

[News story: £45m boost for young people with SEND](#)

The Government today announced a package of support worth nearly £45 million to provide additional help for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Minister for Children and Families Robert Goodwill confirmed the additional funding for councils and organisations to continue transforming SEN provision and put families at the heart of the system.

The reforms which began in 2014 introduced Education, Health and Care plans which are tailored to the individual needs of the child or young person.

In addition to the funding to bolster the roll out of these reforms, a new £9.7million fund has been set up to create new supported internships, helping to bridge the gap for some of the most vulnerable young people between education and employment. The announcement has been welcomed by the National Children's Bureau

Minister for Children and Families Robert Goodwill said:

We have taken action to fundamentally reform support for children with special educational needs, making sure that families are at the heart of the process and care plans are tailored to individuals – and our survey of parents tells us that this has made a difference to so many of these families.

Councils are making encouraging progress, but there is still work to be done to fully embed this improved system across education, health and care sectors.

That's why I am pleased to announce this additional investment for councils and other groups who have been instrumental in getting us to this positive stage. Their hard work is raising the aspirations of these young people and giving them access to the same opportunities as their peers, helping them fulfill their full potential as adults.

The package of funding announced today includes:

- £29 million to support councils and their local partners to continue pressing ahead with implementation of the reforms to the SEND system;
- £9.7 million to establish local supported internship forums, which will create work placements for young people with SEND to provide them with

the skills and confidence they need to move into paid work. The funding could also be used to train job coaches, who are vital to the success of supporting those with learning difficulties into paid work; and

- £4.6 million for Parent Carer Forums, which bring parents together with local decision makers and help to provide them with a voice in the process.

Annamarie Hassall MBE, Director of Practice and Programmes at the National Children's Bureau, said:

The funding announced today will help more children with disabilities and special educational needs get the support they need to live normal lives in their home communities. In particular, we welcome funding for internships, which will provide young people with valuable work experience as they make the transition to adulthood.

The Minister also confirmed that further funding would be available to build capacity in the system and support the ongoing delivery of the SEND reforms over the next two years. Invitations to bid for these contracts, which will include providing families with access to information, advice and support, continuing support for the SEND workforce, and expert support to local areas, will be published online shortly.

[Press release: Yorkshire Water fined for raw sewage leak](#)

On 27 November 2017, Yorkshire Water Services Limited appeared at Sheffield Crown Court and pleaded guilty to charges relating to a water pollution incident in Doncaster which led to the deaths of several hundred fish.

They were fined £45,000 and ordered to pay Environment Agency costs of £24,762.56 as well as a victim surcharge of £120.

Proceedings were brought by the Environment Agency following the pollution incident in April 2014 where raw sewage was discharged from the defendant company's pumping station at Sandy Lane, Belle View in Doncaster, South Yorkshire into a water course and ultimately into 2 local ponds.

The discharge of sewage resulted in a raised level of ammonia in the water of the ponds and a reduced level of dissolved oxygen for a considerable period of time. The pollution from the illegal discharge was traced for over 3.5km

downstream from the pumping station and a large number of fish died due to the toxic effects of ammonia.

Yorkshire Water Services Limited operates the pumping station under an environmental permit, and is required to ensure the site operates correctly. There was a breach of conditions of the permit on this occasion which caused an unlawful discharge.

Richard Moore, Team Leader at the Environment Agency said:

Safeguarding the environment is an essential part of how all water companies must operate. The sentencing in this case shows we will continue to take companies to task where they fail to meet environmental standards.

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[Press release: England's largest woodland planting scheme gets green light](#)

More than 600,000 trees are set to be planted across Northumberland over the next two years, with England's largest woodland planting scheme in decades given the go-ahead by the Forestry Commission today.

Thanks to government funding, Doddington North Moor has been given consent to plant a new 350-hectare forest near Wooler in Northumberland – the largest of its kind to be planted in England for over 30 years.

The forest, which will span the equivalent of over 650 football fields, will help to enhance populations of the iconic red squirrel, while storing over 120,000 tonnes of carbon and helping to manage flood risk in the area. With the forestry and timber processing industry a major employer in the region, the project is also set to bring a boost to local businesses and will generate a number of new jobs.

It joins another successful project that has just been approved this week in the Lake District, with government funding helping the Lowther Park Estate plant more than 200,000 trees over 170 hectares of their land.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey welcomed the decision, saying:

Our forests and woodlands are some of our most vital and cherished natural assets, and planting more trees is at the heart of our ambition to protect the environment for future generations.

