

Press release: Annual report of the Chief Schools Adjudicator for England

The annual report of the Chief Adjudicator Ms Shan Scott, to the Secretary of State for Education, covering the period 1 September 2016 to 31 August 2017 is published today (8 February 2018). The report records the progress made by admission authorities in England in complying fully with the [School Admissions Code](#) and achieving fair access to schools for all children.

In her report, Ms Scott states that the main admissions rounds for entry to schools works well and serves well the interests of looked-after and previously looked-after children, those with disabilities and special needs or who are vulnerable for other reasons. She is less confident that the needs of children who need a place outside the normal admissions round are so well met and is concerned that some children, particularly the more vulnerable, spend more time out of school than they should.

Concerns about admission arrangements continue to make up the largest part of the work of the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) and accounted for 100 of the total of 163 new cases of all types referred to OSA.

The Chief Adjudicator reports many positives in achieving fair access to schools for all children while highlighting areas in which admissions procedures can be strengthened. She notes that:

- local authorities report that fair access protocols typically work well and do much to support timely admission to school
- more schools are giving priority in their oversubscription criteria to children eligible for the pupil premium and service premium and these cover all age ranges, rural and urban schools, large and small schools and different categories of schools
- clarity and fairness are at the heart of sound admission arrangements. Clearly written admission arrangements that parents understand are least likely to be the subject of successful objections

The Chief Adjudicator said:

In this my second annual report as Chief Adjudicator, I have been particularly pleased to report that the main admissions round is working effectively and to recognise some good practice seen by adjudicators in the course of our work. It remains the case though that some school admission arrangements fail to comply with what the law requires.

The total number of cases referred to the OSA was lower than in recent years and objections to admission arrangements continue to form the largest part of our work. As in previous years, parents were the single largest group of objectors, accounting for about

half of all objections.

I am grateful for the work done by adjudicators, our administrative staff and legal advisers, and for their support. The OSA aims to consider each case referred to us impartially, honestly and objectively and in full accordance with the legislation that governs our powers and duties and I am confident that all my colleagues have done everything possible to meet that aim. I am confident too that in their dealings with parents, schools, academy trusts, religious bodies, local authorities and others, adjudicators and OSA staff appreciate how important the matters raised are to those concerned and that they deal sensitively and fairly with all.

1. Read the [OSA 2016 to 2017 annual report](#).
2. Ms Shan Scott was appointed as an adjudicator in 2013 and to the post of Chief Adjudicator on 4 April 2016.
3. There are currently [10 adjudicators](#), including the Chief Adjudicator. All are part-time and paid only for the work they are asked to undertake.
4. Adjudicators resolve differences over the interpretation and application of legislation and guidance on school admissions and statutory proposals concerning school organisation.

In relation to all state-funded schools, adjudicators:

- rule on objections to and referrals about determined school admission arrangements

In relation to maintained schools, adjudicators:

- decide on requests to vary admission arrangements
 - resolve disputes relating to school organisation proposals
 - resolve disputes on the transfer and disposal of non playing field land and assets
 - determine appeals from admission authorities against the intention of the local authority to direct the admission of a particular pupil
5. The Chief Adjudicator can also be asked by the Secretary of State to provide advice and undertake other relevant tasks.
 6. The Office of the Schools Adjudicator is a tribunal and was supervised by the Administrative Justice and Tribunals Council until its abolishment in August 2013. Once published, decisions can only be challenged through the courts.
 7. Adjudicators do not deal with complaints from parents whose child has not been offered a place at a particular school.
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[News story: Apprenticeship diversity is going from strength to strength](#)

Set up to champion apprenticeships and diversity amongst employers, BT, Shropshire Council, Nottingham City Homes, the Royal Air Force, Walsall Council, Vets4Pets, My KindaFuture, Colas Rail, Christeys and Bombardier have all recently joined the network.

These employers have all committed to encourage more people from underrepresented groups – including individuals with a learning difficulty or disability, from disadvantaged areas, from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities and Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Manufacturing (STEM) careers – to consider apprenticeships.

Existing members, including the BBC, Kier Group, Yorkshire Water, Rolls Royce, Glaxo Smith Klein (GSK) and BAE Systems are already making an impact on diversity in apprenticeships, through positively promoting the benefits of apprenticeships with visits to thousands of schools and looking at the recruitment, selection, and progression of apprentices.

