



BRIEFING PAPER

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UK Youth Parliament 2017

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Background

On 10 November 2017 the House of Commons chamber will host the eighteenth annual sitting of the UK Youth Parliament.

What is the UK Youth Parliament?

The UK Youth Parliament provides opportunities for 11-18 year olds to use their elected voice to bring about social change through meaningful representation and campaigning. The UK Youth Parliament has over 280 seats for elected Members of Youth Parliament (MYPs) all aged 11-18. MYPs are usually elected in annual youth elections throughout the UK. Any young person aged 11-18 can stand or vote. In the past two years one million young people have voted in UK Youth Parliament elections. Once elected MYPs organise events and projects, run campaigns and influence decision makers on the issues which matter most to young people. All MYPs have the opportunity to meet once a year at the UK Youth Parliament Annual Sitting.

Where do campaigns and policies come from?

Each year MYPs present the issues they were elected to campaign on. Those already in the manifesto are filtered out; others covering similar content are combined.

The final list of manifesto policy motions goes forward to the online MYP vote to prioritise the issues they would like most to be debated at the Annual Sitting. This year the Annual Sitting was held in July at Liverpool Hope University.

Manifesto motions are voted on at the Annual Sitting with speeches for each motion and an open floor debate. The top ten issues are prioritised and go forward to a national consultation through the Make Your Mark ballot.

Parliament Week (13 – 19 November)

The UK Youth Parliament's sitting in the House of Commons marks the start of UK Parliament Week, a programme of events and activities that connects people with the UK Parliament.

Organisations across the UK run events and activities throughout UK Parliament Week, which explore what the UK Parliament means to them and their community. There is something for everyone: whether you attend or organise an event, or simply take part in the conversation online using the hashtag #UKPW17.

Find out more at www.ukparliamentweek.org and follow @YourUkParl on Twitter for the latest news.



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The House of Commons Library aims to ensure that MPs are well informed ahead of any debate in the House of Commons chamber.

The purpose of this paper is to ensure that MYPs have access to the same relevant information to help them prepare for the debate in the House of Commons chamber.

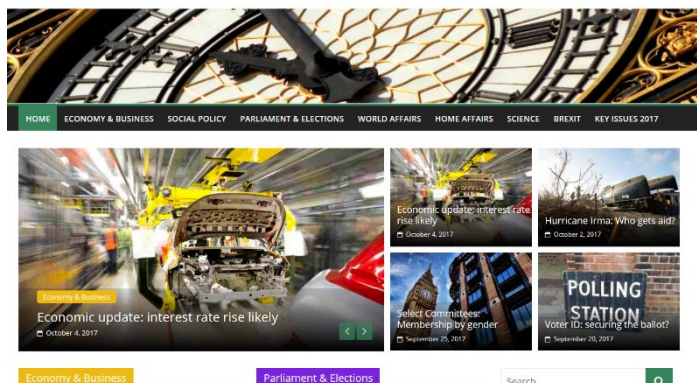
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Second Reading

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1. A curriculum to prepare us for life

Proposal before the Youth Parliament:

Schools should cover topics like finance, sex and relationship education and politics.

Education is a **devolved** subject. The Westminster Parliament would not make the decisions on how this topic would be addressed in Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland. As a result, **all the information included in this section relates to England only.**

1.1 Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE)

Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) is taught in schools across England. The PSHE Association defines PSHE as:

A planned programme of learning through which children and young people acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to manage their lives, now and in the future.¹

PSHE is a non-statutory subject. However, the [National Curriculum Framework](#) states that:

All schools should make provision for personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE), drawing on good practice. Schools are also free to include other subjects or topics of their choice in planning and designing their own programme of education.²

In September 2013, the Department for Education issued [new guidance on PSHE](#), which makes clear that it is largely up to schools to determine what is taught; it also states that the then Government did not intend to publish new non-statutory programmes of study for PSHE.

Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is an important and necessary part of all pupils' education. All schools should teach PSHE, drawing on good practice, and this expectation is outlined in the introduction to the proposed new national curriculum.

PSHE is a non-statutory subject. To allow teachers the flexibility to deliver high-quality PSHE we consider it unnecessary to provide new standardised frameworks or programmes of study. PSHE can encompass many areas of study. Teachers are best placed to understand the needs of their pupils and do not need additional central prescription.

However, while we believe that it is for schools to tailor their local PSHE programme to reflect the needs of their pupils, we expect schools to use their PSHE education programme to equip pupils

¹ PSHE Association, [What is PSHE and why is it important?](#) [accessed 15 September 2015]

² Department for Education, [The national curriculum in England: Framework document: for teaching 1 September 2014 to 31 August 2015](#), September 2013

with a sound understanding of risk and with the knowledge and skills necessary to make safe and informed decisions.

Schools should seek to use PSHE education to build, where appropriate, on the statutory content already outlined in the national curriculum, the basic school curriculum and in statutory guidance on: drug education, financial education, sex and relationship education (SRE) and the importance of physical activity and diet for a healthy lifestyle.³

The new guidance followed a review of PSHE carried out by the Coalition Government, which reported in March 2013, separately from its review of the National Curriculum.⁴ The [Summary Report](#) of the consultation on PSHE education (which includes discussion of sex and relationship education) sets out the views of the respondents to that consultation.⁵

PSHE Association

The Government provides grant funding to the [PSHE Association](#) to work with schools to advise them in developing their own PSHE curriculums and improve the quality of teaching.

The association focuses on signposting schools to resources and in expanding their Chartered Teacher of PSHE programme. The Government has also asked the association to promote the teaching of consent as part of SRE.⁶

The PSHE Association has published its own [programme of study](#) for PSHE, covering Key Stages 1-5. The programme has three core themes:

- Health and Wellbeing
- Relationships
- Living in the Wider World

Within these headings the programme includes focus on a variety of areas, including diversity and equality, relationships of different kinds, personal financial choices, drugs education, the importance of respecting and protecting the environment, and people's rights and responsibilities as members of families and other groups, and as citizens.⁷

Statutory PSHE?

On 1 March 2017, the Education Secretary, Justine Greening, [announced](#) her intention to put Relationships and Sex Education on a statutory footing. She also announced her intention to create a power to make PSHE statutory in future, following further work and consultation:

³ Department for Education, [Personal, social, health and economic education](#), 11 September 2013

⁴ Written Ministerial Statement at [HC Deb 21 Mar 2013 c52WS](#)

⁵ Department for Education, [Consultation on PSHE Education: Summary Report](#), March 2013

⁶ Department for Education, [Personal, social, health and economic education](#), 11 September 2013

⁷ PSHE Association, [PSHE programme of study \(Key stages 1-5\)](#), January 2017

The amendments [to the *Children and Social Work Bill*] also create a power enabling the Government to make regulations requiring PSHE to be taught in academies and maintained schools – it is already compulsory in independent schools. By creating a power on PSHE, we are allowing time to consider what the right fit of this subject is with Relationships Education and Relationships and Sex Education.⁸

It is intended that the announced changes to Relationships and Sex Education would be in place for teaching to begin in September 2019. No indication has been given of a timetable for the potential introduction of statutory PSHE.

Section 35 of the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#) provides for PSHE to be made statutory at all schools in England through regulations.

A [Policy Statement](#) published alongside the announcement indicated that PSHE would be reviewed, in the context of statutory Relationships and Sex Education, to determine what the subject's makeup could be with statutory status, under the following 'broad pillars':

- Healthy bodies and lifestyles, including keeping safe, puberty, drugs and alcohol education;
- Healthy minds, including emotional wellbeing, resilience, mental health;
- Economic wellbeing and financial capability;
- Careers education, preparation for the workplace and making a positive contribution to society.⁹

Education Committee report and recommendation for statutory PSHE

In 2014-15, the Commons Education Select Committee conducted an enquiry into PSHE and Sex and Relationship Education (SRE), including consideration of whether the two subjects should be made statutory. In February 2015 the Committee [recommended](#) that age-appropriate PSHE, including SRE, should become a statutory subject in primary and secondary schools.¹⁰ The Committee believed that the then Government's:

...current strategy for improving PSHE is weak, with a mismatch between the priority that ministers claim they give PSHE and the steps that have been taken to improve the quality of teaching in the subject.¹¹

The [Government response](#) published in July 2015 did not take forward this recommendation for PSHE to be made statutory, although it stated

⁸ [HC Deb 1 March 2017, HCWS509](#)

⁹ Department for Education, [Policy Statement: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Personal, Social, Health, and Economic Education](#), March 2017

¹⁰ House of Commons Education Select Committee, [All schools should have to provide PSHE and SRE](#), 17 February 2015

¹¹ Ibid.

that it would be giving further consideration to the Committee's arguments in 2015.¹²

The Chair of the new Education Committee, Neil Carmichael, was [critical](#) of the Government's response:

The response made by the Government today is disappointing.

Ministers entirely sidestep the call made by MPs in the closing months of the last Parliament to give statutory status to PSHE.

They also reject or brush over nearly every other recommendation made by the previous Education Committee in their key report published five months ago.

It is unclear why it should have taken the Government so long to publish such a feeble response.¹³

In November 2015, the Chair of the Committee [wrote](#) to the Education Secretary to stress that the Committee expected an update on statutory status, and urging that the arguments in favour of statutory status should be considered carefully.¹⁴

In December 2015, Natasha Devon, founder of the Self-Esteem Team and mental health champion at the Department for Education, told the Education Committee in [oral evidence](#) to its inquiry into the mental health and wellbeing of looked after children that she believed the Education Secretary favoured statutory status, but that there were budgetary issues:

Q50: [...] As far as I am aware—this is just anecdotal—Nicky Morgan is in favour of it being made statutory, so the question is: what more can we do? My hunch is that financial considerations are at the root of the decision not to make it statutory, because as soon as you make it statutory you have to give it a budget.¹⁵

Joint letter from select committee Chairs

In January 2016, the Chairs of four Commons select committees – education, health, home affairs and business, innovation and skills – [wrote](#) to the then Education Secretary, citing committee reports and statements from the Children's Commissioner and the Chief Medical Officer, in support of statutory PSHE and SRE.

