12%) – despite having similar qualifications.

Later today, the Prime Minister will visit a Birmingham-based youth employment charity, which has helped thousands of young people to find work since 2010. The charity runs programmes helping unemployed 16 to 24 year-olds develop key skills in team work, leadership, communication and discipline – providing them with the necessary skills to gain qualifications and work experience so they can move into sustainable employment or further training.

On the visit, Theresa May will speak to young people about the barriers they have experienced in finding work, and will also meet young people who have successfully completed training and gone into full-time employment.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

Youth unemployment blights communities and wastes talent and potential – and too many young people from deprived and ethnic minority backgrounds face barriers preventing them from entering the world of work.

Evidence from the Race Disparity Audit clearly shows that while the educational attainment gap between people of different backgrounds has narrowed over time, this has not been reflected in getting jobs.

Talent, ability and hard work should be the only factors affecting a young person's ability to get on in life – not their background or ethnicity.

The launch of this ambitious programme, which has young people at its heart and draws on their direct experiences, will help to address the barriers holding many young lives back, and will support young people furthest from the labour market into employment, so they can achieve their full potential.

Dawn Austwick, Chief Executive of the Big Lottery Fund, said:

Young people who are facing multiple barriers to employment are the best placed to tell us what needs to change for them.

They will be at the heart of the process to shape solutions and create a dormant accounts youth programme that works for them by working with employers, educators, youth and community organisations.

Simon Woolley, Chair of the Race Disparity Advisory Group and Director of Operation Black Vote, said:

This intervention is driven by the Prime Minister's leadership with support from NGOs. Our role is to find out where and how we can make the biggest impact on a range of issues including youth unemployment and the ethnic disparities within it.