

News story: Holocaust memorial designs exhibition in Parliament

An exhibition of the [shortlisted teams' designs for the National Holocaust Memorial and education centre](#) is on display and open to the public in Westminster Hall in Parliament from Monday 26 February.

The new National Holocaust Memorial and accompanying education centre will stand in Victoria Tower Gardens in the shadow of Parliament. This striking new structure will honour victims and survivors of Nazi persecution and will act as a national voice against hatred in our world today.

The [international design competition](#) sought to harness the very best architectural talent to create an emotionally powerful and sensitively designed memorial. Ninety-two teams expressed an interest in the project, with a [shortlist of 10](#) invited to submit the concept designs on display as part of this exhibition.

Consultation with the public, survivors, those working in the field of Holocaust remembrance and education, and technical experts will play a crucial role in informing the final decision of the jury. Visitors are invited to give their views as part of the exhibition.

The exhibition is open from Monday 26 February until Saturday 11 March, from 9am each morning. Entrance is via Parliament's Cromwell Green entrance. Read more about [finding the Houses of Parliament](#).

Closing times will vary depending on parliamentary business each day and will close at 5:30pm on non-sitting days (Friday 3 and Saturday 4 March). Parliament has advised visitors to avoid busy periods, notably between 3pm and 7pm on Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons. Visitors will go through an airport-style search. For further information on entry arrangements, call Parliament's Visitor Services on 020 7219 0516.

Welsh Government flies the flag for Wales in celebration of St David's Day

First Minister Carwyn Jones is launching the inaugural 'Wales in London' week in London this morning. He will make a keynote speech promoting Wales as a key investment location at the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors' (RICS) headquarters in Parliament Square.

The First Minister will also host a St David's Day reception at Lancaster

House to engage with London-based foreign diplomats and businesses with an interest in Wales.

On Tuesday, the First Minister is travelling to Washington and New York to meet with companies looking to invest in Wales and will discuss trade and business links with political representatives.

While in New York, the First Minister will host a reception to mark the launch of a new £5 million international tourism campaign. The 2017 Year of Legends campaign will show Wales is a country rich in history, storytelling and creativity.

Meanwhile, Finance and Local Government Secretary Mark Drakeford will be celebrating St David's day in Brussels, where he will be hosting the annual evening reception at the British Residence.

Mark Drakeford will also hold a series of meetings with representatives from European Institutions and the UK's Permanent Representative to the EU, Sir Tim Barrow, to discuss Wales' priorities as Britain prepares to leave the EU.

Environment and Rural Affairs Secretary, Lesley Griffiths, is travelling to the United Arab Emirates this week to promote Wales' thriving food and drink industry. During her trip, Lesley Griffiths will join twenty five Welsh food and drink producers at Gulfood, the world's largest food trade event, and hear about plans for the next World Expo, taking place in Dubai 2020.

First Minister Carwyn Jones said:

"St David's Day 2017 marks a step-change in our ambition to promote Wales to the world like never before.

"During these times of great change, there is a need for us to work even harder to raise Wales' international profile and performance. In recent years we have seen record inward investment to Wales; record tourism figures – including an increase of 12% over the last twelve months alone – while our products are now exported across the globe. We are, therefore, well placed to take on the challenge.

"This week, my Cabinet and I will celebrate our national day by promoting Wales around the world and celebrating everything we have to offer. We will use every opportunity to showcase our unique culture, history and language – and demonstrate that Wales is a great place to visit and do business."

[Nearly £14 million for improvements to](#)

Ysbyty Gwynedd A&E department

The significant funding will pay for infrastructure improvements at Ysbyty Gwynedd hospital, creating more capacity to deal with peaks in demand while improving the environment for patients, staff and visitors alike.

The funding is for the period 2017-18 and 2019-20 and it is envisaged that work will start in March 2017. The investment will fund:

- A single point of entry to the department
- Three triage rooms
- A four bay resuscitation area plus a separate isolation bay with external access
- Eight cubicles plus two treatment rooms
- Eight chairs in minor injuries
- An assessment unit including relatives' waiting room
- Paediatrics facilities including three assessment rooms and dedicated waiting rooms.

Health Secretary Vaughan Gething said:

"I'm delighted that we've been able to announce this capital money for Ysbyty Gwynedd, it'll make a real difference to patients accessing emergency and urgent care in North West Wales.

"What is particularly exciting about this new development is the "One Door" approach to medical care, where emergency and urgent care patients will enter through a single point to get the most appropriate care based on their clinical need. This allows them to be treated and discharged or referred on to other specialist services within the hospital or community setting as quickly as possible.