The letter stated that it was "clear to the four of us that there is a need to work towards PSHE and SRE becoming statutory in all schools."¹⁶

¹² Department for Education, [Government response: Life lessons: PSHE and SRE in schools](#), Cm 9121, July 2015, p9

¹³ House of Commons Education Select Committee, [Government response to sex education report is "feeble"](#), 16 July 2015

¹⁴ Education Committee, [Letter from Neil Carmichael MP to Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP](#), 25 November 2015

¹⁵ Education Committee, Uncorrected oral evidence: [Mental health and well-being of looked after children](#), HC 481, 16 December 2015

¹⁶ Education Committee, [Letter from Neil Carmichael MP, Dr Sarah Wollaston MP, Rt Hon Keith Vaz MP, and Iain Wright MP, to Rt Hon Nicky Morgan MP](#), 8 January 2016

Women and Equalities Committee scrutiny and recommendation

As part of its inquiry into sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools, the Women and Equalities Committee [asked](#) for comments on the strength of the Government's evidence on the current status of PSHE and its work in this area, to inform its questions to Ministers.¹⁷

[The Committee's report](#) was published on 13 September 2016. One of the Committee's recommendations was that:

Every child at primary and secondary school must have access to high quality, age-appropriate relationships and sex education delivered by well-trained individuals. This can only be achieved by making sex and relationships education (SRE) a statutory subject; investing in teacher training; and investing in local third sector specialist support.¹⁸

The Committee further recommended that both PSHE and SRE should be made statutory.¹⁹

1.2 Sex and relationship education (SRE)

Sex and relationship education is distinct from PSHE, although many issues relating to SRE may be taught within the PSHE curriculum. The Library briefing [Sex and Relationship Education in Schools \(England\)](#), SN 6103, provides more detail on what is taught and the campaigns for reform.

Current position

The [gov.uk website](#) provides a brief overview of the rules relating to SRE in schools:

Sex and relationship education (SRE) is compulsory from age 11 onwards. It involves teaching children about reproduction, sexuality and sexual health. It doesn't promote early sexual activity or any particular sexual orientation.

Some parts of sex and relationship education are compulsory - these are part of the national curriculum for science. Parents can withdraw their children from all other parts of sex and relationship education if they want.

All schools must have a written policy on sex education, which they must make available to parents for free

Academies and free schools do not have to follow the National Curriculum and so are not under the same statutory obligations as local authority maintained schools. As such, they are not obliged to teach sex

¹⁷ Women and Equalities Committee, [Personal, Social, Health and Economic education and the curriculum](#), 5 July 2016

¹⁸ Women and Equalities Committee, ['Widespread' sexual harassment and violence in schools must be tackled](#), 13 September 2016

¹⁹ House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee, [Sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools \(full report\)](#), HC 91 session 2016-17, September 2016, para 151

and relationship education;²⁰ if they do provide it, they must have regard to the [SRE guidance](#) issued by the Secretary of State.²¹

Reform: statutory Relationships and Sex Education

On 1 March 2017, the Education Secretary, Justine Greening, [announced](#) her intention to put 'Relationships and Sex Education' – rather than SRE – on a statutory footing.

Section 34 of the [Children and Social Work Act 2017](#) requires:

- All primary schools in England to teach age-appropriate 'relationships education'; and
- All secondary schools in England to teach age-appropriate 'relationships and sex education' (RSE)

The parental right to withdraw children from sex education has been retained.²²

These changes apply to all schools in England – local authority maintained, academies and independent.

The Education Secretary stated:

The statutory guidance for Sex and Relationships Education was introduced in 2000 and is becoming increasingly outdated. It fails to address risks to children that have grown in prevalence over the last 17 years, including cyber bullying, 'sexting' and staying safe online. [...]

Schools will have flexibility over how they deliver these subjects, so they can develop an integrated approach that is sensitive to the needs of the local community; and, as now, faith schools will continue to be able to teach in accordance with the tenets of their faith.²³

The [Department for Education \(DfE\) has stated](#) that regulations and statutory guidance to implement these plans will be subject to full public consultation later in 2017, and highlighted the emphasis in the new subject on relationships, indicated by the change of name:

The government is proposing the introduction of the new subject of 'relationships education' in primary school and renaming the secondary school subject 'relationships and sex education', to emphasise the central importance of healthy relationships. The focus in primary school will be on building healthy relationships and staying safe. As children get older, it is important that they start to develop their understanding of healthy adult relationships in more depth, with sex education delivered in that context.²⁴

²⁰ Unless there is a clause in their funding agreements requiring SRE to be taught.

²¹ Department for Education and Employment, [Sex and Relationship Education Guidance](#), July 2000

²² However, the DfE has stated that clarification is being sought on "the age at which a young person may have the right to make their own decisions," and that a blanket right for parents to withdraw their child from sex education is no longer consistent with English caselaw (or with the ECHR and UNCRC). The outcome will be set out in regulations which will be subject to consultation and debate. See Department for Education, [Policy Statement: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Personal, Social, Health, and Economic Education](#), March 2017

²³ [HC Deb 1 March 2017, HCWS509](#)

²⁴ Department for Education, [Schools to teach 21st century relationships and sex education](#), 1 March 2017

DfE Policy Statement: proposed RSE content and timeline

The Department for Education [Policy Statement](#), published in March 2017, gave an indication of the intended focus of RSE and the issues that would be focused on in its teaching. These themes would form the focus of RSE, and will be addressed as the Government reviews and consults on RSE content during 2017:

- **Different types of relationships**, including friendships, family relationships, dealing with strangers and, at secondary school, intimate relationships;
- How to recognise, understand and build **healthy relationships**, including self-respect and respect for others, commitment, tolerance, boundaries and consent, and how to manage conflict, and also how to recognise unhealthy relationships;
- How relationships may affect **health and wellbeing, including mental health**;
- Healthy relationships and **safety online**; and
- Factual knowledge, at secondary school, around **sex, sexual health and sexuality**, set firmly within the context of relationships.²⁵

Proposed Timeline

March 2017: Introduction of amendments to *Children and Social Work Bill*

Spring 2017: Work to consider RSE content begins, engagement with stakeholders

Autumn 2017: Draft regulations and guidance for consultation

Following consultation: Regulations and final draft guidance laid in the House for debate

Early 2018: After regulations have been passed, final statutory guidance published

September 2019: Teaching of new RSE requirements begins.

1.3 Citizenship education

Citizenship is a compulsory National Curriculum subject at key stages (KS) 3 and 4 (pupils aged 11-16) and so is taught in all local authority maintained secondary schools in England. It is also part of the curriculum at some academy and free schools, and independent schools, although those schools are not required to follow the National Curriculum.

New statutory programmes of study for citizenship were introduced from September 2014. The [new programmes of study and attainment targets for citizenship at key stages 3 and 4](#) were published in September 2013, and the DfE has also [published a non-statutory programme of study for Key Stages 1 and 2](#).

[The KS 3 and 4 programme](#) sets out the aims of citizenship education:

²⁵ Department for Education, [Policy Statement: Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education, and Personal, Social, Health, and Economic Education](#), March 2017

The national curriculum for citizenship aims to ensure that all pupils:

- acquire a sound knowledge and understanding of how the United Kingdom is governed, its political system and how citizens participate actively in its democratic systems of government
- develop a sound knowledge and understanding of the role of law and the justice system in our society and how laws are shaped and enforced
- develop an interest in, and commitment to, participation in volunteering as well as other forms of responsible activity, that they will take with them into adulthood
- are equipped with the skills to think critically and debate political questions, to enable them to manage their money on a day-to-day basis, and plan for future financial needs.

More details are included in the programme about what should be taught at each stage.

Citizenship studies may also be studied as a GCSE, and [subject content](#) has been published by the Department for Education. Pages 4-6 set out relevant subject matter that may be studied covering democracy in the UK and politics overseas, as well as citizen participation in democracy.

1.4 Further Reading

- Rt Hon Justine Greening MP, [Written statement on RSE and PSHE](#), 1 March 2017, HCWS509
- Department for Education, [Sex and Relationship Education Guidance](#), 2000
- House of Commons Library, [Personal, social, health and economic education in schools \(England\)](#), CBP 7303, June 2017
- House of Commons Library, [Sex and Relationship Education in Schools \(England\)](#), SN 6103, June 2017
- House of Commons Library, [Financial and enterprise education in schools](#), SN 6156, November 2016
- Ofsted, [Not yet good enough: personal, social, health and economic education in schools](#), May 2013
- House of Commons Education Select Committee, [Life Lessons: PSHE and SRE in schools](#), February 2015
- Department for Education, [Government response: Life lessons: PSHE and SRE in schools](#), Cm 9121, July 2015
- House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee, [Sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools \(full report\)](#), HC 91 session 2016-17, September 2016

2. Votes at 16

Proposal before the Youth Parliament:

To reduce the age of voting in elections to include 16 and 17 year olds

Under current legislation, **a person must be 18 or over to vote** in all elections in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and in a UK general election. The voting age for all elections in the UK was lowered from 21 to 18 in 1969.

The franchise for the referendum on independence for Scotland in 2014 was extended to **include 16 and 17 year olds**. The law has subsequently been changed in Scotland to lower the voting age to 16 for elections to the Scottish Parliament and local government elections in Scotland, although the voting age for UK Parliamentary elections there remains at 18, as in the rest of the UK.

The Welsh Government is now considering lowering the voting age for elections to the National Assembly for Wales and local elections within Wales.

Of the major political parties in the House of Commons, lowering the voting age is now party policy for the Labour Party, the Scottish National Party and the Liberal Democrats. The Greens also support the proposal, as do several of the political parties in Northern Ireland.

However, the Conservative Government in Westminster opposes changing the voting age for elections in England and for elections to the House of Commons.

