

[Vote LibDem, get Tory](#)

Between 2010 and 2015 the Lib Dems propped up a Tory government that cut funding for public services and support for the most vulnerable.

And given the Lib Dem track record on election vows, there is no guarantee they won't prop up another Tory government in the future.

[Welsh Government boost to help up-skill Enterprise Zones](#)

The pilots will enable all employers in Ebbw Vale and Port Talbot Enterprise Zones to access an array of pre-approved training, with Welsh Government providing a 50 percent contribution to the cost.

Economy Secretary, Ken Skates, said:

"I am pleased to announce a new strand of Wales' Flexible Skills Programme will be piloted within Ebbw Vale and Port Talbot Enterprise Zones. The pilots are designed to facilitate access to a variety of skills training programmes, assisting employers and businesses to up-skill and grow.

"The programme also provides an additional incentive for employers to engage with the Welsh Government and develop mutually beneficial relationships with schools, further education and higher education institutions.

"From Robotics to quality auditing, the areas of training have been specifically selected against the needs of employers operating in those areas and designed to assist them and enhance the skill sets of their employees, which in turn will help develop the businesses and the local economies"

"I am sure the launch events will be very worthwhile and provide an opportunity for businesses to engage with a new and exciting skills support programme. I'd encourage all employers to get involved."

The Ebbw Vale pilot will launch at an event being held on 16 May at The General Offices, Ebbw Vale with the Port Talbot pilot launching at the Skills Summit on 23 May at The St Pauls Centre, Port Talbot.

Employers and employees who would like more information about the launch events and the scheme itself are invited to email DFESRM@wales.gsi.gov.uk.

Speech: Op-ed by Lord Mayor of City of London on his visit to Tunisia

Tunisia may be the smallest country in North Africa, but I think it has a big role to play in the region's economic development. Tunisia is an important partner for the United Kingdom in North Africa, and I am in Tunis this week to reaffirm the strong bilateral economic links that bind our two countries, as well as explore new ways that we can work more closely together.

As the Lord Mayor of the City of London I travel the world as the UK's financial and professional services ambassador looking for ways that the City of London, the world's leading financial centre, can develop closer links with our international partners.

When I began my year in office, visiting the dynamic, growing economies of North Africa was a key goal for me, as I believe that there are many opportunities for mutually beneficial growth and development. This is the second visit to Tunisia by a Lord Mayor in three years, highlighting the importance we place on further developing the already strong links between the UK and Tunisia.

Ahead of my arrival I heard great things about the Tunisian government's ambition to develop Tunis into a regional centre of excellence in financial services, and I fully support this ambition as I have seen first-hand how a burgeoning financial centre can bring prosperity to an entire generation. When I meet with government representatives I will certainly be discussing with them how the City of London can best support the development of Tunisia's financial sector.

I have also heard a great deal about the ambition in Tunisia to develop your capital city into a world-leading technical and digital hub. London is one of the world's leading centres for financial technology, or fintech, development, with more people working in the sector than in Silicon Valley. Mobile banking will be the future of banking, and as the world's leading financial centre we are looking forward, and working to usher in this new era of financial inclusion. I believe we can work very closely together in the digital and mobile payments sector.

Another exciting area of global growth in the financial services sector is the area of Islamic Finance. Islamic Finance has developed into an important new financial market, with the global Islamic Finance sector estimated to have assets worth around USD\$2 trillion, a figure which is expected to grow at around 20% a year over the next decade. The UK is the western world's

leader in Islamic Finance education, with over 70 institutions offering Islamic Finance courses, and 22 universities offering degrees specialising in Islamic Finance. As an educator I firmly believe that these courses will foster the next generation of finance professionals who will cement London's position as the western hub for Islamic Finance.

As a teacher by background I know that education is the best way to spur economic growth, and because of that I will be exploring ways we can expand the training we provide in the City of London to Tunisian stock brokers, providing valuable qualifications that allow them to work abroad. The goal however must be to have a strong domestic financial services offer so that talented Tunisians can train abroad, but return to the prospect of quality jobs at home. It is because of that goal that I am offering a Mansion House scholarship to a promising young Tunisian who is looking to study in the UK for a business related degree. I'm here in Tunisia because we in the City believe in the potential for growth in the Islamic Finance and fin-tech sectors in Tunis, with both a domestic and regional orientation. I think that this will attract investment and international business to Tunisia, and will help in the wider development of Tunis as an international financial centre, which we strongly support.

As we start the process of leaving the European Union it is now more important than ever that we deepen our business relationships across the world with valued partners such as Tunisia. The United Kingdom has always been a global trading nation, epitomised most strongly by the City of London, the world's leading financial centre. I believe that with support from the City's unique cluster of services Tunisia can see an era of strong growth that will benefit all Tunisians and I look forward to seeing Tunisia's continued development over the years to come.

SNP literacy figures are “an absolute disgrace” – Gray

By Scottish Labour Education spokesperson Iain Gray MSP

The official Scottish Survey of Literacy and Numeracy 2016 (Literacy) published yesterday has revealed slipping standards in reading and writing in our schools.

These figures are the education legacy of ten years of SNP government and they are an absolute disgrace. Standards in both reading and writing have fallen since 2012 and the gap between the richest pupils and the rest has not closed.

No child should have their life chances determined by their background – yet that is exactly what is happening under a Nationalist government obsessed

with the constitution.

For John Swinney to suggest that the answer is centralising school budgets is ridiculous. The answer is to stop the SNP's cuts to schools.

The SNP has starved our schools of £1billion in recent years, and a generation of children has paid the price.

There are 4,000 fewer teachers, 1,000 fewer school support staff and 700 teacher vacancies that will take three years to fill under the SNP.

Class sizes are among the biggest in the developed world.

Labour is the only party standing up against SNP cuts that put the life chances of our young people at risk.

A vote for Labour on June 8 will tell Nicola Sturgeon to get on with the job of running our schools – and to stop trying to divide us with an unwanted second independence referendum.

[Trainees expose the gaps in Scotland's teacher training programme](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Trainees expose the gaps in Scotland's teacher training programme

10 May 2017



Evidence given to Holyrood's education committee today has thrown more doubt over the effectiveness of Scotland's teacher training programme.

Several teacher trainees spoke to the committee about their experiences of teacher training, and highlighted problems with training for additional support needs (ASN), behaviour management, and most worryingly, literacy.

It comes after figures yesterday revealed that the percentage of S2 pupils who are not meeting the required level of writing increased from 7% to 16% in the last four years.

One trainee said that they received a "single week on literacy – that would be it".

Others said that they received "'next to nothing on classroom behaviour management", and that there was "absolutely nothing on ASN" in their course.

Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary Liz Smith MSP said:

“The evidence heard this morning has once again laid bare the SNP’s terrible record on education.

“With literacy rates plummeting under this SNP Government we now discover that trainee teachers are receiving the bare minimum in training when it comes to improving reading and writing skills.

“This morning’s committee evidence made plain the extent of the concerns about some aspects of the teacher training programme.

“Trainees told us that there was virtually no training on additional support needs despite the fact that nearly a quarter of Scottish pupils are requiring that support, and that there has been no support to help children stay safe online.

“There were also concerns over how school placements were organised, something which clearly has had a detrimental effect on the experience of some trainee teachers.

“These are major issues which have a huge impact on our children. Today’s evidence sends yet another very blunt message to John Swinney that there are serious issues in Scotland’s schools.”