"Once again this is the Welsh Government investing the future of our NHS in Wales."

Gary Doherty, Chief Executive at Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board said:

"We're absolutely delighted that Welsh Government has approved the £13.89m funding required to redevelop the Emergency Department at Ysbyty Gwynedd.

"The current department is too small and is not designed to meet the requirements of modern clinical practice. This major scheme will provide state of the art accommodation for the 52,000 patients who use the service each year and will help us transform medical and emergency care.

"The Welsh Government's commitment to this area will also provide a much needed boost to our dedicated and hard working staff and will help improve

our recruitment potential.”

In Yemen, UN aid chief rallies support for relief efforts to prevent famine

27 February 2017 – The parties to the conflict in Yemen need to continue providing humanitarian access, and the international community needs to step up its funding for life-saving operations, the United Nations relief aid chief said today during his visit to the port city of Aden.

“I have come to Aden with the first humanitarian UN flight to lend support to the humanitarians who have been working in this city and in Yemen since the conflict escalated in March 2015,” UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O’Brien told reporters there.

“Today, almost 19 million people in Yemen need humanitarian assistance. Seven million people don’t know where their next meal is coming from and we now face a serious risk of famine,” he added.

Mr. O’Brien said the purpose of his visit was also to meet with senior Government officials to discuss how to prevent a possible famine and how to better protect the civilians that are caught in this conflict.

In Aden and the surrounding governorates, 3.1 million people need humanitarian assistance, two thirds of whom are in desperate need of food, he warned.

RELATED: As Yemen’s food crisis worsens, UN agencies call for urgent assistance to avert catastrophe

Yesterday, in meetings with President Abd Rabbu Mansour Hadi, Prime Minister Ahmed Obeid bin Daghr and other senior officials, the top UN aid official stressed the need for all parties to the conflict to respect international humanitarian law, protect civilians and civilian infrastructure and to allow for unimpeded and immediate full access by humanitarian partners to all of Yemen.

Given the urgency of the situation, they also discussed the need to facilitate commercial imports of food, fuel and medicine, through all ports of Yemen, and the resumption of commercial flights to all of Yemen, Mr. O’Brien said.

“Yesterday, I saw with my own eyes the destruction of the war and the impact on the people living in Aden,” he said, noting that he was especially pleased to know that two babies – a boy and a girl – were born while he was at a maternity hospital. “They are Yemen’s hope

and future,” he said.

In the Aden hub, more than 55 humanitarian organizations are working to meet pressing needs.

“We are here to help and provide neutral, impartial life-saving assistance to all people in need, regardless of where they are in Yemen,” Mr. O'Brien said, stressing that there are no military solutions to this conflict and only peace can provide a lasting solution to this unfolding humanitarian crisis.

Press release: Drop in poor children's progress at secondary school

Children from poor backgrounds experience a worrying drop off in progress at secondary school, [new research](#) by the Social Mobility Commission reveals today (Monday 27 February).

It finds that the gap between poor pupils' attainment at the end of primary school and the end of secondary school has widened. Since 2012, low-income families have been making less progress year on year, compared to their more affluent peers.

Even when bright pupils from low-income families outperform their more advantaged peers at primary school, they are likely to be overtaken at the next stage of their education.

The report warns that the secondary school drop off means that poor children are failing to finish school with the qualifications that will create opportunities for them to succeed in life.

The research, which was conducted by LKMco and Education Datalab using data from the National Pupil Database, finds that most of the gap (88%) in progress stems from differences in achievement between children at the same school, rather than variations between schools (12%).

The report suggests that this is partly due to the treatment of children on free school meals. These children are more likely to be placed in lower sets, have access to less qualified teachers and have lower expectations set for them by the school.

Home life can also have a big impact on progress with children from low-income families less likely to benefit from effective homework routines, access to books and computers, or cultural and sporting experiences.

Outcomes for children from low-income backgrounds are also affected by the

fact that they are more at risk of behavioural issues and exclusion from school.

The research finds that poor pupils located in cities make more progress relative to their more affluent peers than those in rural areas and that the gap is greatest in large schools with average levels of pupil disadvantage.

It also finds that ethnic minority pupils make better progress at secondary schools than poor white children – partly because some evidence suggests that low-income ethnic minority parents seem to provide support that is more effective for their children at home.

The largest gaps in progress are between poor white children and their more affluent peers. Most low-income ethnic minority groups make progress that is in line with the national average for all pupils.