Doddington North Moor will make a significant contribution to our drive to plant 11 million trees across the nation and is a fantastic example of the kind of tree planting schemes we want to see more of. I hope this will signal a wave of similar projects to come forward and help other landowners realise the benefits of woodland creation.

Richard Greenhous, Director of Forest Services at the Forestry Commission said:

We have worked very closely with the applicant, Natural England and the Environment Agency to help shape this important project into something we can all be proud of.

We stand ready to support more large scale woodland creation projects that will deliver the government's and the forestry sector's ambitions to plant more trees across the country.

Andy Howard, Doddington North Moor project manager, said:

I'm delighted that we have gained approval from the Forestry Commission for our afforestation project at Doddington North. There needs to be a major uplift in the planting of new woodlands in England, and hopefully us starting to plant trees at Doddington and the lessons learnt from the application process can unlock interest from further potential applicants.

Planting at Doddington is expected to begin in March 2018 and will be phased over the next two to three years.

Doddington has been developed over the last two years with support from the government's Woodland Creation Planning Grant. It anticipated the planting will be funded through other schemes such as the Woodland Carbon Fund and Countryside Stewardship Woodland Creation Grant.

Under the Countryside Stewardship scheme landowners can apply for up to £6,800 per hectare to plant more trees, reaping the environmental and financial benefits of woodland creation – and improvements have been made to this scheme this year to make it easier to apply.

Funding is also available for larger scale projects via the £19million Woodland Carbon Fund. The threshold for minimum applications for this funding has been recently reduced to 10 hectares, so that more projects can take advantage of this support.

[Press release: Consultation on further safeguards on investigatory powers launched](#)

The government has announced today that it is consulting on new safeguards for the use of communications data.

A [consultation](#), which will run for 7 weeks, is seeking views on amendments to

the UK's communications data and acquisition regime in response to a judgment handed down by the Court of Justice of the European Union in December 2016.

The proposed changes will introduce additional safeguards to ensure communications data can continue to be used to keep people safe from crime and terrorism while complying with the judgment.

Launching the consultation, Security Minister, Ben Wallace said:

Communications data is used in the vast majority of serious and organised crime prosecutions and has been used in every major Security Service counter-terrorism investigation over the last decade. Its importance cannot be overstated.

For example, it is often the only way to identify paedophiles involved in online child abuse and can be used to identify where and when these horrendous crimes have taken place.

As this is an issue of public importance, we consider it important to consult on our proposed changes to inform our legislative response and subsequent Parliamentary debate. All responses will be welcomed and carefully considered.

The new provisions include:

- the introduction of independent authorisation of communications data requests by a new body, known as the Office for Communications Data Authorisations, under the Investigatory Powers Commissioner Lord Justice Fulford
- restricting the use of communications data to investigations into serious crime
- additional safeguards which must be taken into account before a Data Retention Notice can be given to a telecommunications or postal operator
- clarification of the circumstances in which notification of those whose communications data has been accessed can occur
- mandatory guidance on the protection of retained data in line with European data protection standards

The communications data code of practice, which sets out how the safeguards governing the retention of communications data by telecommunications operators and its acquisition by public authorities will operate, is also being published today for consultation.

The government is clear that the December 2016 judgment does not apply to the retention or acquisition of data for national security purposes as national security is outside of the scope of EU law. Nevertheless, a number of the proposed changes will apply to certain national security applications for communications data to create a simpler, more practical regime.

Notes to editors:

Communications data is the 'who', 'where', 'when', 'how' and 'with whom' of a communication, but not what was written or said, and includes information such as the subscriber to a telephone service. It is an essential tool for the full range of law enforcement activity and national security investigations, for example to investigate crime, keep children safe, support or disprove alibis, and tie a suspect to a particular crime scene, amongst other things. It is used in 95 percent of serious and organised crime prosecution cases handled by the Crown Prosecution Service Organised Crime Division, and has been used in every major Security Service counter-terrorism investigation over the last decade.

The Investigatory Powers Act brings together and updates existing powers while radically overhauling how they are authorised and overseen. There is more information on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

The consultation is open for responses now and will close on 18 January 2018. The government proposes amending the IPA by secondary legislation made under section 2(2) of the European Communities Act 1972.

We have also published relevant [case studies](#).