

## News story: Home Office funding to combat substance misuse by young people

More than 140 young people in the Blackpool area will be helped to build the skills and resilience they need to make healthy choices and avoid falling into drug and alcohol misuse and related crime.

The Real-Life Skills project, developed by the charity Mentor UK, is being backed by more than £90,000 of funding from the Home Office as part of the [Serious Violence Strategy](#).

The training will be delivered in two schools and two education facilities for those outside of mainstream education. It will be led by project officers, youth workers and trained peer-group facilitators aged 14 to 15.

A total of 144 youngsters aged 12 to 14 will benefit from the three-month programme through weekly hour-long sessions. The aim is to increase their knowledge around alcohol and drugs including their effects on mental and physical health.

They'll be educated about links between drugs and organised crime and helped to improve their ability and confidence to make positive choices.

Real-Life Skills will also build capacity among teachers for alcohol and drug prevention education.

Victoria Atkins, Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability, said:

A crucial part of our approach to tackling serious violence is engaging with young people at an early stage to provide them with the skills and knowledge they need to stop them being drawn into substance abuse and crime.

I'm delighted to be able to support the excellent work done by Mentor UK as every young person deserves to lead a healthy and productive life away from crime and violence.

Boris Pomroy, Mentor UK CEO, said:

Mentor UK is excited about this opportunity to engage young people through our innovative approach to alcohol and drug education. We look forward to working with schools and community organisations in Blackpool to support young people in building the knowledge, skills and self-confidence they need to make positive choices and thrive, even in the most challenging situations.

The project builds on existing work to improve support and opportunities for young people in Blackpool, as one of the government's 12 Opportunity Areas to drive social mobility. A key priority in Blackpool is to improve attendance at school, reduce school exclusions and the numbers of young people in pupil referral units, through targeted support for children at risk of exclusion using specialist staff to work with pupils and parents.

While law enforcement is a key element of the [Serious Violence Strategy](#) which launched in April, it also looks at the root causes of the problem and how to support young people to lead productive lives away from violence. The overall strategy is supported by £40 million of Home Office funding.

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## **News story: Israel AI programme will help female innovators' ideas succeed**

Women-led small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) specialising in artificial intelligence (AI) and data can apply to be part of a global business innovation programme to help them get ideas closer to market, make connections and uncover opportunities in Israel.

Innovate UK and the UK Science and Innovation Network Israel will host 15 successful applicants on a week-long, fully-funded programme to Israel. They will get advice before the visit to help them prepare as well as follow-on support to make the most of the opportunity.

### **Vibrant innovation and start-up environment**

Israel is known worldwide for innovation in digital, AI and cyber technology, with the [highest investment in research and development \(R&D\) globally](#). Over 300 multinational corporations, including Facebook and Amazon, have R&D labs in the country.

Earlier this year, UK government [signed 2 new agreements to strengthen academic and scientific links with Israel](#). One agreement specifically focuses on improvements in AI and data, which is an Industrial Strategy Grand Challenge.

### **Helping to address the gender innovation gap**

[A recent report from the Women's Business Council](#) revealed that from 2013 to 2018, the percentage of women in the UK engaging in early-stage entrepreneurial activity dropped from 5.8% to 5.3%. [Research from Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics](#) has shown that similarly, Israeli women are underrepresented in high-tech fields.

By supporting UK business women on a mission to Israel, this programme hopes to encourage diversity in innovation in both countries and help participants make their ideas a success.

This is part of Innovate UK's wider commitment to supporting people from a variety of backgrounds and walks of life to succeed in business.

## **Programme information**

A preparation event will help attendees get ready for the visit.

The Israel mission will include a 4-day innovation programme, during which delegates will:

- visit local innovation hubs, AI labs and academic institutions
- meet businesses to gain market knowledge, industry insights and build potential partnerships
- pitch to and network with investors in the region
- attend networking events with local businesses, Israeli women innovators and policymakers
- receive tailored one-to-one support from a specialist Enterprise Europe Network

## **Who can attend?**

Individuals can apply if they are:

- from UK-registered small and medium-sized enterprises
- female co-founders or women in senior decision-making roles
- able to demonstrate significant development in machine learning and AI, data analytics or big data

## **Find out more and register to attend a briefing event**

- the visit will run from 3 to 9 March 2019 (excluding travel)
- deadline for applications is 7 January 2019

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**[Press release: Ofsted Chief Inspector launches her second Annual Report on state of education and children's care](#)**

## in England

Launching her second [Annual Report](#) as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman said today that, thanks to the hard work of teachers, lecturers, childminders, social workers and many others, the quality of education and care in England is good and improving:

- 95% of early years providers are judged good or outstanding
- 76% of further education (FE) colleges and 86% of schools are at least good
- 82% of children's homes are good or better
- the number of local authorities (LAs) judged good or outstanding for children's services continues to rise

This paints a positive picture for much of the country. However, the Ofsted Annual Report finds that some young people still have the deck stacked against them. It calls for policy makers and practitioners to redouble their efforts to tackle these challenges and drive up standards in the years ahead.

Speaking to an audience of education and social care professionals, local authority representatives and policy experts in Westminster, Ms Spielman said that there has been real progress, but there is still much more to do:

There are still children who lag behind. Children, for whom it seems the die is cast, even before entering nursery, and who never catch up in 12 years of schooling. Wealth remains a predictor, albeit a weaker one, of educational performance. And despite promises from policy makers, FE is too often seen as a poor relation to schools, somewhere for 'other people's children', while the outlook for too many children in contact with the care system remains bleak.

New problems have emerged as well. A child in Hackney is more likely to fulfil their potential than ever before, but in some of our coastal towns and white working class communities, attainment, progress and aspiration are too low. Sink schools may have disappeared, but some schools that haven't improved for more than a decade remain. Our colleges look less financially secure than in the past. Across the whole education sector a mentality of 'what's measured is what gets done' trumps the true purpose of education, and curriculum thinking—the consideration of what needs to be taught and learned for a full education—has been eroded. The counterpart in social care is that while statutory services have largely been protected from funding cuts, early help and prevention have indeed been cut back. And schools have become another front in the new culture wars, expected to tackle an ever growing list of societal issues.

The Annual Report provides a summary of Ofsted's findings from inspections, visits and research over the past year. It presents a 'state of the nation' commentary on the quality of education, training and care services in England.

This year's report is clear that, across the sectors Ofsted inspects, people are working incredibly hard to deliver for young people. However, the Chief Inspector said today that underneath the headline success, deep inequities remain.

Ms Spielman continued:

There is a group of young people who seem to have the deck stacked against them. I often liken the path through education to a slope. For affluent and high ability children the slope is, in general, fairly shallow, and the path to reaching their potential only moderately challenging. For others from poorer backgrounds, who face challenges in the home, or who struggle with learning, the gradient is steeper and the path is harder. Our job as education and care professionals is to reduce that gradient, to make that path shallower.

And perhaps the most important thing we can do to reduce that gradient is to get the basics right.

The Chief Inspector urged policy makers to avoid searching for the latest gimmicks from the tech world to tackle these problems, saying:

Some policy makers and practitioners are constantly looking for the next magic potion that will infallibly raise standards or reduce the numbers of children in care. Indeed, despite the history of snake oil, white elephants and fashionable gimmicks that have in the main been debunked, there remains a curious optimism that the elixir of education is just around the corner. But the truth is, we don't need an elixir to help raise standards, because we already have the tried and tested ingredients we need.

Instead, to put all children on the path to success, the most important thing is to get the basics right, which begins with early literacy. But the Annual Report finds that getting the basics right for one group of children is not always translating to getting it right for another.

The phonics screening check has had a major impact on the standard of early reading, with year-on-year increases in the proportion of children reaching the expected standard on the check. However, the percentage of children on free school meals (FSM) who reach the expected standard on the check is 12 percentage points lower than their more affluent peers. There should be no reason for this, because the check is one of reading mechanics. Schools that focus on early reading make a major difference. Others need to do more. To

support them, Ofsted will propose changes in the [new education inspection framework](#) that strengthen the focus on early reading.

There is also stark regional variation here, but not the usual pattern of advantage versus disadvantage. Areas such as Newham and Newcastle, which educate high proportions of disadvantaged children, excel in making sure that pupils eligible for FSM perform well on the phonics check. At the same time, more affluent areas like West Berkshire lag behind.

The Annual Report also highlights concerns raised by [Ofsted's local area SEND inspections](#). These have shown that provision for young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is too disjointed and inconsistent. Diagnoses are taking too long and are often inaccurate. Mental health needs are not supported sufficiently. The quality of education, health and care (EHC) plans is far too variable. Critically, the gap in performance and outcomes for children with SEND is widening between the best and worst local areas. Crucial to delivering a good service is having the right resources, a qualified workforce and strong leadership in order to be good or better. However, the Annual Report finds that in too many cases, the capacity for improvement does not exist.

There are almost 500 'stuck' schools across England that have been judged inadequate or requires improvement at every inspection since 2005. This means that some children may have been in a failing school for their entire time at secondary school. More outstanding schools and school leaders are needed to help these schools improve.

Across the country, turnaround rates for underperforming schools remain too slow. A lack of sponsor capacity means some schools have been left in limbo for over 18 months before joining a multi-academy trust (MAT). The Annual Report argues that the current halfway-house approach to academisation is not working and calls for incentives to be reinstated to encourage the best schools to become academies and to use their expertise to sponsor.

Ms Spielman continued:

As long as children are attending schools that are perpetually less than good, we have a problem. What makes the inequity even starker is that many of these schools are concentrated in particular parts of the country, serving the same demographic groups – often the white working class.

I make no apology for not giving these schools an easier judgement; I'd never want us to be saying that this education wouldn't do for Chelsea children, but it's good enough for Grimsby. The moment we allow for a different quality of education based on demographics is the moment we concede defeat in the battle for equality of opportunity. It would be the moment we wrote off the Einsteins, Mozarts and Brontes of the future who don't happen to grow up on the right side of the tracks.

Instead, we need a real focus on improving standards in areas and schools that lag behind. We need to inject capacity.

## Other areas of concern highlighted in the Annual Report

- [Between 2016 and 2017, 19,000 pupils dropped off school rolls between Years 10 and 11 and around half did not reappear on the roll of another state-funded school.](#) This is a huge cause for concern. Ofsted's new education inspection framework will empower schools to always put the child first, and it will allow inspectors to report on those schools that off-roll young people who might achieve less well.
- In the FE sector, there is potential for a dilution in the quality of apprenticeships. There are common issues around poor governance, low-quality teaching and not enough off-the-job training. Ofsted is also concerned about access to apprenticeships for students who leave school without a full level 2 qualification.
- Spending per student in an FE or sixth form college is now 11% lower than for pupils at secondary school. Ofsted is concerned about the college sector's financial sustainability and the impact that funding cuts can have on provision.
- In children's social care, funding for statutory services has largely been protected locally. However, reductions in funding for other areas, such as youth services, mean demand has been pushed downstream because LAs are less able to intervene early when young people need help.
- In some early years settings, children's physical development is being hindered by undue concerns about health and safety requirements; some level of risk is essential in childhood. Without it, children are denied opportunities to build muscular strength and dexterity.

In January, Ofsted will consult on the new education inspection framework and handbooks. This will give the sector a real opportunity to shape the future of inspection. The framework is being piloted throughout the autumn term until July 2019, with information and training sessions for schools running in parallel. Subject to the consultation, the new framework will take effect from September 2019.

## Research programme

Over the next year, Ofsted's research programme will explore many of the themes discussed in the Annual Report. This will include projects looking at:

- teacher workload and well-being
- managing the most challenging behaviour in schools
- how faith schools successfully navigate potential conflicts between their religious beliefs and equality legislation
- physical development in the early years curriculum
- the 16 to 19 curriculum
- curriculum knowledge and pedagogy in initial teacher education
- factors leading to good decisions for children in care
- creating the environments for great social work practice to thrive
- SEND in mainstream schools

In addition, Ofsted will be working with the Department for Education to look at 'stuck schools' and what they can do to improve.

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## **Press release: Funding to help improve the lives of those affected by alcohol**

A total of £10.5 million of funding is being allocated by Public Health England (PHE), to help improve the lives of adults and children impacted by alcohol, consisting of:

- £4.5 million innovation fund for local projects working with children and families
- £6 million capital fund to improve access to alcohol treatment in the community

A £4.5 million innovation fund, from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), managed by PHE, has today, 4 December 2018, been awarded to 9 projects across the country.

The winning projects have been selected for demonstrating a new and creative approach to reach and support families whose lives have been affected by alcohol.

In addition, PHE is announcing a call for bids for a share of a £6 million capital fund for local authorities, which can be used to improve services and facilities for people with alcohol problems. PHE is encouraging local authorities to submit an application to bid for money by 21 January 2019, with successful projects announced next spring and money being made available from 2019 to 2020.

It is estimated that there are 200,000 children in England living with 120,000 parents who have alcohol problems. PHE's recent [annual treatment statistics](#) show that there were 16,000 adults receiving treatment for alcohol who were living with children and a further 18,000 who are parents but not currently living with their children. The figures show that the vast majority

(82%) of children with parents receiving alcohol treatment weren't receiving support from children's social care.

The impact of having a parent with an alcohol problem on the lives of children can be devastating. An analysis of serious case reviews (where a child was seriously hurt or killed) found that 37% recorded alcohol as a contributing factor.

Alcohol is also often a major contributor to parental conflict, which can lead to a range of poor outcomes for children including being detrimental to their education and employment opportunities and harmful on their health. The government is committed to reducing conflict between parents and this funding forms part of a new 'reducing parental conflict programme' which encourages local areas across England to integrate approaches addressing parental conflict into local services for families.

Examples of areas awarded innovation funding are the Greater Manchester project which offers continued support for parents leaving prison and their children across 5 areas: Rochdale, Bolton, Bury, Salford, and Trafford; and in Portsmouth, where the project will provide a range of tailored services and interventions specific to individual families, including alcohol treatment, family counselling and support to reduce parental conflict.

Commenting on the innovation fund winning projects, Duncan Selbie, Chief Executive at PHE said:

There are about 200,000 children whose lives are often torn apart from living with a parent with alcohol problems, which often haunts them into adulthood and can lead to a lifetime of under-achievement and personal problems.

That is why I'm delighted to be announcing the 9 winners receiving funding, which will provide new and innovative ways of working to identify and reach out to these vulnerable children.

Steve Brine, Public Health Minister said:

Alcohol abuse can tear lives apart, not only for the people trapped in the grip of an addiction but for their children, who are often robbed of the support, comfort and structure they need from their parents. I am committed to finding new ways to help families in the midst of these heart-breaking situations.

Many children in this position suffer in silence – but the funds awarded to these councils today will help them identify those children sooner and offer them a vital lifeline. We are also investing more money to get parents into alcohol services to help free them of addictions once and for all.

Justin Tomlinson, Minister for Family Support, Housing and Child Maintenance at DWP, said:

This new funding will make a real difference to the lives of children of alcohol-dependent parents.

All young people deserve to feel safe and these new services will ensure thousands more get access to the support they need. I look forward to working closely with the Department of Health and Social Care on this fantastic and innovative programme, the first of its kind.

Cllr Ian Hudspeth, Chairman of the Local Government Association's Community Wellbeing Board, said:

This Innovation Fund is a terrific opportunity for councils to maximise their pioneering work to support families whose lives have been affected by alcohol.

The causes and the solutions for tackling alcohol misuse are multi-factorial. It requires close working with partners, imagination and hard work. However, when we get it right it can have a tremendous impact on the lives affected.

To support work between alcohol and drug services and children's social care, PHE has also today (Tuesday 4 December 2018) published new guidance for local authorities on safeguarding children with alcohol and drug dependent parents.

This document updates previous PHE guidance for local authorities on the importance of developing protocols between alcohol and drug treatment and children and family social care services.

The 9 projects of the Children of Alcohol Dependent Parents Innovation Fund are:

- Swindon: running a parenting programme for 840 parents over the course of the project, and providing support for 370 children through early help services, where parental alcohol use is identified
- Haringey: supporting vulnerable children and their alcohol dependent parents, with additional support from a specialist team
- West Sussex: providing pre-birth support to 50 families at high-risk of interventions from Children's Social Care and therapeutic support to children and young people, alongside treatment for parents
- Brighton and Hove: providing family-focused support by bridging the gap between adults and children services to better identify vulnerable and neglected children and their alcohol dependent parents
- Greater Manchester (Rochdale, Bolton, Bury, Salford, and Trafford): offering continued support for alcohol dependant parents leaving prison and their children across the 5 areas

- Portsmouth: delivering a tailored programme to support 160 families a year, including approximately 240 children
- North Tyneside: aiming to double the number of children who are identified as living with alcohol dependent parents and increase the number of these parents receiving treatment by over 50%
- Knowsley: training 1,000 professionals in identifying potentially alcohol dependent parents, and aim to see a 20% increase in the number of alcohol dependent parents accessing treatment over 12 months
- St Helens: working with local agencies to support around 270 families each year on a range of programmes

The £4.5 million innovation fund is part of a £6 million package of measures to support children of alcohol dependent parents which also includes:

- £1 million to fund national capacity building by NGOs to complement local activity, including through awareness raising and training programmes
- £500,000, which was announced at the end of last year, to expand helplines for children

## **Children of Alcohol Dependent Parents Innovation Fund**

PHE received 68 applications from local authorities who were asked in their proposal to set out how through innovative team working, such as placing social workers into alcohol treatment teams or alcohol treatment workers into children's social care, fewer families fall through the cracks and more children and families benefit from integrated care. They were also asked to detail their ambition of how they would reduce parental conflict in the families they are working with through this programme.

The application phase for the innovation fund was open from 22 May to 17 July 2018. The total available fund is £4.5 million over 3 financial years.

Payments to the successful projects are awarded as a grant, under section 31 of the Local Government Act.

## **Capital fund**

For further guidance and information about applying for the Capital Fund contact Tim McGregor [Tim.McGregor@phe.gov.uk](mailto:Tim.McGregor@phe.gov.uk).

This fund has been running since 2013 to 2014 and has allowed PHE to support 158 projects (at an average of £200 to £250,000 per project) supporting the recovery of people dependent on alcohol and drugs.

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# Press release: Faith Minister launches national tour to celebrate the role of faith communities

Faith Minister Lord Bourne today (4 December 2018) embarked on his latest national Faith Tour to shine a spotlight on the central role faith institutions play in building strong, resilient communities.

The tour – ‘Belief in communities: bridging divides and strengthening communities’ – will commence with a visit to the Highway of Holiness Church in Tottenham and will be followed by monthly flagship visits across the country to engage directly with faith communities.

This will include meeting volunteers and faith leaders to understand the key success factors that could be applied elsewhere.

Minister for Faith Lord Bourne said:

Large or small, faith communities are often at the heart of a local area – the glue that binds our society together.

The length and breadth of this country, faith institutions form community hubs and support centres, as well as places of worships.

The Highway of Holiness Church in Tottenham is a shining example of this – providing support to its community with a homeless shelter for those most in need.

Many faith-based organisations provide support to their community above and beyond their day-to-day work. Lord Bourne’s tour will serve to recognise and promote this, whilst strengthening and extending the positive impact many faith institutions have as this government continues to celebrate its faith communities.

This follows the launch of ‘[Belief in communities: bridging divides and strengthening communities](#)’. This report details Lord Bourne’s tour of 55 places of worship across 15 towns and cities throughout 2017 to 2018 and calls upon faith groups to ‘bridge the divide’ by strengthening inter faith networks.

## **Case study**

The Highway of Holiness Church, Tottenham is a community-oriented Evangelical Pentecostal church working to support the most vulnerable in our society. Pastor Alex set up a 24/7 homeless shelter in 2009.

Predominantly funded through donations from the congregation, the shelter has

helped 900 men in the 7 years that it has been open. The value of its work has been widely recognised with research showing that for every £1 invested in Highway House, £5 to £8 is returned to society.