To mark the growing impact of the Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network (ADCN), a short film featuring Sue Husband, Director of the National Apprenticeship Service and Helen Grant MP, is being launched.

[10 new members sees the Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network continue to grow](#)

Helen Grant MP and Chair of the Apprenticeship Diversity Champions Network, said:

Apprenticeships offer a real ladder of life changing opportunity to individuals, allowing each to reach their full potential through committed employment and earning whilst they learn. It is crucially important that these opportunities are made available to people of all backgrounds.

Each employer who joins our network is sending out a loud message to other employers and individuals about the transformative impact apprenticeships can have on business, engendering loyalty and delivering the bespoke skills required for their workforce.

I am delighted to welcome our new employers to our growing network, together we will make a difference by creating the most diverse and inclusive apprenticeships possible.

Steven Stewart, Apprenticeship Programme Lead from GSK added:

As soon as I heard about ADCN I thought it was a fantastic mission and I really wanted to be part of it. As someone who did not have a straightforward path to reach my current role, I am passionate about supporting people from diverse backgrounds and helping them succeed.

I have seen the benefits of having a diverse apprenticeship programme at GSK and we are continually working hard to ensure that our scheme is accessible to everybody. One of our pledges is to work with experts to review social mobility and see how we can benchmark this to understand our current state. I am looking forward to learning from the group and taking this knowledge back to GSK to support our programme”.

Employers interested in joining the Apprenticeships Diversity Champions Network should visit our [page on GOV.UK](#).

[Press release: New projects see UK space firms tackle Southeast Asian challenges](#)

The Philippines pictured from space. Credit: ESA

The harmful effects of tropical forest fires affect over 20 million people in Southeast Asia, having a negative impact on people’s health as well as contributing to global CO2 emissions. Many fires occur over drained peatland areas and this project in Indonesia and Malaysia will use satellites to map peat conditions, even when under a forest canopy. Monitoring water levels in this way will enable the risk of fire to be significantly reduced.

The second project being funded will see earth observation data being used as a dengue outbreak early warning system in Vietnam. Early detection will enable public health authorities to mobilise resources to those most in need. The project will also provide forecasts of dengue fever under a range of climate change scenarios. By linking earth observation data with climate forecasting and a land-surface model the impacts of various elements (such as water availability, land-use, climate), on the likelihood of future dengue epidemics can be predicted for the first time.

Satellite technology and data will also be used to help the Philippine government tackle illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in its waters. The work aims to support the sustainability of the fisheries sector and the 4 million people who rely on it for their livelihood. The project will use a

wide variety of data sources, including satellite data to understand the location, time and behaviour of specific vessels at sea.

Nicola Willey, South East Asia Director for Science and Innovation at the British High Commission Singapore, said: “Tropical fires, dengue outbreaks and illegal fishing are problems affecting countless people across this region. It’s great to see that the UK’s world-leading research and technology is being used to positively impact on so many people’s lives through working with partners across Southeast Asia.”

About the International Partnership Programme

The [UK Space Agency’s International Partnership Programme](#) uses UK space expertise to deliver innovative solutions to real world problems across the globe. This helps some of the world’s poorest countries, while building effective partnerships that can lead to growth opportunities for British companies.

The successful projects, worth £38 million in total, are led by a diverse range of organisations from the UK’s growing space sector, from large companies such as Inmarsat and CGI, to start-ups such as Guildford-based Earth-i. The UK Space Agency and industry are working together to grow the UK’s share of the global space market to 10% by 2030.

UK Science Minister Sam Gyimah said:

“The UK’s space sector is going from strength to strength. It pioneers new technology and provides jobs for 40,000. Today I can announce that the space sector’s capabilities are being put to use to tackle some of the world’s biggest challenges.

“The UK Space Agency’s International Partnership Programme will help developing countries tackle big issues like disaster relief and disease control, while showcasing the services and technology on offer from our leading space businesses.”

The International Partnership Programme is part of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy’s (BEIS) Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF): a £1.5 billion fund from the UK Government, which supports cutting-edge research and innovation on global issues affecting developing countries.

First round projects

There are 22 existing projects already delivering benefits, including a partnership between Inmarsat and the Philippine government to reduce the impact of natural disasters using satellite communications, which was called into action in December and January when tropical storms killed hundreds of people and displaced tens of thousands more to evacuation centres. The project used British technology and expertise to help relief workers get information in and out of the disaster zones which greatly increase the effectiveness of the response effort, helping them save lives and restore

critical infrastructure.

Rupert Pearce, CEO of Inmarsat, said:

“Inmarsat was originally founded to save lives at sea and we are proud that, almost 40 years later, our robust, reliable satellite communication services are deployed throughout the world to assist following natural disasters and humanitarian crises, wherever they occur.

“With the invaluable support of the UK Space Agency, we have been able to pre-equip disaster response teams in the Philippines with vital satellite communications solutions. This meant that when two deadly cyclones hit the country over a two week period, resulting in loss of life and serious damage to terrestrial communications infrastructure, Philippine authorities were able to utilise Inmarsat’s mobile connectivity services to assess the damage and identify the needs of those regions most affected.”

All IPP projects are match-funded by consortium members and international partners to ensure maximum value for money. The programme is fully compliant with Official Development Assistance (ODA) with the Independent Commission for Aid Impact recently reporting that the UK Space Agency had developed robust procedures for ensuring ODA eligibility and was thorough in its ODA compliance screening.

Details of all ten global projects announced today can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

More information about the UK Space Agency International Partnership Programme can be found at this [link](#).

[News story: New projects see UK space firms tackle global challenges](#)

Malaysia pictured from space. Credit: ESA.

The Industrial Strategy highlights the importance of bringing together the UK’s world-class research with business investment to develop technologies and industries of the future that benefit society, as well as our economy.

[International Partnership Programme](#)

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The UK Space Agency is also funding five Business Applications Ambassadors to work with industry across the UK. The Agency already supports a network of business incubators and the new ambassadors will advise on business applications and other opportunities in the UK.

Full list of new projects:

1) British Geological Survey, Nottingham: Modelling Exposure Through Earth Observation Routines (METEOR): EO-based Exposure, Nepal and Tanzania Grant: £2.8 million Target countries: Nepal and Tanzania (test countries), rolling out to all 48 Least Developed ODA countries Theme: Disaster Management

At present, there is a poor understanding of population exposure in developing countries, which causes major challenges when making Disaster Risk Management decisions. METEOR takes a step-change in the application of Earth Observation exposure data by developing and delivering more accurate levels of population exposure to natural hazards. Providing new consistent data to governments, town planners and insurance providers will promote welfare and economic development in these countries and better enable them to respond to the hazards when they do occur.

2) Satellite Applications Catapult, Didcot: Space Enabled Monitoring of Illegal Gold Mining Grant: £3.3 million Target country: Colombia Theme: Mining

This project is about improving detection and efficiency in monitoring illegal gold mining in remote forested areas in Colombia. The project will make use of freely available Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) data, and incorporate machine-learning techniques to show suspected areas of illegal mining, in a user-friendly web portal. The project will support the promotion of safe and secure working environments for all workers, and a reduction in the health-related effects from the high rates of mercury contamination associated with illegal mining.

3) EARTH-i Ltd, Guildford: ACCORD Grant: £2.7 million Target countries: Kenya and Rwanda Theme: Agriculture

Coffee is the second most traded commodity globally, with revenues directly benefitting farmers in developing countries. Despite this, in Kenya and Rwanda 67% and 80% of people respectively live in poverty, including most smallholder coffee farmers. Unpredictable weather, pests, diseases, nutrient depletion and other factors limit earning potential by hitting coffee quality and quantity. ACCORD will deliver advice from satellite Earth Observation to help smallholder coffee farmers make significant improvements to crop quality and yield, providing them with access to timely, geo-targeted advice through a simple mobile application. This will allow smallholder farmers to achieve higher incomes for their work, improving quality of life for their families.

4) Rothamsted Research, Harpenden: EcoProMIS Grant: £3.9 million Target Country: Colombia Theme: Agriculture

The EcoProMIS project aims to help Colombian rice and oil palm farmers to improve productivity and stabilise incomes, allowing them to compete globally whilst responding to climate change and producing responsibly. The project uses satellite Earth Observation alongside environmental and crop data to research the impact of crop and ecosystem management on biodiversity, greenhouse gas emissions and productivity. The outcome will be a partnership of farmers, research institutes and industry experts that creates comprehensive sets of crop and ecosystem data. This data will be made freely available for the Colombian partners to improve the environmental, technical and financial efficiency of their processes. It will also provide information to insurance firms, government food processors and further beneficiaries to create income for sustainable knowledge.

