

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people to get extra education support

- Education and training programmes to help Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children catch up on lost learning
- Programmes backed by £400,000 investment to help over 100 children
- Tutoring, one-to-one support and expert guidance to help young people progress in education or find employment

Children and young people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities will receive extra educational support under proposals outlined today (8 December 2020) by Communities Minister Lord Greenhalgh.

Evidence shows that children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds are among the lowest achieving groups at every key stage of education and are likely to have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic, due to lack of access to public services and digital exclusion, which impairs access to online learning.

Backed by £400,000 government investment, over 100 children and young people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities will receive extra tutoring, one-to-one support and expert guidance to help them progress in education or find employment.

The first of the projects will provide online 'catch-up' tutoring for a group of up to 80 Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children to support their learning and tackle the attainment gap between these children and their peers.

The second will provide up to 30 young people who are not in education, employment and training in Derbyshire, London, Essex and Kent with access to targeted support and educational resources to help move them into further education or employment.

Communities Minister Lord Greenhalgh said:

All of the evidence shows us that members of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities continue to face some of the steepest challenges in society, and the pandemic is likely to have increased these yet further, especially in education.

Children from these communities have been disproportionately affected by being out of school, which is why I am so determined to help them bridge the gap to their peers.

These important projects will ensure that vulnerable children have a fair chance in life and are given the opportunity to gain further

skills and experiences to help them in education or in the workplace.

Pauline Anderson, Chair, and Yvonne MacNamara, CEO of The Traveller Movement said:

We are delighted to be able to support the development of this new programme, which will afford these young people opportunities that have not previously been available to them.

We will provide one-to-one tutoring catch-up to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children that have fallen behind on schoolwork due to the pandemic, alongside support for up to 30 young people not in education, employment or training to gain level two functional skills in Maths and English.

Michael Farrell, Interim Programme Manager of Open Doors Education and Training said:

We are really excited about this venture as Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and young people have traditionally fared poorly in education league tables.

Programmes such as these are vital for ensuring young people are valued, supported and given opportunities to develop career prospects and access to further education and training pathways.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is leading the development of a cross-government strategy to tackle the inequalities and improve outcomes faced by Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities across the country.

The Department for Education is also running a National Tutoring Programme, worth £350 million, which will increase access to high-quality tuition for the most disadvantaged young people over the 2020-21 academic year.

This will help accelerate their academic progress and prevent the gap between them and their more affluent peers widening.

Lord Stewart of Dirleton QC sworn in

as Advocate General for Scotland

News story

Lord Stewart of Dirleton QC was sworn in as Advocate General for Scotland at ceremonies in Parliament House, Edinburgh on Friday 4 December 2020.



Swearing-in ceremony at Parliament House. Credit: STV

Lord Stewart presented his Royal Warrant of Appointment, first to a bench of three Court of Session judges led by Lord Carloway, the Lord President, in the First Division courtroom and then to three High Court judges, again chaired by Lord Carloway, in Court Three.

Lord Carloway administered the Oath of Allegiance and the Official Oath and, after Lord Stewart had signed the official parchment, invited the Advocate General to take his seat at the table within the Bar of the Court, joining the Solicitor General for Scotland, Alison Di Rollo.

Lord Carloway, the Lord President, pointed out that while several new Senators of the College of Justice had been welcomed to the Bench under Covid conditions, Lord Stewart was the first Law Officer to “take the oath in this strange, but as now appears finite, era of physical distancing.”

Lord Carloway also said: “Lord Stewart’s transition from law to government reminds us that these two spheres of public life are not mutually exclusive. As the UK Government continues with the complex process of leaving the European Union and, in conjunction with Scottish Ministers, guides the recovery from the worst public health crisis in living memory, it is vital that it has access to authoritative legal advice on Scots law.

“That is something, with the benefit of a long career as a member of the Faculty of Advocates, that Lord Stewart is well equipped to provide.”

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Home Secretary attends security conference in Bahrain

Home Secretary Priti Patel was joined by Chief of Defence Staff, General Sir Nick Carter, at the international defence and security conference, which attracts senior Ministers from across the world.

Across the 3 days, the conference focused on a range of topics from global governance in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic to building new security partnerships in the Middle East.

The UK is a major international player in the region and has long-standing security relationships across the Gulf. The government is investing in and working closely with partners to counter terrorism and promote stability, which has a direct impact on the safety of the British public at home.

Following the conference, the Home Secretary met senior Bahrain government ministers and regional counterparts.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

It was a pleasure to visit Bahrain, a country with which the UK's close and important relationship has flourished for more than 200 years.

I am committed to supporting Bahrain as it continues to make important reforms, and both our nations will work closely together to promote peace and security in the Gulf region and across the world.

On 6 December, the Home Secretary met her counterpart, Minister of Interior Affairs Sheikh Rashid bin Abdullah Al Khalifa. She reiterated the UK's support for Bahrain's security and police reform, and welcomed both nations' commitment to working closely on a number of joint security and counter-terrorism issues.

The Home Secretary also met Sheikh Khalid bin Ali Al-Khalifa, Bahraini Minister of Justice, to discuss the initiatives being implemented in the country's justice system and areas where the UK might be able to provide support.

Following that meeting, the Home Secretary also had a bilateral with Foreign Minister Dr Abdulatif bin Rashid Al Zayani in which she welcomed the Kingdom's efforts promoting security and stability in the region, and set out how the UK's new points-based immigration system will benefit the citizens of Bahrain looking to live, work or study in the UK.

Latest ESFA senior staff moves, December 2020

News story

An update from Eileen Milner, ESFA chief executive, on senior staff moves in the agency



**Education & Skills
Funding Agency**

Eileen Milner, ESFA chief executive said:

Following a competitive recruitment process, ESFA's interim Director of Professional and Technical Education [Sue Lovelock](#) has been appointed to the post on a permanent basis. Sue has been acting Director since November 2019, following Jennifer Coupland becoming the chief executive of the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education.

Sue has been responsible for leading the Professional and Technical Education Directorate during the challenging period of COVID-19. This has included overseeing the successful launch of the very first T Level delivery in September 2020. Sue has a wealth of experience in delivering government programmes and will lead the work of the directorate through the challenging but critical next stages of continuing T Level rollout and complex qualifications reform.

I know Sue is hugely committed to building on what has been achieved and I congratulate her on her appointment.

The principal contractor for the Grenfell Tower site: an update

Our existing contract with the on-site contractor for Grenfell Tower will expire in June 2021. We need to re-procure the contract due to government rules and guidance on spending public money. It is a standard process and is part of the government's role in keeping the site safe.

From 8 December, we are inviting potential companies to bid to carry out some of the [safety and day-to-day maintenance works](#) on the Grenfell Tower site. We know that this will be of interest to some of the community. In this update, we explain how we'll approach this, as well as the ways you can be involved if you would like to be.