

[Press release: Government pledge £16 million to tackle drug dependency and support children in care](#)

Projects that combat drug and alcohol dependency and support children in care will receive more than £16 million, Minister for Sport and Civil Society Tracey Crouch announced today.

The money is the first round of investment from the £80 million Life Chances Fund and will:

- provide specialist services for children in foster care and residential homes
- help drug and alcohol dependent adults find full-time work, reduce addiction and cut unnecessary A&E admissions.

All ten projects are Social Impact Bonds, meaning money is only transferred when projects meet agreed targets. The investment is in addition to funding from 36 local authorities who will provide a combined £37.6 million to the ten successful projects.

Minister for Sport and Civil Society, Tracey Crouch, said:

“This funding will benefit some of the most vulnerable people in society and provide vital support to help them transform their lives. The UK is a world leader in using social impact bonds to make a positive impact in society and these projects will achieve real results in communities across the country.”

Examples of the projects that will receive funding are:

Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC)

FDAC will receive £6.2 million over seven years to support its work within the family court system to help families whose children are subject to care proceedings due to parental substance misuse and domestic violence in the home. Parents will be supported to address these issues so that children can be safely returned to the home. It is estimated that over 2,400 individuals will benefit from the programme.

Fostering Better Outcomes

Supported by Cheshire West and Chester Council, Fostering Better Outcomes will receive £939,000 to support the delivery of a project which aims to help children and young people transition into stable foster care. It will work with 30 children aged seven to 17 who are in or are at risk of entering residential care, to help improve their emotional well-being.

West London Alliance

The organisation will receive £1,200,000 to deliver placement services to people with drug and alcohol addictions who are out of work, so they can gain and retain competitive paid employment.

The Big Lottery Fund is delivering the Life Chances fund on behalf of DCMS.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

The £80m Life Chances Fund was launched in July 2016 with the objective of tackling entrenched social issues and helping those people in society who face the most significant barriers to leading happy and productive lives.

The fund is structured around six key themes: drug and alcohol dependency, children's services, early years, young people, older people's services, and healthy lives.

The grantees, the money they will receive and the project they will deliver, are listed below:

1. Family Drug and Alcohol Court: Will receive £6,052,434 to work with the family court system to support families whose children are subject to care proceedings due to parental substance misuse and domestic violence in the home.
2. East Midlands Children's Services Social Investment Platform: Will receive £3,001,057 for the delivery of new services that support challenging young people aged 10-17 who are either in care or at risk of entering care.
3. Integrated Family Support: Will receive £1,890,000 to fund the work it will carry out with families to reduce child safeguarding concerns associated with drug and alcohol use among parents.
4. West London Alliance: Will receive £1,200,000 to deliver placement services to people with drug and alcohol addictions who are out of work, so they can gain and retain competitive paid employment.
5. Bright Residential for Children: Will receive £1,118,520 to fund the way that residential placements for children and young people in Warwickshire are delivered.
6. Fostering Better Outcomes: Will receive £939,000 to support the delivery of a programme which aims to help children and young people transition into stable, highly supported foster care.
7. Cornwall Frequent Attenders Project: Will receive £779,216 to deliver services aimed at reducing frequent and avoidable A&E attendances by people with drug and alcohol problems.
8. Plymouth City Council: Will receive £539,140 to reduce the number of children aged five years and under entering care. Over a three year period it will provide support for up to 40 women who are experiencing a cycle of recurrent removal of their children.
8. Edge of Care and Reunification: Will receive £425,000 to support the delivery of multisystemic therapy, an evidence based programme which

aims to return looked after children to the family home, or place them in sustainable foster care.

9. Early Intervention Care Prevention: Will receive £422,400 to develop a programme that will aim to reduce the number of adolescents entering or staying in care in Suffolk.

News story: PM's call with Prime Minister Gentiloni: 17 Oct 2017

A Downing Street spokesperson said

This afternoon the Prime Minister spoke to Prime Minister Gentiloni of Italy ahead of Thursday's European Council.

Prime Minister Gentiloni expressed his appreciation for the choice of Florence for the Prime Minister's speech and the spirit in which it was conducted.

Both agreed on the importance of continued constructive progress in the UK's exit negotiations and expressed a desire to provide reassurance on citizens' rights as early as possible.

Speech: How team with cardboard boxes for desks saved taxpayer £60 million

Just over five years ago, a group of people using cardboard boxes for desks came together in an office in Waterloo. Their central idea was that citizens shouldn't need to understand the structure of government to interact with it. Their mission was to turn 1,884 separate websites into a single site for government.

Five years on, that single government website, [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk), has been visited 4 billion times: more than 3 million times every day. Delivered by the [Government Digital Service](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/government-digital-service) (GDS), it has become a part of our national infrastructure. It has won design awards and is recognised as a world leader

in public sector digital innovation.

Government should help not hinder citizens and by putting users first and simplifying tasks which before took days and many pages of form filling, it has done just that.

For example, the Carer's Allowance digital service removed 170 questions from the application process. It saved precious time for those who spend their lives caring for others.

It is now possible to register to vote online, renew your passport online and, if, in the course of your life you wish to import a ferret, GOV.UK has made it easier than ever to find out how.

As encouraging as big numbers and awards are, they are not the motivation, nor were they when the government brought together that group of people in Waterloo. Transforming services has always been about making a difference to people's lives. By doing this, it creates a government that is more open, adaptable and responsive. One which is inclusive and puts the user first.

The creation of GOV.UK remains good for government and good for the people it serves. It brought departments and agencies together. It has saved the taxpayer over £60 million. People visit GOV.UK to access services and information which affect their families, homes and jobs. Its importance cannot be overstated. GOV.UK is where government communicates what it is doing, thinking and how it is working.

For instance last week we launched the ethnicity facts and figures service. As the prime minister said on its launch: "By bringing this information together in one place for the first time it will shine a light on the issues we are facing."

This is the whole point of GOV.UK: bringing everything together in one place and making it as easy as possible for people to find, understand and use it.

For me, one of the best features isn't anything that has been built: it's the commitment to continuous improvement. GOV.UK is not finished now, and it never will be: it will always be a work in progress, adapting and improving all the time.

As we look to the future, we see that websites are just one way of accessing content and services over the internet. Technologies such as Alexa and Siri are good examples of this. Work is under way at GOV.UK to prepare content so that it can adapt to meet just this sort of technological change.

I'm excited at the work the GDS is doing to lead and enable departments to play their role in realising the possibilities that the internet and digital advances offer. GOV.UK is part of the transformation of public services designed to meet the needs of today and equip us for the technological changes of tomorrow.

Those who have brought us to this point have my thanks and congratulations. The work they have done has redefined how a modern government should serve

its people.

I know that the work on digital government is never finished. GOV.UK and the Government Digital Service have vital work to do to ensure that as technology moves forward, the government fulfils our duty and keeps pace. I hope the cake and balloons are ready as you celebrate your fifth birthday today, and I send my very best wishes.

[News story: F-35 jet and new batch of UK pilots cleared for Carrier take-off, Defence Minister tells Select Committee](#)

A new group of UK pilots are trained and ready to fly the UK's cutting-edge F-35 fighter jet which is now cleared for take-off from HMS Queen Elizabeth following successful trials using the ski-ramp design featured on the UK flagship, Defence Minister Harriett Baldwin announced at the House of Commons Defence Select Committee this afternoon.

Defence Minister Harriett Baldwin said:

With a new team of British pilots completing their training and the F-35 cleared to fly from the carrier, the momentum continues for this game-changing jet. These milestones come as our pilots prepare to return from the States, ready for next year's unforgettable flight trials from the deck of the nation's new flagship.

The UK currently has 12 F-35 jets out in the United States where they are being tested ahead of flight trials from the Royal Navy's 65,000 tonne carrier, HMS Queen Elizabeth, next year. Two more aircraft are set to be delivered by the end of the year.

The UK's F-35s have been successfully tested on the ski ramp design at Pax Rivers, Maryland, in the US.

The Defence Minister announced that the F-35 Integrated Test Force, which includes five British pilots, has now successfully completed ski ramp trials. That milestone clears the aircraft for take-off from the deck of the Carrier.

Speaking about the jet, Squadron Leader Andy Edgell, part of that

Integrated Test Force, said:

She's marvellous. She has an incredible amount of thrust but it's more than just brawn that makes her so fantastic to fly – it's the brains behind her as well.

She's a masterful piece of engineering and it makes her so effortless to fly. It's impossible not to be exhilarated every time. She's a beast when you want her to be and tame when you need her to be. She's beautiful.

The launch of the F35s from the HMS Queen Elizabeth is a once in a generation historical event. To be the first to fly off the carrier, to have a front row seat, would be an absolute privilege. It wouldn't just be about the pilot – there are hundreds of people who have been working tirelessly behind the scenes to make this happen and the honour will be theirs too.

There are already 150 UK personnel out in the US working with the state-of-the-art jets, and the latest course of UK pilots have just finished their ground school training and are now ready to fly the F-35B at Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort in South Carolina.

The cutting-edge F-35 fighter jet.

Amongst those to have graduated from that course are four pilots who started F-35 training straight from their advanced pilot training at RAF Valley, and Wing Commander John Butcher, who will be the Commanding Officer of the RAF's new 617 squadron.

The new home of 617 squadron, RAF Marham, continues to build towards the arrival of the jets next year, moving a step closer earlier this month when the runway intersection resurfacing was completed. 617 Squadron will be the first operational British F-35 unit.

And elsewhere, the Defence Minister also announced that last week, the first F-35 flight with the latest software was conducted on one of the UK's F-35Bs at Edwards Air Force Base in California. This software upgrade, technically known as Block 3F, represents the full warfighting capability the UK F-35s will have at Initial Operating Capability in December 2018.

UK industry will provide approximately 15% of the value of each F-35 to be built, more than 3,000, worth some £1 billion and generating around 25,000 British jobs. The programme remains on time, within costs and offers the best capability for our Armed Forces.

Find out about about the fifth generation F-35B Lightning and the important work of the Integrated Test Force [here](#).

Press release: PM call with Prime Minister Rajoy: 17 Oct 2017

This afternoon the Prime Minister spoke to Prime Minister Rajoy of Spain. The Prime Minister expressed her condolences over the loss of life and the damage caused by the forest fires in northern Spain.

The two leaders discussed the ongoing situation in Catalonia. The Prime Minister reiterated that the UK is clear that the referendum had no legal basis and that any unilateral declaration of independence would be inconsistent with the rule of law. She added that the UK would not recognise any such declaration of independence by Catalonia.

On Brexit, the Prime Minister and Prime Minister Rajoy discussed progress in the negotiations and looked ahead to meeting at this week's European Council.