Head teachers interviewed as part of the research said that lower funding was already putting pupils progress at risk and that the prospects for improvement were bleak despite the new funding formula proposed by the government.

With health and social care funding streams also under pressure, schools are facing reductions in external support for children with mental health disorders or Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) who make the least progress in secondary schools.

The Rt Hon Alan Milburn, chair of the Social Mobility Commission, said:

One of the shocking features of our education system is that the gap between poor pupils and their better-off peers increases during their time in school rather than reducing.

This new research suggests that the progress poor pupils make in primary school is all but wiped out during secondary. The consequence is that successive generations of poor children are being let down by a school system that is supposed to be there to help them move up and get on.

This is not just an issue for the government. If social mobility is to improve, schools need to do more to bridge the education attainment divide between poorer children and their better-off classmates. Closing the gap needs to be top of mind for every teacher in every school.

The government can help by setting an explicit target for narrowing the attainment gap at GCSE and by doing more to get the best teachers into the toughest secondary schools.

Lead author Bart Shaw, from education think tank LKMco said:

Whilst we should be concerned about the high attaining pupils from low-income families who get overtaken at secondary school, it is at least as important to focus on low and middle-attaining pupils from poorer backgrounds.

These children will continue to achieve poorly at GCSE and have diminished life chances unless more is done to accelerate their progress at secondary school.

Our research has found that teacher expectations and actions taken by schools can have a profound impact on outcomes. Parents also have an important role to play by creating an effective home learning environment and taking an active interest in their children's education.

- children on free school meals achieve almost half a GCSE grade less progress in 'Attainment 8' core subjects than better-off pupils
- 88% of this gap is due to differences between pupils at the same school, meaning that only 12% is due to variations between schools
- school culture: pupils from low-income families are most likely to make progress in secondary schools that focus on them, both in terms of setting and sharing high expectations for pupils
- successful schools use data to track pupils' progress and intervene swiftly and flexibly when pupils fall behind
- high-quality teachers who believe that poor children are capable of making progress are key to ensuring progress
- the teaching of pupils with SEND needs should be prioritised and specialist provision should be easily and promptly accessed where needed.
- pupils from low-income families are less likely to make progress when they are grouped by ability from an early age

Key recommendations:

For government:

- ensure funding cuts do not exacerbate the problem of poor pupils failing to make good progress at secondary school
- make additional funding available for schools to buy-in high-quality specialist provision for SEND pupils
- tackle teacher recruitment issues in areas where pupils from low-income families make low progress
- halt plans to increase selection to prevent further segregation of pupils from low-income backgrounds
- set up an exclusion fund for specialist provision to reduce the chances of 'at risk' children being excluded
- review the quality of specialist provision for looked-after children and make more funding available to offer high-quality support for these

children

For secondary schools:

- head teachers must ensure that resources are targeted at KS3 and year 7 pupils making the transition from primary school to the same level or beyond the resources targeted at KS4
- head teachers should develop a school culture of universally high expectations and promote practices that support those expectations
- schools should make regular use of data to analyse progress in order to intervene as early as possible when pupils' progress, especially those from low economic backgrounds, stagnates or drops off.
- heads of departments and senior leaders should exercise great caution in using setting and streaming practices that can negatively impact on pupils from low-income backgrounds
- all staff in schools, particularly school leaders, should prioritise support for pupils with SEND, for example, by providing continuing training which improves teachers' skills and confidence in providing 'quality first' teaching in every classroom
- all school staff should improve their understanding of teaching approaches that support low prior attainers and pupils from low-income backgrounds
- senior leaders should reduce exclusion rates, particularly of pupils from low-income families.
- secondary schools should provide early and regular careers guidance that makes clear the links between progress at school and the freedom to choose from a wide range of careers

Notes for editors

1. The Social Mobility Commission is an advisory, non-departmental public body established under the Life Chances Act 2010 as modified by the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016. It has a duty to assess progress in improving social mobility in the United Kingdom and to promote social mobility in England. It currently consists of 4 commissioners and is supported by a small secretariat.
2. The commission board currently comprises:
 - Alan Milburn (chair)
 - Baroness Gillian Shephard (deputy chair)
 - Paul Gregg, Professor of Economic and Social Policy, University of Bath
 - David Johnston, Chief Executive of the Social Mobility Foundation
3. The functions of the commission include:
 - monitoring progress on improving social mobility
 - providing published advice to ministers on matters relating to social mobility
 - undertaking social mobility advocacy
4. For further information, please contact Kirsty Walker at the Social Mobility Commission by: