

[News story: Newcastle seed business flourishes thanks to exporting](#)

Seedcell manufacture biodegradable pods filled with different vegetable or herb seeds, allowing customers to sustainably grow their own produce at home. Each pod is pushed into the soil, where the seeds get the correct amount of food and water to ensure germination.

Since 2017 the company has been working with advisers at the Department for International Trade (DIT), to help increase sales and target new overseas markets.

Its products are now sold in France, Malta and Italy, and Seedcell now has plans to export to the US and Australia within the next 12 months.

Launched in 2014 with just 1 employee, Managing Director Dan Robson now employs 3 full-time and 2 part-time members of staff thanks to the company's exporting success.

Dan Robson, said:

Exporting was a natural progression for the business, due to the UK weather. We decided to sell our products in places where sunshine is almost guaranteed and where people were more likely to be out enjoying their gardens.

A bad winter in the UK has had a direct impact on our sales, therefore exporting has been transformative for the business.

We worked with DIT to explore new territories and the team advised us on how we should adjust our packaging to suit overseas markets. Our main challenge was adapting to different languages, but thanks to DIT's advice, we found a solution by printing our instructions on each pod as an image, rather than a text description. This helped to give our products a universal 'language' that people in all markets could understand.

When we first started exporting, we had a lot of questions and initial doubts around selling overseas but DIT's experience and insights were invaluable. My main advice would be, don't walk before you run. Do your research and with the right support, you too could benefit from exporting.

As part of its [Exporting is GREAT campaign](#), DIT is currently showcasing 30+

UK businesses – from a range of sectors and regions – to inspire and support firms up and down the country to export.

David Coppock, Regional Director for the North East, said:

Seedcell is a great example of a business that is seeing growth thanks to selling its products abroad. We've been heavily involved with the business by providing support and advice throughout its entire exporting journey and are pleased to see how successful the company has been in new markets.

We are seeing businesses of all shapes and sizes across the North East region realise the endless benefits of exporting and have 19 dedicated International Trade Advisers across the region ready to help other business like Seedcell. If you think exporting might be right for your business, please get in touch today and see how we can support you.

Business looking for support should visit [great.gov.uk](https://www.great.gov.uk) which gives UK businesses access to millions of pounds' worth of potential overseas business, helping them start or increase exporting.

[Speech: Secretary of State speech at the National Association of Headteachers conference](#)

I'm delighted to join you here today, and for the opportunity to speak directly to so many heads and school leaders.

Since I started this job in January, one of my first priorities was to go out and visit schools, visit nurseries, visit colleges.

You can read a lot of papers and talk to a lot of officials in the civil service – but nothing beats meeting the people who bring education to life.

And, of course, no two schools are the same but what I've seen everywhere is this enormous passion, enormous level of commitment and dedication that you just don't see in every profession.

With so many teachers telling me how deeply they enjoy what they do. The creativity. The freedom. The joy of learning, helping to develop young minds.

Looking around this conference room, I know that all of you want to lead

great schools, to create a culture where teachers love their jobs and where children do their best.

As Secretary of State for Education, my simple ambition is for all children, whatever their background, to go to a good school where they are inspired to learn and can fulfil their potential.

I want us, together, to narrow the gap for the places left behind and provide better opportunities for the children who have the hardest start in life.

And in aiming for this I know that in education there is nothing more important than the people who are making it happen.

When I ask people to think back to their own days of school – about what they most remember from school, what made the difference for them, I have yet to hear anyone mention the smartboard. Or textbook, or a computer, or an exam. It is always Ms Smith or Mr Davies.

There are no great schools without great teachers and leaders.

And of course great schools thrive under great leaders – which is why I want to work with you. It's why I am determined to champion your profession.

Working with you to raise its status, helping to attract and retain more brilliant people to teach in our schools.

In short, I will do everything in my power to make sure teaching remains one of the most fulfilling jobs anyone can do.

One of my most urgent tasks is, therefore, to look at the barriers that can drive teachers, and leaders, out of the profession and may put people off in the first place.

Top of the list here is workload. Workload comes from different places.

Sometimes it can come from schools themselves, and policies on marking and data collection for example.

It can come directly from specific requirements set by government.

But it can also come indirectly from the pressures inherent in the accountability system.

And today I'm going to talk quite a lot about those pressures and about that system.

I don't need to tell anybody here that accountability is vital. Children only get one shot at an education and we owe it to them that they can get the best, where they are being let down we need to act quickly – so no one ends up left behind.

But, that sort of action is rarely needed.

In fact, standards in our classrooms are higher than ever. 89% of schools,

and 90% of your primary schools, are rated Good or Outstanding by Ofsted.

This is not to say that the system that we have right now is working perfectly.

We all know that if we went outside this room and tried explaining to someone not in the education sector, about Regional Schools Commissioners, Ofsted, MATs, coasting, below the floor – they would look pretty blank.

But what I've found from speaking to many of you these last few months is that even within the profession and within the sector, there can be confusion.

Confusion about the different actors within the system...who has the power to do what and on what basis, the exact circumstances that could lead to enforced structural or leadership change at a school.

All of this means that the spectre of our accountability system can loom large over schools.

Fear of inspection. Fear of a single set of bad results. Fear of being forcibly turned into an academy – all of this can create stress and anxiety, and that can percolate through the staff.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we can do better than this.

As members of NAHT you are, of course, doing your own thinking about accountability, and I want to work closely on this with you.

But I also wanted to come here today with something that I think itself is very important.

School leaders need better clarity on how the accountability system will operate, the consequences that can flow from it – and the roles of the actors within it.

So I am publishing today a statement that sets out key principles for how I see the system working in future – the next step will be consulting with you and colleagues on the details.

I urge everyone to read the statement in full but in essence it comes down to this:

We have many excellent schools in this country – schools with great leaders, great teachers.

And I have a clear message to these schools and their leaders – we, I trust you to get on with the job.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I trust that you know better than us – better than me, better than the Department for Education – how to improve your schools. You don't need government getting in your way.

We will, of course, take action where a school is failing – on those rare occasions where, frankly, the leadership isn't there to make the improvements needed then we must act decisively and make structural change where it's necessary.

But these are the measures of last resort – and I believe every school must be absolutely clear on the rare circumstances when this would happen – and when it wouldn't.

Ofsted is the body that can provide an independent, rounded judgement of a school's performance – data alone can't tell the whole story.

So I want to move to a system where, when it comes to educational underperformance, we only enforce academy conversion, leadership change or changing the trust a school is part of when there has been an Ofsted Inadequate judgement.

So that means we will not be forcibly turning schools into academies unless there is that judgement.

Now, I firmly believe that becoming an academy can bring enormous benefits to schools and their pupils.

Increasingly, becoming an academy also means schools coming together in a Multi Academy Trust, sharing expertise, working collaboratively, driving improvements.

Hundreds of schools every year voluntarily choose that route – to become an academy and join a Multi Academy Trust. And I want this to be a positive choice for more and more schools.

So I want to move away from forced academisation being seen as this punitive threat that can also hang over schools that are not failing.

But we must have a system that does more than just deal with failure. Which is why we will work to identify schools at risk... But we will also do so in the right way, making a clear offer of support for the current school leadership.

This support would come from Teaching Schools or other high quality school improvement providers – people with a proven track record.

I intend this to replace the current confusing system of having both a 'below-the-floor' standard and 'coasting' standards for performance.

There will be a single, transparent data trigger at which schools will be offered support in this way. We will consult on how this single measure should work.

And as I said earlier, school leaders above this threshold will know that they have full freedom to get on with their job – without interference.

What does this mean for how we work with schools?

I know that right now schools can sometimes feel accountable to multiple masters.

Regional School Commissioner representatives going into schools and performing visits that can feel a lot like inspections – making additional requests for data.

And that is something that comes about for well-intentioned reasons. But it can be confusing for schools. And I'm afraid it plays its part in helping to create a culture that drives some unnecessary workload for you and your teachers.

Ladies and Gentlemen, this will end.

Ofsted inspectors are the only people who should be inspecting schools – the clue is in the name.

Commissioners commission.

Ofsted inspectors inspect.

Which means no more RSC initiated visits that can feel like inspections with those extra demands for data, adding to bureaucracy – more time for schools to get on with the job that they're doing well.

I've been talking here about the standard of education provided in schools.

I will also be looking at how we can support schools that are in financial trouble or take action where there has been a serious breakdown of governance. I will be setting up far more robust oversight and challenge when it comes to the financial performance of academy trusts.

And there must also be improvements in the governance of MATs as they grow in size and number, and how we, on behalf of the public, hold them to account – and again, we'll seek your views on this.

The need to bear down on workload is not a new thing.

In 2014, the Department for Education launched the Workload Challenge. Thousands took part and, overwhelmingly, people talked about the sheer volume of lesson planning, marking and data management which was too often being driven by fear of inspection rather than for the benefit of the child.

Since then we have worked closely with Ofsted and others to bust myths about inspections.

I recently made a video with a clear message with myself alongside Amanda Spielman and others – committing to schools that you won't be judged for cutting back on excessive bureaucracy.

And let me say again – neither Ofsted or DfE require you to do things like annotated seating plans, triple marking, deep marking, dialogic marking, colour coded marking, excessive monitoring of a child's progress...

The video has now been watched more than 75,000 times, and I hope you will all, not only watch it but share it. And if anyone does tell you that Ofsted require this or that, please show them that video too.

There's more to come from us on this. One area which many of you have raised with me is how the pressure to collect assessment data and evidence of progress has grown dramatically over the years.

In response, I have established a workload advisory group to look into this issue and publish recommendations.

And I am pleased to announce that this group will be chaired by Professor Becky Allen and the membership will include teachers and school leaders, as well as Ofsted and the unions – and I very much welcome NAHT's commitment to take part.

I also want to urge heads and leaders to play their part.

As I visit more and more schools, I discover that there isn't a uniform story on workload – teachers' experiences are very different; and schools' policies and practices are very different too.

I urge you to ask questions like: Do we need this much data collection? What does this extra time spent marking add?

And yes, Government has responsibility too.

In our drive to raise standards these last seven years, we have made great strides together.

However, the pace of change has been fast and that is why I've said that there will be no more new statutory tests or assessments for your schools, beyond those already announced, for the rest of this parliament as I've already announced.

And I will continue to work with NAHT and others to make sure that schools successfully embed and have the time to adapt to the changes that have already been announced and are coming through.

Of course, all of us here have a shared goal of making sure teaching remains an attractive, fulfilling profession.

Yes, teacher numbers are at an all time high and more people are returning to teaching this year – but, still, we know that staff turnover is a real challenge for schools.

Actually not just for schools. With record employment there has been increased demand for talented graduates altogether.

We've brought in schemes like the student loan reimbursement pilot for new graduates.

But we need to go further and that's why over the coming months we will be

developing an overall recruitment and retention strategy.

We will take an unflinching look at the things that discourage people from coming into teaching or make them consider leaving.

We will also look at how we support teachers to get better at what they do and hone their expertise as well as career progression, whether they want to get into leadership as you have, or stay and develop in the classroom.

I particularly want to support teachers early in their careers, when I know some new teachers feel a bit like having been chucked into the deep end before they've really learnt to swim.

And so I'm pleased we are setting out our initial response to our QTS consultation today.

Following strong support, I'm happy to announce that we will be introducing an enhanced offer of support for new teachers – including extending the induction period to two years.

And we will work with the profession to develop a new early career framework that will set out all the training and mentoring a teacher is entitled to in those first years.

I am committed to working with the profession to understand how to deliver these proposals and the resources needed to make them work.

It's not just the early years though – I want teachers to be able to develop and progress through clearer career pathways, including for those, as I said, who want to stay in the classroom as experts.

You've said you want professional qualifications including in a specialist subject – so we will work with the sector to support these new qualifications.

I'm also announcing today something that has been called for by the profession for some time – a new £5 million sabbatical pilot.

This will allow more established teachers to do something else for a period, whether that's working in an industry relevant to their field or doing academic research – or indeed coming to DfE to help shape policy.

Now, finally, I want to turn to an issue which I know is top of your minds.

I certainly don't pretend I can just stand up here at this podium and say a few words that will solve all of the challenges that you face in schools today.

It is true that schools get more funding than they used to but it is also true that society asks much more of schools than we did a generation ago.

It is true that if you compare our schools to other countries... according to the latest OECD data, per pupil, our schools get more government funding than

countries such as Germany.

But there have also been real cost pressures on schools – pensions, National Insurance.

So, yes, it is challenging for schools making the numbers add up and I do pledge to work with you to bear down on some of the cost pressures as best as we can.

Working closely with you to make sure schools do get the best deals possible and can target precious resources at the frontline.

I want a close, collaborative relationship with you, with this profession, whether on reforming accountability, or reducing the data burden, strengthening professional development or reducing cost pressures.

I'm clear that our retention and recruitment strategy would be nothing without your voices, your expertise... heads, teachers, support staff and unions.

We have a powerful opportunity to raise the status of this profession, for teaching to remain one of society's most fulfilling roles...meaning that every child has the chance to fulfil their potential.

And I pledge to work with you all to make this a reality.

[News story: Applications invited for the role of Non-Executive Director for MHRA](#)

Ministers are seeking to make three appointments to the board of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). This includes a NED to chair the Audit, Risk and Assurance Committee (ARAC), one NED who will bring commercial expertise, and a NED to act as a patient, lay-person/carer representative.

MHRA regulates medicines, medical devices and blood components for transfusion in the UK. It plays a leading role in protecting and improving public health and supports innovation through scientific research and development.

Role and Responsibilities

As a Non-Executive Director you will:

- Provide independent counsel, support and constructive challenge to the

Executive.

- Maintain oversight of the Agency's operational effectiveness and its relationship with other bodies, including appropriate and constructive relationships with stakeholders.
- Contribute to the development of the Agency's strategic objectives, ensuring that they are reflected in its plans and regularly reviewed.
- Monitor the performance of the Corporate Executive Team, challenging them on the delivery of the Agency's business and corporate plans.
- Provide assurance of the highest standards of corporate governance and public accountability.

For more information on this role, including the qualities required, you are invited to read the [full appointment details on the Centre for Public Appointments website](#).

Fatality notice: MOD confirms the death of Corporal Steven Wainwright

Corporal Steven Wainwright with his family.

Corporal Steven Wainwright died on Tuesday 1 May after being involved in a road traffic collision on the Akrotiri Sovereign Base Area in Cyprus. The incident is under investigation.

Cpl Wainwright enlisted into the RAF in 2006. Following successful completion of basic training at RAF Halton he went on to complete trade training at RAF Cosford (formally the Defence College of Aeronautical Engineering (DCAE)), graduating in October 2006. He then undertook his first posting to RAF Kinloss, working as part of the Nimrod Line Squadron until July 2008. Upon completion of his Trade Ability Tests, he was promoted to Senior Aircraftman in December 2006. Following his first tour, he returned to DCAE Cosford for further training to qualify as a Technician, where he was subsequently assigned to RAF Marham to support Tornado operations. He remained there until December 2012 when he was posted to No. 6 Squadron, RAF Leuchars until June 2014. He then moved with the Squadron as part of a rebasing programme to RAF Lossiemouth where he has served ever since. He was successful on his trade promotion board for the rank of Cpl in October 2017.

Group Captain Andrew Dickens OBE, Commanding Officer 903 Expeditionary Air Wing said:

Our deepest condolences go to Cpl Steven Wainwright's family and friends at what is a terrible, tragic time. He was a popular member of No. 6 Squadron, who are currently deployed as part of 903 Expeditionary Air Wing based at RAF Akrotiri in Cyprus. As a highly skilled aircraft technician, Cpl Wainwright was making a key

contribution to Operation Shader in ensuring Typhoon aircraft could complete the challenging mission against Daesh. Cpl Wainwright was a dedicated professional who had served his country with distinction. All our thoughts are now with Cpl Wainwright's family, friends and colleagues as they come to terms with his tragic death.

Wing Commander William Cooper, Officer Commanding No. 6 Squadron said:

Cpl Wainwright was an unfailingly professional technician who had an incredible passion for his family, his work and life in the Royal Air Force. He was a man who motivated and lifted everybody he interacted with at RAF Lossiemouth, especially on No. 6 Squadron. A fighter squadron is a very tight unit and Cpl Wainwright embodied all the qualities to make that possible. He was a mentor to those both more senior and more junior and by sheer force of personality produced results in people others could not.

No task was too daunting or too challenging, he took adversity in his stride and, as a result, No. 6 Squadron is a far happier place and more effective fighting unit. Every job, every aircraft see-off, every mentoring role was conducted with the same cheery personality and calm professionalism. Unwavering dedication to operations was typical of Cpl Wainwright, be that at home on Quick Reaction Alert or overseas on Operation Shader. His shoes cannot be filled and he will be greatly missed by everybody on No. 6 Squadron, the thoughts of all of us on are with Cpl Wainwright's family at this incredibly difficult time.

Squadron Leader Chris Harris, Senior Engineering Officer No. 6 Squadron said:

Always with a smile to share, even at the end of the hardest night shift, Steve was renowned for picking up morale with his infectiously positive approach to life. This unwaveringly positive determination transferred into his outstanding professional dedication, where he took justifiable pride in being one of the best engineers on the Squadron. Steve Wainwright was one of the first people I met on the Squadron, his characteristic good humour evident in our very first discussion where he introduced himself with his typical comedic style. Respected and admired across every trade on No. 6 Squadron and beyond, Steve will be sorely missed by all and our thoughts are with his family at this time.

Warrant Officer David Clegg, No. 6 Squadron Detachment Warrant Officer said:

Full of charisma and highly respected by everyone, Stevie was an exceptionally friendly individual with a great sense of humour. As an aircraft engineer, he was one of the best and it was an absolute

pleasure to work alongside him. His affectionate nature and loveable character shone through in everything he achieved and he will be sadly missed by all. Our thoughts are with his family at this sad time.

Group Captain, Jim Walls, Station Commander RAF Lossiemouth said:

Cpl Wainwright was a member of our family here at RAF Lossiemouth, we all feel his loss deeply. He was a highly skilled individual who was a key part of our team. I always enjoyed the gift of his upbeat attitude. I particularly respected him for his values and approaches as a family man. We are all thinking of his loved ones at this tragic time.

Press release: Blitz on illegal fishing for Bank Holiday Weekend

The officers will work with the police and Angling Trust Voluntary Bailiffs to make sure anyone fishing is obeying the law including fishing in waters that are open to anglers, using the right tackle and equipment, and having a valid fishing licence.

Bank Holiday weekends are a great opportunity for families to get out and do some fishing on our waterways and the Environment Agency is keen to ensure everyone is enjoying themselves and doing the right thing.

Kevin Austin, Deputy Director Agriculture, Fisheries and the Natural Environment, Environment Agency said:

The Environment Agency conducts enforcement operations throughout the year to protect fish stocks and improve fisheries.

Our enforcement officers, Angling Trust Voluntary Bailiffs and police are out there to make sure everyone is fishing legally this weekend. Anyone caught can expect to face prosecution.

Our work is intelligence-led, meaning we target known hotspots and act on reports of illegal fishing.

Is your local fishing spot open for fishing?

Anglers are reminded that it is currently the closed season for coarse fishing and fishing for coarse fish on rivers and streams is not permitted.

This is done to protect breeding fish, helping to safeguard stocks for the future. However, there are still plenty of places anglers can wet a line.

Anglers are encouraged to check which waterways are open to fishing. They can visit [fishinginfo](#) to find more information.

There are nearly 500 Angling Trust Voluntary Bailiffs doing a great job keeping watch on their local rivers and working alongside local police. However, the Environment agency is also asking the public to report any suspicious activity.

Money from rod licence sales is invested in England's fisheries, and is used to fund a wide range of projects to improve facilities for anglers including; protecting stocks, restoring fish stocks through restocking, eradicate invasive species, and fish habitat improvements. Fishing licence money is also used to fund the Angling Trust to provide information about fishing and to encourage participation in the sport.

You can check local fishing byelaws and get your fishing licence direct from [GOV.UK](#)

People are urged to report illegal fishing to the Environment Agency's incident hotline on 0800 807060, or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.