5) HR Wallingford, Wallingford: An integrated dengue early warning system driven by Earth Observations in Vietnam Grant: £4.1 million Target Country: Vietnam Theme: Health

This work will provide a tool that enables advance warning of likely dengue outbreaks, allowing public health authorities to mobilise resources to those most in need. The project will also provide forecasts of dengue fever under a range of climate change scenarios. The system will link Earth Observation data with climate forecasting and a land-surface model to predict for the first time the impacts of various elements (such as water availability, land-use, climate), on the likelihood of future dengue epidemics. The dengue forecasting tool will also include a water assessment module, delivering the additional benefit of improving water management in Vietnam's transboundary river basins.

6) Janus TCD, Stourbridge: Improved Situational Awareness In Fisheries (ISAIF) Grant: £5.5 million Target Country: The Philippines Theme: Illegal Fishing

The ISAIF project will use satellite technology to help the Philippine government tackle Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated (IUU) fishing in its waters. This project aims to halt the decline of a fisheries sector that employs more than 4 million people. The project will use a wide variety of data sources, including satellite data to understand the location, time and behaviour of specific vessels at sea. This will be combined with a satellite navigation application with an authentication tool through which Philippine fisherfolk confirm their compliance, creating a new digital barrier to IUU fishers within the supply chain. Outcomes will include better monitoring and enforcement of IUU by the Philippine government, improved safety, security and economic productivity for Philippine fisherfolk, benefits to the Philippine economy, and an improvement in the international reputation of Philippine fisheries.

7) CGI, Leatherhead: Peatland Assessment in SE Asia by Satellite (PASSES) Grant: £2 million Target Countries: Indonesia, Malaysia Theme: Forestry

Tropical forest fires affect over 20 million people in South East Asia, leading to significant deteriorations in public health and premature mortalities as well as contributing to global CO2 emissions and other negative environmental impacts. Many fires occur over drained peatland areas. This project will use satellite observations and measurements to map peat condition, even when under a forest canopy. By monitoring water levels and improving hydrology in the peatland areas, the risk of fire can be dramatically reduced. By using freely available observations from satellites through the EU Copernicus programme and use of emerging industrial hosted processing capabilities, PASSES will prove that peatland monitoring is a cost effective way to reduce forest fires.

8) e0sphere Limited, Didcot: SIBELIUs: Improved resilience for Mongolian herding communities using satellite derived services Grant: £1.6 million Target Country: Mongolia Theme: Disaster Management / Insurance

Mongolia is a large country with around 30% of its population dependant on livestock herding who are exposed to extreme weather events (dzuds). Dzuds are increasingly exacerbated by climate change and are highly damaging to Mongolia's economy and devastating for the poorest herders. A typical dzud can impact tens of thousands of herders, many of who will lose all their livestock leaving them in extreme poverty, with associated impacts for the wider economy. The SIBELIUs project will provide greater dzud-resilience for herders by providing the Mongolian Research Institute of Meteorology, Hydrology and Environment with new sources of satellite data, plus a geo-spatial database for distributing new and upgraded environmental products to key stakeholders supporting herding communities.

9) United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR): CommonSensing Grant: £9.6 million Target Countries: Fiji, The Solomon Islands, Vanuatu

The overall aim of CommonSensing is to improve resilience towards climate change, including disaster risk reduction, and contribute to sustainable development in three selected Commonwealth Small Island Developing States (SIDS): Fiji, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. The project will combine earth observation data to provide stakeholders with access to important information regarding disaster risks (including disaster risk planning, food security, climate risk and other environmental concerns). This information will be accessible to beneficiaries through a web portal and mobile applications. CommonSensing project will create long-term investment loops, define priorities for future climate funds proposals and ensure a sustainable service-platform, running three years after IPP project end.

10) HR Wallingford, Wallingford: Minimising the risk of tailings dams failures through the use of remote sensing data Grant: £2.7 million Target Country: Peru Theme: Mining

Tailing dams are earth embankments used to store toxic mine waste and effluent which can be more than 100m high. Their rate of failure is high, due to poor design regulations and less rigorous construction methods than for normal water-retaining dams, especially in low-income countries. This project will use Earth Observation and Global Navigation Satellite System

technologies to allow for more effective monitoring of the dams and therefore quicker action can be taken to avoid the tailings dams failures. The project will help to reduce damage to ecosystem services downstream of mines upon which many vulnerable communities rely for both their source of water and their livelihoods.

[News story: Third party puppy sales: Michael Gove launches call for evidence on ban](#)

A ban on third party puppy sales is to be explored by the government as part of a package of reforms to drive up animal welfare standards, the Environment Secretary Michael Gove has announced today.

A [call for evidence](#) is launched today seeking views on a possible ban on third party sales, which would mean anyone looking to buy or adopt a dog will either deal directly with the breeder or with one of the nation's many animal rehousing centres.

A [raft of measures to crack down on unscrupulous puppy breeders](#) set out by the Prime Minister in December have also been laid in Parliament today.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

We need to do everything we can to make sure the nation's much loved pets get the right start in life. From banning the sale of underage puppies to tackling the breeding of dogs with severe genetic disorders, we are cracking down on sellers who have a total disregard for their dogs' welfare.

This is a further step to raise the bar on animal welfare standards. We are also introducing mandatory CCTV in all slaughterhouses and increasing maximum prison sentences tenfold for animal abusers.

The legislation being put before parliament today will come into force later this year, including:

- Banning licensed sellers from dealing in puppies and kittens under the age of eight weeks;
- Ensuring that licensed dog breeders show puppies alongside their mother

before a sale is made;

- Tackling the sale of weak underage puppies and the breeding of unhealthy dogs and dogs with severe genetic disorders;
- Introducing compulsory licensing for anyone in the business of breeding and selling dogs;
- Requiring puppy sales to be completed in the presence of the new owner, preventing online sales where prospective buyers have not seen the animal first;
- Insisting licensed dog breeders can only sell puppies they have bred themselves.

These plans have been widely welcomed by charities.

RSPCA deputy chief executive Chris Wainwright said:

We are delighted that Defra is considering a ban on third party sales of puppies. We believe that cracking down on unscrupulous traders, who put profit ahead of animal welfare, will provide much-needed protection for prospective pet owners and puppies.

We have always said that an end to third party sales alone would not be enough to end the puppy trade crisis and we are pleased that this is being looked at alongside enhanced licensing conditions for breeders which will come into force later this year.

Together, we hope these moves will offer better protection to puppies and their parents and also reduce the number of families duped by rogue traders in this illegal multi-million-pound trade.

Mayhew rehoming centre's CEO Caroline Yates said:

We are really pleased today to hear that there will be a call for evidence on banning third party sales of animals. It is a real issue that animal welfare organisations are very concerned about. Getting a dog or cat is not a commercial business and these big puppy farms have no regard for their health or welfare.

Owners are being duped into buying animals from these places and the resulting sickness and poor treatment means there is also an additional burden on animal welfare charities that are mopping up the problem.

Caroline Kisko, Kennel Club Secretary, said:

The Kennel Club welcomes Defra's announcement as a crucial step forward to tackle the cruel puppy farming industry. The Kennel Club, whose own regulations explicitly ban the sale of puppies to third parties, has long called for an end to the sale of puppies in pet shops and by other third party retailers.

Third party sales are an underhand practice designed to protect puppy farmers with terrible consequences for dog welfare. Puppy buyers unknowingly purchase a puppy from a seemingly nice dealer in pleasant surroundings, who would in fact have purchased the puppy from a backstreet dealer who has given no thought to their health and welfare.

There is simply no way that a responsible breeder would ever sell a puppy to a pet shop or a pet dealer and we are delighted to see this issue getting the attention that it deserves. Good breeders, such as Kennel Club Assured Breeders, always insist on speaking at length to potential puppy buyers to ensure their pups will be given good homes.

Launching the call for evidence on a ban, Environment Secretary Michael Gove invited all interested parties to share their views by 2 May 2018 on how this could best be introduced.

The government recently consulted on plans to increase maximum prison sentences for animal abusers to five years and recognise animal sentience in domestic law. The [consultation](#) closed on 31 January and we are now considering the responses. We will set out next steps in due course.

1. For further information on this press release, please contact the Defra press office on 020 8225 7318.