Supporters of votes at 16 point out that people below 18 years old can work, must pay tax, and can join the army, claim benefits, have sex, smoke, get married or leave home without their parents' permission and say it is illogical to deny such people the right to vote.

Opponents argue that some of these arguments are not fully thought through. Joining the army and marriage below the age of 18 requires parental permission. The age at which you can legally purchase cigarettes, alcohol and fireworks is 18 and the Government recently announced proposals to ban anyone under 18 buying acids. Opponents question whether 16 and 17 year olds can be trusted with the vote if they cannot be trusted to do these other things.²⁶

²⁶ LSE, [Votes at 16: democracy experts respond to Ed Miliband's proposal](#), September 2013, Democratic Audit summary of expert opinion gathered after Ed Miliband announced the Labour Party supported lowering the voting age to 16.

2.1 Who supports lowering the voting age to 16?

At the 2016 Youth Parliament's sitting in the House of Commons, MYPs voted in favour of making "Votes for 16 and 17 year olds in all public elections" UK Youth Parliament's national campaign for 2017.²⁷

The British Youth Council's Youth Select Committee report of 2014 recommended that the Government introduce legislation to allow for 16 and 17 year olds to vote. Membership was drawn from a number of youth organisations from across the UK. One of the Committee's conclusion was that:

UK society has a number of different ages at which it gives rights and responsibilities to people. And there is no single age of maturity in the UK, although both 16 and 18 are clearly important milestones. We firmly believe that 16 year olds are mature enough to vote and we think our evidence supports this.²⁸

The British Youth Council also runs a [votes at 16 campaign](#).

At the 2017 General Election, the Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats, the Scottish National Party, Plaid Cymru, the Green Party, and the Alliance Party all contained manifesto commitments to reduce the voting age to allow 16 and 17-year olds in all elections in the UK. These parties represent six of the top twelve parties at the 2017 General Election

Labour's manifesto said:

We will reduce the voting age to 16. At 16, you are eligible to pay tax, get married or even join the army. You deserve a vote.²⁹

Although not included in their 2017 General Election or 2017 Assembly election manifestos, the Ulster Unionist Party previously contained commitment to votes at 16 in its 2016 Assembly election manifesto.³⁰

Sinn Féin recently reaffirmed its support for voting age to be lowered to 16 across the whole of the island of Ireland.³¹ In November 2012 the Northern Ireland Assembly supported a Private Members' Business motion from Sinn Féin in favour of lowering the voting age to 16. The motion was opposed by the Democratic Unionist Party,

Historically, the Conservative Party has generally opposed lowering the voting age on the grounds that 16 and 17 year olds are not mature enough to have the vote. Its 2017 General Election manifesto stated, "We will retain the current franchise to vote in parliamentary elections at eighteen".³²

The Prime Minister repeated this view at Prime Minister's Questions on 19 July 2017:

²⁷ United Kingdom Youth Parliament Debate, 11 November 2016, c63

²⁸ Youth Select Committee report 2014, *Lowering the voting age to 16*

²⁹ Labour Party, *For the Many not the Few, The Labour party Manifesto 2017*, p103

³⁰ Ulster Unionist Party Northern Ireland Assembly Manifesto 2016, p36

³¹ Lower voting age to 16 across Ireland - Kelly, 11 August 2017

³² *Forward, Together: Our Plan for a Stronger Britain and a Prosperous Future Conservative Party Manifesto 2017*, p 43

My view has always been and continues to be that 18 is the right age. We expect people to continue in education or training until the age of 18, and I think that is the right point for the voting age.³³

In 2015, the leader of the Scottish Conservatives, Ruth Davidson, announced that she supported lowering the voting age. In her contribution to the Tory Reform Group's publication, [Giving 16 and 17 year olds the vote: the Tory case](#), Ruth Davidson wrote:

In the weeks following the [Scottish independence] referendum, the debate has inevitably shifted onto whether the franchise should now be extended to all other elections. Those in favour of the status quo argue that while the referendum offered a clear, unambiguous choice, parliamentary elections present a more muddled, multi-layered decision which require a more mature electorate.

But having watched and debated in front of 16 and 17 year olds throughout the referendum, I have found myself unable to agree. My position has changed. We deem 16 year olds adult enough to join the army, to have sex, get married, leave home and work fulltime. The evidence of the referendum suggests that, clearly, they are old enough to vote too.³⁴

2.2 How many 16 and 17 year olds are there in the UK?

According to the 2016 mid-year population estimates from the Office of National Statistics there are nearly 1.5 million 16 and 17 year olds in the UK.

This represents about 2.3% of the population.

Population aged 16 and 17 in the UK: mid-2016

	Population	Population aged 16 and 17	2017 General election electorate
United Kingdom	65,648,000	1,490,000	46,826,000
England	55,268,000	1,256,000	39,297,000
Scotland	5,405,000	116,000	3,988,000
Wales	3,113,000	71,000	2,298,000
Northern Ireland	1,862,000	48,000	1,243,000

Sources:

ONS Mid-year population estimates

House of Commons Library General Election statistics

In order to register to vote for elections to the UK Parliament you must be British, Irish or a qualifying Commonwealth citizen resident in the UK. In addition citizens of an EU country resident in the UK may register to vote in local government elections and elections to the devolved administrations.

³³ [HC Deb 19 July 2017, c834](#)

³⁴ [Giving 16 and 17 year olds the vote: the Tory case](#), Tory Reform Group, 27 September 2015

The table above shows the registered electorate at the 2017 General Election (which excludes EU nationals who are ineligible to vote at a UK General Election).

Not all of the 1.5 million 16 and 17 year olds living in the UK may meet the nationality qualification to register.

2.3 What would the impact of letting 16 and 17 year olds vote?

It is not possible to predict how many 16 and 17 year olds would turn out to vote and how they would vote. There is no official data on turnout by age, but polling data suggests that turnout tends to increase with age, with the lowest turnout in the younger age groups. However, research has indicated that if voters vote in the first elections they are eligible for, they are more likely to vote throughout their lives.³⁵

Survey data suggests that at the 2017 General Elections, Conservative support was strong among older voters. 61% of those aged 65+ reported voting Conservative and 25% Labour. Around 62% young voters aged 18-24 supported Labour and 27% supported the Conservative Party.³⁶

In July 2017, the Office for National Statistics published an article *What impact could lowering the UK voting age to 16 have on the shape of the electorate?*

Its calculations found that overall there were 88 constituencies where the number of 16- and 17-year-olds was greater than the winning margin. As the article notes

This doesn't mean that the outcome in the seats would have changed, that would depend on voter turnout and preference, but it does show us those areas where there would have been potential for change.

2.4 What has happened in Scotland?

The franchise (those eligible to vote) was extended temporarily in Scotland to allow 16 and 17 year-olds to vote in the referendum on independence in 2014. The Electoral Commission reported that those registered to vote at the referendum included 109,593 16 and 17 year olds

The Scottish Parliament was subsequently given the power to extend the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds for elections to the Scottish Parliament and for local government elections in Scotland.

On 18 June 2015, the *Scottish Elections (Reduction of Voting Age) Bill* was passed by the Scottish Parliament. It meant 16 and 17 year olds were able to vote in the Scottish Parliament elections from 2016 and in local government elections in Scotland from 2017.

³⁵ Democratic Audit, *Engaging young voters with enhanced election information*, 2014, page 21

³⁶ See Chapter 3.2 Who voted for which party? Social characteristics of voters – in the Library briefing, *General Election 2017: full results and analysis*

Some argue that lowering voting age will have a negative impact on turnout and drive down turnout overall. This does not seem to have been the case in Scotland, although whether or not people turnout to vote is a complex decision and not determined by a single factor.

There are no breakdowns of votes cast by characteristics of voters because votes are cast in secret, but opinion polls and surveys can give some idea of how people vote.

Generally younger people have lower levels of turnout than older voters. Despite this, the independence referendum in Scotland in 2014, the first time 16 and 17 year olds could vote in a public poll anywhere in the UK, saw the highest turnout at a nationwide referendum or parliamentary election in Scotland since the franchise was extended to women in 1918.

A survey carried out by the Electoral Commission indicated that 69% of 16-34 year olds said that they voted in the referendum on independence, compared with 85% of 35-54 year olds and 92% of the 55+ age group. Claimed turnout amongst 16-17 year olds was 75%, significantly higher than amongst 18-24 year olds (54%).

The Electoral Commission reported that 97% of those 16-17 year olds who reported having voted in the 2014 independence referendum said that they would vote again in future elections and referendums.³⁷

The Scottish Parliament elections of May 2016 were the first that 16 and 17 year old could vote in. About 80,000 were registered to vote, about 2% of the electorate. As with the referendum, 16 and 17 year olds were generally less likely to have said they had voted than older voters. Claimed turnout for 16 and 17 year olds was 78%, similar to the referendum, compared to over 90% of those aged 55+.

Overall the turnout at the 2016 Scottish Parliament elections was 55.8% of the registered electorate in the constituency vote and 55.9% in the regional vote. This is the highest turnout recorded since the first Scottish Parliament election in 1999 where 58.8% of the eligible electorate voted in the constituency ballot and 58.7% in the regional ballot.³⁸

This pattern seems to have continued in 2017. The 2017 local council elections in Scotland were the first Scotland-wide set of council elections at which 16 and 17 year olds could vote. Overall turnout for the elections was 46.9%. This was the highest turnout in stand-alone local council elections in Scotland since 1977. Turnout was higher in 1999, 2003 and 2007 but elections were held on the same day as the Scottish Parliament elections in those years.³⁹

³⁷ Electoral Commission, [Scottish Independence Referendum Report on the referendum held on 18 September 2014](#), December 2014

³⁸ Electoral Commission, [The May 2016 Scottish Parliament election: Report on the administration of the 5 May 2016 Scottish Parliament election](#), September 2016

³⁹ Electoral Commission, [Scottish council elections 2017 Report on the administration of the elections held on 4 May 2017](#), September 2017

2.5 The lowering of the voting age in Wales?

In Wales, the power to lower the voting age for elections to the Assembly and local elections in Wales is to be devolved to Cardiff. The [Wales Act 2017](#) received Royal Assent on 31 January 2017 and gives the NAW and the Welsh government legislative competence for the administration of Assembly and local government elections in Wales, including the franchise for those elections. These powers are expected to be transferred in 2018.

The Welsh Government supports the lowering of the voting age for local government elections. It has recently consulted on electoral reform in Wales. [The consultation](#) ran from 18 July to the 10 October 2017. It said:

The case for enabling 16-year-olds to vote has been well-rehearsed. With most of the 16 and 17-year-old cohort these days being in school, it makes them far more exposed to political education of some sort than was the case in previous generations. Use of social media and electronic media sites is high amongst this age group and discussion of major political events is common.⁴⁰

The consultation points out that the franchise for elections to the Assembly is linked to the local government franchise. Extending the local government register to include 16 and 17-year-olds would, without changes to the current legislation, apply automatically to voting at Assembly elections. The Welsh Government has said “It will, of course, be for the Assembly to determine, if it so wishes, to remain affixed to the local government register.”

The Presiding Officer of the National Assembly for Wales has established an independent [Expert Panel on Electoral Reform](#) to examine the number of Assembly Members, the voting system to be used for Assembly elections and the voting age for Assembly elections.

The last time the National Assembly voted on the subject of reducing the voting age Assembly Members voted 41 votes to 5 in favour of lowering the voting age for council elections in Wales. A further seven Members abstained.⁴¹

The National Assembly also undertook a consultation on lowering the voting age to 16 in November 2014. A summary of responses was published in July 2015, [Vote@16? The consultation](#) and of the 10,300 young people aged 11 to 25 surveyed, 53% favoured lowering the voting age to 16 and 79% agreed that young people should have political education and learn about politics and voting.

2.6 Recent debates in Parliament

There have been a number of debates in Parliament in recent years on the subject of reducing the voting age to 16.

⁴⁰ Welsh Government, [Electoral Reform in Local Government in Wales](#), Number: WG32167, p7

⁴¹ The vote was on amendment 7 to the debate on [Strengthening Local Government Democracy](#) on 14 May 2013.

Backbench business debate 24 January 2013

Stephen Williams (Liberal Democrat) secured a backbench business debate on 24 January 2013 on the lowering of the voting age.⁴² Mr Williams suggested that the time had come to extend the franchise to 16 and 17 year-olds:

There is widespread support for this proposed measure among parliamentarians from all parties. It is also supported by a wide coalition of youth charities, including the British Youth Council, Barnardo's and the YMCA, as well as youth representation groups, such as the National Union of Students and, as the hon. Member for Worthing West (Sir Peter Bottomley) just mentioned, the UK Youth Parliament...⁴³

Natascha Engel (Labour) argued that the Scottish referendum would provide the opportunity to see how giving 16-year-olds the vote could work:

Why should we not view it as a pilot? After 16, 17 and 18-year-olds have had their say in the referendum, we can look at how it went. I agree that the genie is out of the bottle once 16-year-olds are able to vote in a referendum, because after that it will be very difficult to say to them that they are to be denied a vote in the general election that will take place in the following year.⁴⁴

The Government was not convinced that there was sufficient evidence to reduce the voting age.

A division at the end of the debate on the motion "that this House believes that the age of eligibility for voting in all elections and referendums in the United Kingdom should be reduced to 16" was agreed: Ayes 119, Noes 46. This was a non-binding vote.

Westminster Hall debate 6 May 2014

Sarah Champion (Labour) secured a [Westminster Hall debate](#) on 6 May 2014 on votes at 16.⁴⁵ Sarah Champion argued that the time was right "to open the democratic system even further and to include 16 and 17 year-olds among the people who are able to vote."⁴⁶ She continued:

We have been pioneers of voting reform in the UK in the past, and I hope that we are open-minded enough now to continue that trend. It is high time that we recognised the clash within our expectations of 16-year-olds. We trust our young people to contribute to society in many ways, so we should start to give them their democratic rights.⁴⁷

Tom Brake, then Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Leader of the House, responded to the debate which he said had "again shown the divergent views in this House on whether 16 and 17-year-olds should be

⁴² [HC Deb 24 January 2013 c479](#)

⁴³ [HC Deb 24 January 2013 c479](#)

⁴⁴ [HC Deb 24 January 2013 c494](#)

⁴⁵ [HC Deb 6 May 2014 c1WH](#)

⁴⁶ [HC Deb 6 May 2014 c2WH](#)

⁴⁷ [HC Deb 6 May 2014 c7WH](#)

eligible to vote” and had reflected “differing opinions on the issue in society at large”.⁴⁸

Cities and Local Government Bill 2015-16

During Report Stage of the *Cities and Local Government Bill [HL] 2015-16* in the House of Lords, the Government was defeated on an amendment moved by Lord Tyler (Liberal Democrat) which made provision to lower the voting age for council elections.⁴⁹ Lord Tyler argued that the engagement of young voters in the Scottish independence referendum showed that 16 – 17 year olds were ready to vote in all elections:

...since September last year, we have had hard empirical evidence from Scotland of the readiness among young people to take on this vital civic function. The huge success of the extension of the vote to 16 and 17 year-olds in the referendum ... was thought by some to be a step too far.

But consider the facts. First, there was a remarkable response in terms of registration—no signs of disinterest there. Secondly, the level of debate, as noted by all observers including Members of your Lordships’ House, was lively, intelligent and very well informed.

...The new young voters proved themselves to be better informed, more conscientious and even more mature than many of their elders—they blew to smithereens all the misgivings and dire warnings of the doomsayers.⁵⁰

The amendment was reversed by the House of Commons on 17 November 2015.⁵¹

EU Referendum Bill 2015-16

During the passage of the *European Union Referendum Bill 2015-16* there were attempts to amend the Bill to allow the franchise for the referendum to include 16 and 17 year olds. Amendments at Committee Stage and Report Stage in the House of Commons were rejected following votes.

At Report Stage of the Bill in the House of Lords on 18 November 2015, an amendment to extend the franchise for the referendum to 16 and 17 year olds was agreed after a division, Contents 293; Not-Contents 211.⁵²

Introducing the amendment, Baroness Morgan of Ely (Labour), argued that it was right to reduce the voting age for the referendum:

This is a very exceptional situation, because it is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for [16 and 17 year-olds] to vote on this significant issue. It is different from other elections, because within two years’ time they will be able to take a position on who they want to run their country; in this instance, they will possibly

⁴⁸ [HC Deb 6 May 2014 c27WH](#)

⁴⁹ [HL Deb 15 July 2015 c625](#)

⁵⁰ [HL Deb 15 July 2015 c625](#)

⁵¹ [HC Deb 17 November 2015 c581](#)

⁵² [HL Deb 18 November 2015 c180](#)

never again get a say on their country's future relationship with the EU. However, they will have to live with the consequences of that decision for longer than any of us.⁵³

The Government was not persuaded that the franchise should be changed for the referendum. It said it was not appropriate to use the EU Referendum Bill to reduce the voting age and "A change of this sort needs substantial legislation; it is a very important change."⁵⁴

Ten Minute Rule Bill on reducing the voting age 20 July 2016

On 20 July 2016, Caroline Lucas (Green) introduced a bill under the Ten Minute Rule Bill procedure, to introduce proportional representation for elections to the House of Commons and to reduce the voting age to 16 in all UK elections.⁵⁵

Caroline Lucas set out her arguments for lowering the voting age:

The United Kingdom was one of the first countries in the world to lower the voting age from 21 to 18, but it is now trailing behind countries such as Brazil, Argentina, and Austria—unless, of course, you live in Scotland, which has blazed a trail with a more inclusive and equal political system, through giving 16 and 17-year-olds the vote in the independence referendum. Those young people need a say, not just on the future of the Union, but on all the decisions that affect their future. We also need equality between 16 and 17-year-olds in Scotland and those in the rest of the UK.⁵⁶

John Penrose (Conservative) disagreed:

This Bill ignores the repeatedly expressed democratic will of Parliament, which has already rejected lowering the voting age many times over the past year.⁵⁷

Ten Minute Rule Bills a good opportunity to raise the profile of an issue and to see whether it has support among other Members but rarely make further progress. On this occasion the House voted 81 to 74 against allowing the Bill to be introduced.

Voting Age (Reduction) Bill [HL] 2017-19

The Labour peer and former Minister, Lord Adonis, has introduced a Private Member's Bill in the House of Lords to extend the vote to all 16 and 17 year olds for all Parliamentary and local elections.

His *Voting Age (Reduction) Bill [HL] 2017-19* has not yet been debated.

2.7 Other countries

The voting age for national elections in other EU countries is 18, except for Austria. In Austria several regions lowered the voting age in regional

⁵³ [HL Deb 18 November 2015 c153](#)

⁵⁴ [HL Deb 18 November 2015 c179](#)

⁵⁵ [HC Deb 20 July 2016 c834](#)

⁵⁶ [HC Deb 20 July 2016 c834](#)

⁵⁷ [HC Deb 20 July 2016 c838](#)

and local elections from 2000. In 2007 the voting age for national elections was lowered to 16.

Research suggests young people's interest in politics has risen in Austria since the voting age has been lowered although the interest and engagement has not been even.⁵⁸

In 2011, Norway saw some areas experiment with allowing 16 and 17 year olds vote in municipal elections. Results were more mixed and young voters were less engaged, but this may have been as a result of them knowing it was an experiment and not a permanent change.⁵⁹

In February 2006 the Isle of Man was the first part of the British Isles to lower the voting age from 18 to 16. Although it is not officially part of the United Kingdom, it recognises the Queen as Head of State and its citizens are British.

The Channel Island of Jersey lowered its voting age from 18 to 16 in July 2007. Although Jersey is not officially part of the United Kingdom, like the Isle of Man, its citizens are British.

Other countries that allow 16 and 17 year olds to vote in national elections are Argentina, Austria, Brazil, Cuba, Ecuador and Nicaragua. Voting is compulsory in all except Brazil, where it is compulsory for voters aged 18-70 and voluntary for those 16 and 17 and 70+.

In March 2017 the Republic of Ireland Senead debated legislation to lower the voting age to 16 for local and European Parliamentary elections. However, after a vote the legislation was delayed for nine months. Reducing the voting age for national elections would require a constitutional amendment.

2.8 Further reading

[Voting age](#), House of Commons Library Briefing Paper

Hansard Society, [Audit of Political Engagement](#)

National Assembly for Wales, [Vote@16? The consultation](#)

Welsh Government, [Electoral Reform in Local Government in Wales](#)

⁵⁸ LSE blog, [The Austrian experience shows that there is little risk and much to gain from giving 16-year-olds the vote](#)

⁵⁹ BBC iWonder, [Are you old enough to vote at 16?](#)

3. Protect LGBT + People

Proposal before the Youth Parliament:

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender + young people deserve to be treated the same as everyone else; discrimination needs to be challenged.

Discrimination on various grounds, known as “protected characteristics” is prohibited by the *Equality Act 2010* in a range of areas, including employment, services and public functions, education and housing.

[Section 4](#) of the Act sets out all the protected characteristics, which include gender reassignment and sexual orientation. The following characteristics are protected characteristics:

- age;
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex;
- sexual orientation.

Gender reassignment is defined in [section 7](#) in the following terms:

A person has the protected characteristic of gender reassignment if the person is proposing to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone a process (or part of a process) for the purpose of reassigning the person's sex by changing physiological or other attributes of sex.

Sexual orientation is defined in [section 12](#) as follows:

Sexual orientation means a person's sexual orientation towards:

- (a) persons of the same sex,
- (b) persons of the opposite sex, or
- (c) persons of either sex.

Persons with protected characteristics are protected from discrimination. The Act identifies two types of discrimination: direct and indirect.

Direct discrimination occurs when a person, because of a protected characteristic, treats another less favourably than he would treat those without the characteristic ([section 13](#)).

Indirect discrimination occurs when a person applies a "provision, criterion or practice" which, although applied to persons with different protected characteristics (e.g. males and females) puts one group of persons at a particular disadvantage ([section 19](#)). For example, if a club has a policy of offering free entry to husbands or wives of members, but

not to civil partners, this would constitute indirect sexual orientation discrimination.

3.1 Criticism of the current law

Definition of “gender reassignment”

One area in which the protection afforded by the Act has been criticised, is the term “gender reassignment” in section 7. As set out above, the definition covers only those persons who propose to undergo, are undergoing, or have undergone some form of change for the purpose of reassigning attributes of sex. This could be a medical or purely social process. In either event, the definition excludes persons who do not wish to undergo such change; for example, persons who do not identify as any particular gender.

This gap in the law was highlighted by the Women and Equalities Select Committee in its first ever report, following the Committee’s appointment on 3 June 2015. In the report [Transgender Equality](#), published in December 2015, the Committee noted:

Our evidence also called into question the extent to which the Act protects people with broader kinds of trans identities, who may not be seeking, or may not have sought, gender reassignment, medical or otherwise...

Many witnesses proposed that ... the Government should ... amend the Equality Act to replace the “gender reassignment” characteristic with a broader definition. The EHRC told us that:

a broader definition of who is protected from transgender discrimination would provide more clarity and certainty for those with responsibilities and rights under the Act

Several witnesses proposed that the protected characteristic in Section 7 of the Equality Act should be changed to “gender identity”.⁶⁰

The Committee went on to recommend:

The inclusion of “gender reassignment” as a protected characteristic in the Equality Act 2010 was a huge step forward and has clearly improved the position of trans people. However, it is clear to us that the use of the terms “gender reassignment” and “transsexual” in the Act is outdated and misleading; and may not cover wider members of the trans community.

The protected characteristic in respect of trans people under the Equality Act should be amended to that of “gender identity”. This would improve the law by bringing the language in the Act up to date⁶¹

Since the Committee made this recommendation in 2015, the law has not been amended, although a Private Members’ Bill - the [Gender Identity \(Protected Characteristic\) Bill 2016-17](#) - was presented to Parliament in December 2016, which would have amended the law to

⁶⁰ House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee, *Transgender Equality*, First Report of Session 2015–16, pp25-26

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p27

reflect the Committee's recommendations. However, as the Bill did not receive its Second Reading prior to the 2017 General Election, it fell.

Gender recognition

The Women and Equalities Committee also criticised the current approach to applying for a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC) under the *Gender Recognition Act 2004*. In order to apply for a GRC – which enables a person's acquired gender to be legally recognised – a person must be 18 or over. The Committee's report recited evidence submitted by the Scottish Transgender Alliance stating that many people now transition younger:

[Younger trans people] often experience significant difficulties with official student records and violations of their right to privacy due to the sex on their birth certificate not reflecting their gender identity. With growing social acceptance, the annual number of children and adolescents coming out as transgender has increased five-fold over four years. We estimate over one thousand transgender young people have now transitioned with the full support of their parents and now require access to legal gender recognition.⁶²

The Committee went on to recommend:

For some young people the decision regarding gender recognition is straightforward; for some it is not. It is important that clear safeguards are in place to ensure that long term decisions about gender recognition are made at an appropriate time. Subject to this caveat, a persuasive case has been made to us in favour of reducing the minimum age at which application can be made for gender recognition. We recommend that provision should be made to allow 16- and 17-year-olds, with appropriate support, to apply for gender recognition, on the basis of self-declaration.⁶³

Since the Committee made this recommendation, the law has remained the same, and as such only those aged 18 or over may apply for a GRC.

⁶² Ibid., p17

⁶³ Ibid., p19

4. Support for young carers

Proposal before the Youth Parliament:

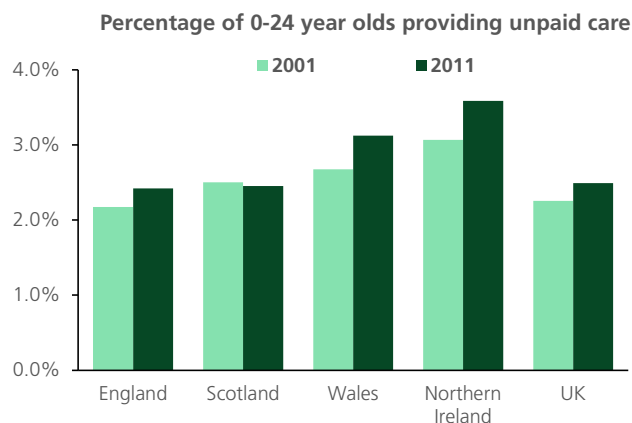
Government should increase funding to support Young Carers. Schools and youth organisations should work together better to support them.

A range of policies affect the support young carers receive. The devolved administrations have their own policies in areas where responsibility is devolved. The information below covers England only, unless otherwise stated.

4.1 How many young carers are there?

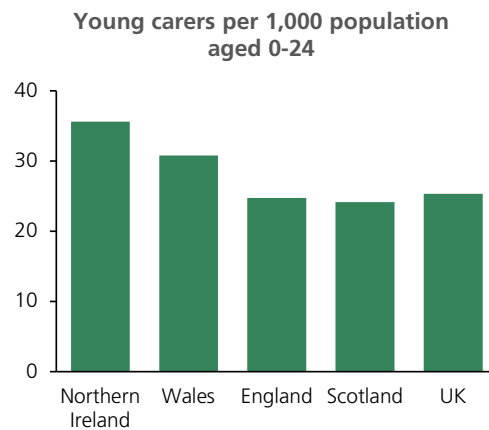
Young carers provide unpaid care to someone, usually a member of their family, on a regular basis. They may care for a parent, sibling, grandparent or other relative who has a disability, long-term illness, mental health problem or other condition which results in a need for care, support or supervision.

The 2011 Census found that there were **491,000 young carers** 24 or younger in the UK, an increase of around 87,000 since 2001. Numbers increased in all constituent countries of the UK, with the exception of Scotland which had a slight decrease (around 400 fewer in 2011). The proportion of under 25s providing unpaid care remained relatively stable at around 2.5%.⁶⁴

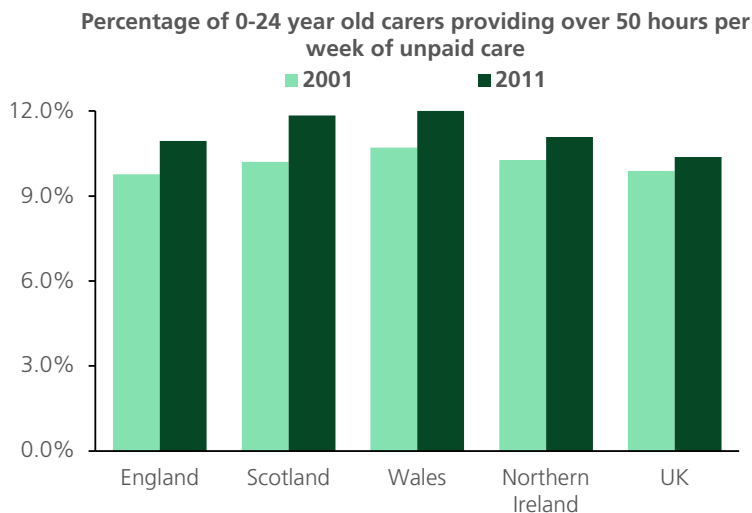


In 2011, Northern Ireland had the highest rate of young carers per 1,000 population (36 per 1,000) and Scotland had the lowest rate (24 per 1,000).

⁶⁴ Office for National Statistics, [2011 Census: Population Estimates for the United Kingdom](#), March 2011



The majority of young carers were providing 1 to 19 hours of care per week but over 10% were providing weekly care of 50 or more hours. The proportion providing over 50 hours care per week increased in all countries between 2001 and 2010.



A 2013 Children’s Society report, [Hidden from View](#), considered that many young carers would not have been included in the 2011 Census figures:

The Children’s Society believes this could be just the tip of the iceberg. Many young carers remain hidden from official sight for a host of reasons, including family loyalty, stigma, bullying, not knowing where to go for support. Some young carers are as young as five years old.⁶⁵

Indeed, organisations like the [Carer’s Trust](#) state that there are over 700,000 young carers in the UK. However, this estimate is based on a BBC article from 2010 highlighting a survey involving 10 secondary schools (see [Number of child carers 'four times previous estimate'](#)). Such a small sample is unlikely to be representative of the UK population as a whole. The 2011 Census estimates remain the most reliable indication of the scale of unpaid care.

⁶⁵ The Children’s Society, [Hidden from view. The experience of young carers in England](#), May 2013, p4

The Department for Education's (DfE) [Longitudinal Study of Young People in England](#) followed a cohort of young people as they were growing up. The last report, published in 2011, reported on the young people when they were aged 19. In terms of the proportion of young people with caring responsibilities, the study found:

At age 17

27% of the cohort had some caring responsibility; 15% regularly took care of children (not their own) in their own household, 11% took care of children outside their own home (without being paid) and 6% regularly looked after ill, disabled or elderly relatives or friends age 15+. There will be some overlap between the different types of caring responsibilities.

Girls were more likely to have caring responsibility than boys (30% v 24%) especially children outside their own home.

Minority ethnic groups were also more likely to be young carers, particularly those from Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black backgrounds (all in the 40-50% range).

Young people from all the south Asian backgrounds were more likely to be looking after ill, disabled or elderly relatives or friends (13-14%).⁶⁶

At age 18

26% of the cohort regularly provided unpaid care for either their own child, another child or another person aged 15 or over.⁶⁷

At age 19

25% of the cohort regularly provided unpaid care for either their own child, another child or another person aged 15 or over.⁶⁸

4.2 The lives of young carers

The 2015 Conservative Government commissioned a research project into the lives of young carers in England. The resulting report was published in February 2016.⁶⁹

Key findings included that:

- Parents reported that most of the young carers aged 5 to 17 were caring for someone inside the home. Of these, over half (55%) were caring for their mother and one in four (25%) were caring for a sibling. Lone parent families were over-represented in the sample.
- Cared-for parents/siblings all had a single or dual diagnoses of physical or mental health illnesses/disabilities, however these were

⁶⁶ Department for Education, [Youth cohort study and Longitudinal Study of Young People in England - The Activities and Experiences of 17 year olds: England 2008](#), 18 June 2009, section 3.2

⁶⁷ Department for Education, [Youth cohort study and Longitudinal Study of Young People in England - The Activities and Experiences of 18 year olds: England 2009](#), 22 July 2010, section 7.2

⁶⁸ Department for Education, [Youth cohort study and Longitudinal Study of Young People in England - The Activities and Experiences of 19 year olds: England 2010](#), 7 July 2011, section 5.2

⁶⁹ Department for Education, [The lives of young carers in England](#), February 2016

often also accompanied by other physical and/or mental health issues that had not been formally diagnosed.

- Nearly eight out of ten (78%) young carers were reported by their parents to be undertaking practical tasks as part of their caring responsibilities, such as cooking, cleaning, doing paperwork or helping with household chores. As might be expected, caring responsibility increased with age. Over one in four (26%) were providing nursing care, and parents considered that over half (57%) also provided emotional support.
- Although the majority of parents (53%) reported that their child was providing up to an hour or so of care a day during the school or college week, around one in seven (14%) reported four or more hours caring each day rising to over one in four (26%) at the weekends.
- School holiday periods were particularly challenging for most of the young carers due to an increase in their caring responsibilities at home and reduced opportunities to engage in other activities both inside and outside the home as compared to term-time.
- Caring was seen to be a very rewarding role by the majority of the young carers – regardless of age or length of time caring - bringing with it a range of positive emotional and psychological benefits. However caring also had adverse effects: anxiety, stress, tiredness, strain within family relationships, restrictions in social activities and relationships, and under-engagement in education.
- Formal or informal support helped reduce the extent of young carers' responsibilities, however not all parents were comfortable disclosing their condition to health and social care professionals due to a fear of the potential repercussions for their family.

4.3 Support for young carers in England

Under the [Children Act 1989](#) as amended, local authorities have a duty "to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need".⁷⁰ Prior to 1 April 2015, however (when the relevant sections of the [Children and Families Act 2014](#) came into force), there had been no legal provisions in force specifically for young carers.⁷¹

Section 96 of the [Children and Families Act 2014](#) amended the [Children Act 1989](#) to give young carers under the age of 18 in England the same right to a needs assessment as adult carers, including the appropriateness of the child providing care in light of their own needs. This was articulated in a written statement on the [Children and Families Bill](#)⁷² by the then Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove:

It is clear therefore that we need to do more to support young carers. With the Care Bill also under consideration by Parliament, this is an ideal opportunity to ensure that young carers get equal consideration and protection. That is not to say that they should be treated the same as adult carers. We are committed to

⁷⁰ [Children Act 1989](#) as amended, section 17

⁷¹ The [Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000](#) defined a carer as someone over 16.

⁷² When Parliament is debating legislation, it is called a Bill. When Parliament has approved legislation, and it has received Royal Assent, the Bill becomes an Act.

ensuring that young people are protected from excessive or inappropriate caring responsibilities. The best way to achieve that is to ensure that the person being cared for, whether that is an adult or a child, is assessed and has all their eligible needs met first. To do this effectively requires local services working together across the statutory and voluntary sectors to consider the whole family's needs.⁷³

Unlike carers assessments provided for adult carers, there are no national eligibility criteria for provision of services, and local authorities need only consider the assessment in deciding whether to provide support.

Regulations under the [Care Act 2014](#) set out how assessments of adults in England must be carried out to ensure the needs of the whole family are considered. This could include assessing what support an adult needs in order to ensure that a young person does not undertake inappropriate caring responsibilities.⁷⁴

The Carers Trust has published several [briefings on the rights of young carers in England](#).

A Department for Education study into the [Lives of Young Carers in England](#) (February 2016) found that fewer than one in five (19%) parents of young carers helping within the household reported that their child had received an assessment of the child's needs by the local authority, falling to 13% among those caring outside the household. Nearly two thirds (64%) were receiving no support, whether formal or informal. Of those receiving help, the most common source was a young carers' project, followed by their school or college.⁷⁵

Parents and young carers in the Department for Education (DfE) study identified a number of factors that would promote access to support for young carers. These included:

- increasing the inclusivity and availability of young carers' services (e.g. greater support for younger carers and enabling access through central locations or transportation to and from services);
- ensuring that health and social care support services communicate the availability and nature of young carers' services quickly and effectively;
- standardising age appropriate activity and information across young carers' services;
- and, improving support for cared-for family members to help meet diverse needs.⁷⁶

⁷³ [HC Deb 8 October 2013 cc11WS-12WS](#)

⁷⁴ [The Care and Support \(Assessment\) Regulations 2014 S.I. 2827/2014](#)

⁷⁵ Department for Education, [The lives of young carers in England omnibus](#), January 2017, p8

⁷⁶ Department for Education, [The lives of young carers in England](#), February 2016, p10

4.4 Benefits for young carers

The main benefit for carers – [Carer’s Allowance](#) – may be claimed from the age of 16, although those in full-time education are excluded from claiming the benefit. At February 2017, only 2,280 young people under 18 were receiving Carer’s Allowance in Great Britain.⁷⁷

At present, families with young carers may be able to get additional help through the [Severe Disability Premium \(SDP\)](#), worth £62.45 a week (2017-18 rate). SDP is not a benefit in its own right but is an additional amount payable with certain means-tested benefits including income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). SDP is intended to give additional help to those severely disabled people who, because they live independently and do not have someone caring for them who receives Carer’s Allowance, are most likely to rely on bought-in care. SDP is not payable if there are other “non-dependants” residing with the person, but for these purposes anyone under 18, or aged 18-19 and qualifying for child benefit, does not count.

Universal Credit (UC) is replacing existing means-tested benefits and tax credits for working age families. Under UC there will be no equivalent of the Severe Disability Premium⁷⁸, and there are concerns this could have a disproportionate impact on families with young carers.⁷⁹

The *Scotland Act 2016* devolves responsibility for disability and carers’ benefits to the Scottish Parliament. The Scottish Government intends to introduce a new “Young Carer Grant” – worth £300 a year – from autumn 2019. This will be payable to young carers aged 16-18 who do at least 16 hours of caring a week, but do not qualify for Carer’s Allowance. This is part of a broader package of support which will also include non-cash entitlements and rewards for 11-18 year-old carers, available through the Young Scot National Entitlement Card which is due to start in April 2018 and roll out from April 2019; and a free bus pass for everyone entitled to a Young Carer Grant from 2020-21.⁸⁰

4.5 Participation and attainment in education

The Children’s Society 2013 report (which analysed the findings of the Department for Education’s [Longitudinal Study of Young People in England](#)) found that:

- Around 1 in 20 young carers missed school because of caring responsibilities.

⁷⁷ Department for Work and Pensions, [Quarterly statistical summary: August 2017](#) [accessed 26 September 2017]

⁷⁸ See section 6.2 of Commons Library briefing SN06548, [Draft Universal Credit Regulations 2013](#)

⁷⁹ [Disability Benefits Consortium submission to the House of Lords Secondary Legislation Scrutiny Committee](#), 2013

⁸⁰ Scottish Government, [More support for young carers](#), 20 September 2017

- Young carers had significantly lower educational attainment at GCSE level, the equivalent to nine grades lower overall than their peers e.g. the difference between nine B's and nine C's.
- Young carers were more likely than the national average to be not in education, employment or training (NEET) between the ages of 16 and 19.⁸¹

Department for Education-commissioned research published in January 2017 compared the experience of young people with caring responsibilities to those with no such responsibilities. On schooling, this found:

Most parents across both the face to face and comparison surveys reported that their children were happy at school and considered they were attending well and performing better than average. [...]

However, parents of young carers were significantly more likely than those in the comparison survey to report that their child was being bullied. The greatest difference was among 16 to 17 year olds of whom over one in five parents (16%) considered their child was being bullied, compared to only 4% of parents of children the same age in the comparison survey. [...]

Just over half (55%) of parents of young carers reported their child had been absent from school at least a few times in the last year compared to around one third of parents in the comparison survey. Further, 12% of parents of 12 to 15-year-old carers were aware that their child had fallen asleep at school at least a few times in the last 12 months compared to only 3% of parents of children the same age in the comparison group. [...]

When asked about being late for school, absenteeism and falling asleep, young people in both surveys were more likely than the parents to report all of these occurrences [...]⁸²

Support in schools

In an answer to a PQ of 27 October 2016, the 2015 Government set out its support for young carers in schools in England:

Asked by: Marcus Fysh

To ask the Secretary of State for Education, what assessment she has made of provision within the school system for the needs of students who are young carers.

Answered by: Edward Timpson

Schools play a very important part in identifying pupils who are young carers and in offering them appropriate support.

During school inspection, Ofsted inspectors consider how schools are meeting the needs of their pupils, including young carers. It is for schools to demonstrate to inspectors that they know all of their pupils, including those with caring responsibilities, and have strategies in place to support these pupils and ensure that they are making expected progress.

This Department has funded the Carers Trust and The Children's Society, in partnership with Suffolk Family Carers, to work with

⁸¹ The Children's Society, [Hidden from view. The experience of young carers in England](#), May 2013

⁸² Department for Education, [The lives of young carers in England. Omnibus survey report Research report](#), January 2017, pp 9-10.

local authorities to develop models of assessment and support that specifically address the needs of young carers. We have also trained school nurses to be champions for young carers, to speak up on behalf of young carers and help head teachers and governors decide how best to support them at school.⁸³

The [young carers in schools programme](#), run jointly by Carers Trust and The Children's Society, works with schools across England to share good practice, and provide training and support to local authorities and young carers services to increase the identification of young carers in their area and to increase school engagement.

Pupil Premium

The 2015 Government indicated that around 60 per cent of young carers are thought to be eligible for free school meals (FSM).⁸⁴ Children in England who are eligible for FSM, or who have been eligible at any point in the last 6 years, ('Ever 6') attract the Pupil Premium. This is extra funding for schools to support the education of disadvantaged children. The annual value of the deprivation pupil premium in the 2017-18 financial year is £1,320 per primary-aged pupil and £935 per secondary-aged pupil.⁸⁵

Information about support for young carers in schools in Scotland and Northern Ireland can be found online:

- [MyGov.Scot website article, 'Young carers: support'](#), 6 June 2017.
- [NI Direct website article, 'Young carers – support at school'](#), undated.

4.6 Further and higher education

As mentioned in Section 7.4 above, young carers aged 16 and above in full-time education are ineligible for Carers Allowance. This section outlines other Government support for young carers in full-time education.

In England, eligible young carers aged 16-19 in further education (FE) may be entitled to a discretionary 16-19 bursary. This is extra money intended to remove barriers to learning. Government guidance to schools and FE providers on administering the bursaries makes clear that they should encourage young carers to apply:

Young people with caring responsibilities, for example, caring for a parent or other relative, may be reluctant to say so because of fear of being stigmatised. Institutions should ensure confidentiality to reduce these concerns, publicise the availability of help from the bursary fund and encourage young carers to apply.⁸⁶

⁸³ [PQ 50843 \(on pupils: carers\) 27 October 2016](#). See also: [DH/ DfE, with Carers Trust and the Children's Society, School Nurse Programme: Supporting implementation of the new service offer: Supporting the health and wellbeing of young carers](#), March 2014

⁸⁴ [PQ 37693 \(on Children: Carers\), 19 May 2016](#)

⁸⁵ See: Gov.uk guidance, ['Pupil premium 2017 to 2018: conditions of grant'](#), 4 July 2017

⁸⁶ DfE, [16 to 19 Bursary fund guide](#): 2016-17, April 2016

Information on financial and other support for further education in the rest of the UK can be found at:

- [Care Information Scotland, 'Help for carers who work or study'](#), updated 24 May 2017.
- [NI Direct website article, 'Carers and learning'](#), undated.
- [Student Finance Wales website](#) (general information, not specific to carers)

The 2015 Government acknowledged that young carers “face challenges participating in higher education and they may require additional support to do so effectively”.⁸⁷ English-domiciled higher education students who have caring responsibilities for children can apply for funding to help with childcare, in addition to mainstream student loans. Some students with adult dependants who meet eligibility criteria may qualify for an [Adult Dependants' Grant](#). This is non-repayable and in 2017/18 the maximum amount is £2,834.

Many higher education institutions have adopted Carers Policies to support students who are carers as part of their equality agenda. Carers Policies aim to allow flexibility for student carers and attempt to make sure that students are not disadvantaged by their caring responsibilities, whilst ensuring that any accommodations made for students do not compromise academic standards. In 2015 the Carers Trust published a guidance document - [Supporting Students with Caring Responsibilities: Ideas and Practice for Universities to Help Student Carers Access and Succeed in Higher Education England version](#) - to help universities formulate their carers policies. The document contains examples of universities' carers policies.⁸⁸

Student carers are also considered as an under-represented, or disadvantaged [target group](#) by the Office for Fair Access (OFFA). [OFFA guidance](#) suggests that higher education institutions may therefore include policies and support for carers in their access agreements:

Young carers

44. Research by [Carers Trust and the University of Nottingham](#) shows that young adult carers often struggle in higher education because of their caring responsibilities. The issues facing young carers include a lack of recognition of their support needs and problems accessing essential services.

45. We encourage you to consider the services you provide to support young carers and how these might align with or be strengthened through access agreements.⁸⁹

Further information about support for HE students with caring responsibilities in other parts of the UK can be found online:

⁸⁷ See: [PQ 20664 \(on Carers: young people\), 17 December 2015](#)

⁸⁸ The Carers Trust, [Supporting Students with Caring Responsibilities: Ideas and Practice for Universities to Help Student Carers Access and Succeed in Higher Education England version](#), 2015

⁸⁹ Office for Fair Access, [OFFA guidance: How to produce an access agreement for 2016-17](#), 9 February 2015, para. 44

- [Student Awards Agency for Scotland \(SAAS\), Support for student carers, undated.](#)
- [Student Finance NI, Help for students with children or other dependents in 2017-18, undated](#)
- [Student Finance Wales, Extra Support in 2017/18, undated](#)

4.7 National Carers Strategy for England

The UK Government does not specifically estimate the amount of financial support provided to young carers.⁹⁰ In June 2016 the Secretary of State for Health outlined the funding available to support all carers and confirmed that the Government was developing a National Care Strategy for England:

The Government recognises the invaluable contribution made by unpaid carers and the importance of supporting them in their carer roles. This includes provision of and access to respite and replacement care.

The Department has provided £400 million to the National Health Service over four years from 2011 for carers to have breaks from their caring responsibilities. The carers breaks funding of £130 million is now included in the Better Care Fund in 2016/17. The Department has also provided £186.6 million of funding in 2016/17 to local authorities for improved carers' rights, as established in the Care Act 2014.

The Care Act 2014 duty for local authorities to undertake carers' assessments also provides an opportunity for the local authority and the carer to look at the support they need and the outcomes that they wish to achieve, including providing them with a break or taking up work, educational and leisure opportunities if they wish.

The Department is committed to continuing to improve support for carers and is currently leading the development of a new cross-Government national carers' strategy, due to be published by the end of 2016. We are currently consulting widely with a range of stakeholders and carers themselves to inform the development of the strategy.⁹¹

On 25 January 2017 the Minister for Community Health and Care, then David Mowat, issued a press notice discussing the need to do more to help young carers fulfil their goals, and confirming that a National Carer's Strategy would be published in 2017:

Most young carers are happy and proud to care for loved ones, but too often this important role goes unnoticed. Young people not only have to cope with the complexities of growing and learning, but also that of their parents or siblings' health conditions, preventing them from enjoying childhood in the way other children do. It's a challenge no one, regardless of age, should face alone - especially if they have their own health concerns.

[...] Young carers need to be identified early and directed to help and support already available in many schools and colleges, such as the young carers in schools programme. Identification, though,

⁹⁰ [PQ 37693 \(on Children: Carers\), 19 May 2016](#)

⁹¹ [PQ 40020, 13 June 2016](#)

should not be an end in itself. We must support young carers to achieve their potential at school, in further education, training and work.

It's why the new national carers strategy, launching this year, has such an important role to play in facilitating opportunity, health and wellbeing for all carers. It will recognise that truly effective support can only happen when we reach beyond health and care services into schools, workplaces and community centres. The more we all know, the more we can do to help.⁹²

To date (6 October 2017) the National Carers Strategy has not been published and the Government has not confirmed a publication date.

4.8 The voluntary sector

A number of voluntary sector organisations provide information and resources for young carers and campaign on their behalf. For example:

- The [Carers Trust](#) works “to improve support, services and recognition for anyone living with the challenges of caring, unpaid, for a family member or friend”. The Trust organises [Young Carers Awareness Day](#).
- [Carers UK](#) provides a support network for carers and campaigns for change.
- [Children's Society](#) runs local projects, helping children and young people, and campaigns on issues that affect children.
- The Learning and Work Institute, an independent policy and research organisation, raises awareness of [young adult carers](#), campaigns, tests new approaches and supports the implementation of good practice.

⁹² ['Ambition interrupted: Young Carers Awareness Day'](#), *Department of Health Press Notice*, 25 January 2017

5. Transport

Proposal before the Youth Parliament:

Make public transport cheaper, better and accessible for all.

5.1 Fares and ticketing on buses and trains

Buses

Local bus services operate in a deregulated market run by the private sector. They set their fares on a commercial basis and it is up to them to decide whether a reduced fare for particular groups is commercially viable. For example, when the Coalition Government abolished the subsidy that supported free long distance coach travel or older people, the commercial operators provided discounts and concessionary fares of their own so that this group would continue to patronise them.

The recently passed [Bus Services Act 2017](#) allows local authorities to take more control over local bus services and to set fares, should they so wish.

Government and local authorities can require bus companies to provide concessionary fares: these are funded by the entity prescribing the concession. The most well-known bus concession is the pensioners' bus pass – set out in legislation. This requires a subsidy of roughly £1.1 billion per annum. Local authorities can require bus operators to provide other, non-statutory, concessions (e.g. discounts for children and younger people in full time education, job seekers and veterans), which they pay for out of local budgets.

Some have suggested that the £1.1 billion spent on bus passes for older people could be better spent on young people.

Local authorities have a statutory duty to provide transport for post-16 learners. In addition, many authorities (often in concert with commercial companies) provide locally-funded concessions for students in full time education (e.g. [Liverpool](#), [Manchester](#), the [North East](#), [Birmingham](#), [Brighton](#)).

Bus fares are not regulated at a national level, but may be regulated at a local level. Many local authorities provide support and subsidy to bus operating companies in order to ensure the provision of services which are deemed to be socially necessary, but which would not be viable on a purely commercial basis. This subsidy is a reason why bus fares in rural English areas have risen at a slower rate than those in England's towns and cities.

Trains

As regards the reasons why rail travel in the UK is so expensive, there are two strands to consider: the railway itself costs too much to run (for a number of reasons) and the cost of rail travel for passengers has been increasing year-on-year from an already relatively high base.

Before the 2010 General Election the then Secretary of State for Transport, Lord Andrew Adonis, announced that the Department for Transport and the regulator would jointly sponsor a value for money review of the rail industry, to be undertaken by Sir Roy McNulty, the former Chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). Sir Roy published his final report [the 'McNulty Report'] in May 2011. He concluded that the UK rail industry should be looking to achieve efficiency savings of approximately 30% by 2019 and proposed recommendations that, together, could deliver cost savings of between £700 million and £1 billion per annum by 2019. McNulty found that there were ten principle barriers to efficiency in the rail industry, including: fragmentation of rail industry structures and interfaces; the way in which major players in the industry have operated; roles of government and industry; nature and effectiveness of incentives; legal and contractual frameworks; and relationships and culture within the industry.⁹³

McNulty identified a number of areas where the GB railway was performing less well than those in other European countries. In particular he highlighted that other European countries had obtained significant cost reductions from the competitive tendering of services, compared to a 17.1% increase in the unit costs of franchised services in GB.⁹⁴ He also highlighted an efficiency gap between Network Rail (NR) and the top-performing European railways of between 34% and 40%.⁹⁵ Work by Infrastructure UK further revealed that:

- an examination of seven high speed lines across Europe showed that construction costs in the UK were significantly higher, and when compared with the four most directly comparable projects, HS1 costs were at least 23% higher;
- comparisons of station development costs indicated that the UK was 50% more expensive, for example, than Spain; and
- total outturn costs that involve significant tunnelling were more expensive than Europe, suggesting higher pre-construction and indirect costs.⁹⁶

Around 45 per cent of fares are subject to regulation (by the Secretary of State in England and by the devolved authorities in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland). Regulated fares are capped by a formula based on the RPI figure for the previous July, and for many years with a degree of flexibility (called the 'fares basket' or 'flex'). All other fares are set commercially by train operators.

Rail fares have increased, in real terms, since the early years of this century. In January 2013 fares across all operators were 23% higher than they were in January 1995; the average annual increase has been

⁹³ ORR press notice, "[Efficiency savings the key to substantial rail industry growth](#)", 19 May 2011

⁹⁴ Sir Roy McNulty for DfT/ORR, [Realising the Potential of GB Rail: Final Independent Report of the Rail Value for Money Study](#), May 2011, p34

⁹⁵ [ibid](#), p32

⁹⁶ [ibid](#), p33

1.2%. Fares have increased fastest amongst long distance operators, with average annual real terms increases of 2% between January 1995 and January 2013. Over the same period an average annual increase of 0.8% and 0.7% was observed for regional and London & South East operators respectively.⁹⁷

The regulated fare increase in England for 2017 is 1.9% (based on an RPI +/-0 formula); the total fare increase was 2.3%. This disguises variations across different routes.

Almost without exception, when the annual fare increases are announced every year passenger groups express concerns that significant increases could 'price people off the railways' and put a strain on those who use the railways to commute to work, particularly into and out of London. However, it has been the policy of successive governments to rebalance the funding of the railways between passengers and taxpayers: reducing the relative contribution of the latter. A consequence of this is higher fares. The train companies themselves are keen to rebut claims that they are 'profiteering' off higher fares, noting that fares income is spent on upgrades and investment projects and, in some cases, is passed on to the Government as part of the financial package for the franchise.

Section 28(3) of the [Railways Act 1993](#), as amended, requires that all TOCs participate in certain approved discount card schemes for young and student travellers, disabled passengers and those aged over 60. All TOCs are obliged to participate in such schemes under the terms of their franchise agreements. This includes the [Young Persons \(16-25\) Railcard](#) (for young people aged between 16 and 25 and students in full time education).

5.2 Service standards

Minimum service standards on trains are required in the Franchise Agreements that train companies sign when they win a franchise. They are also required to meet statutory punctuality targets and there are well-understood penalties in place for failure to meet these standards – up to and including removal of the franchise.

Bus operators need to register an intention to set up a service with the relevant local Traffic Commissioner and agree to run the bus service according to the specification in the registration. Individual bus operators are responsible for the timetable. The introduction of new services will depend on the operator's opinion of the demand for it and its commercial viability. The Commissioners have the power to fine bus operators between 1% and 20% of their profits for failure to operate services in accordance with registered details.

As mentioned above, in the future changes to bus service licensing in England may mean that local authorities will have more control over the services in their areas and will be able to specify routes, frequencies and fares – as is the case in London.

⁹⁷ <http://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06384/SN06384.pdf>

5.3 Rural transport

Provision of public transport to rural areas is generally the responsibility of local authorities, who know best what is required in their local areas. The Government does provide some grant support for schemes that provide transport in isolated communities, though it has also admitted that while around £2 billion is currently provided each year by a number of agencies for local transport funding, “this is often not co-ordinated or integrated at a local level, resulting in duplication and potential waste of public money”.⁹⁸ It is providing funding for ‘total transport pilots’ to tackle this problem.

The Transport Select Committee published a report on transport in isolated areas in 2014, the Government’s response sets out the measures it is taking to address problems such as access for vulnerable groups, and encouraging community transport partnerships.⁹⁹

5.4 Access for young people with a disability

The UK is rapidly approaching the point where all buses, coaches and trains must be accessible to disabled people (January 2020) and in many cases these vehicles already meet the requirements. Taxis are also accessible in many parts of the country, though non-metropolitan urban areas and rural areas lag somewhat behind. There are also duties on air travel and sea travel providers to ensure that disabled people can access their services and expect a certain level of accommodation to their needs, though they can be denied travel on safety grounds.

Many day-to-day problems for disabled people stem from confusion over the rules, poor or insufficient communication, inadequate training, and/or a lack of enforcement. Issues where these concerns overlap include the provision of assistance on vehicles and at stations; the carriage of mobility scooters; and buggies and prams using wheelchair spaces on buses.

5.5 Further reading

- [Bus Services Act 2017](#), Commons Library Briefing Paper 7545, June 2017
- [Rail fares and ticketing](#), Commons Library Briefing Paper 1904, February 2017
- [Access to transport for disabled people](#), Commons Library Briefing Paper 601, April 2016
- [Public Transport Fares](#), Commons Library Briefing Paper 7470, January 2016
- [Transport 2015](#), Commons Library Briefing Paper 7177, May 2015

⁹⁸ DfT press notice, “[£7.6 million for local transport in rural and isolated areas](#)”, 27 March 2015

⁹⁹ [Passenger transport in isolated communities: Government Response to the Committee’s Fourth Report of Session 2014–15](#), HC 719, October 2014

- [Transport provision for post-16 learners](#), Commons Library Briefing Paper 6726, September 2013

6. First Aid education for all young people

As **education is a devolved area**, the Westminster Parliament would not make policy decisions on this subject for schools in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Consequently, **the information in this briefing relates to England only, unless otherwise stated.**

Proposal before the Youth Parliament:

All young people should learn basic First Aid, on a regular basis, including CPR, and all schools in the UK should have a defibrillator.

6.1 Current provision of first aid education in schools

First aid education is not currently part of the National Curriculum in England, which sets the required content for those subjects that should be taught to all pupils. Local authority maintained schools are required to follow the National Curriculum; academies, free schools (which operate as academies in law) and independent schools are not required to follow it but may do so if they wish.

Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education

Personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) is taught in schools across England. While the Government has stated that all schools should teach PSHE, it is currently a non-statutory subject and is not part of the National Curriculum. There is no requirement for schools to teach first aid as part of PSHE, but they may do so if they wish.

The PSHE Association, which receives funding from the Government, has published a [programme of study](#) (non-statutory) for PSHE. First aid is included in the suggested content for children at key stages 3 and 4:

- At key stage 3 (ages 11-14) pupils should have the opportunity to learn “a knowledge of basic first aid and life-saving skills”.
- At key stage 4 (ages 14-16) pupils should have the opportunity to learn “how to find sources of emergency help and how to give basic and emergency first aid in appropriate contexts”.¹⁰⁰

Statutory PSHE

As outlined in section two of this briefing, the *Children and Social Work Act 2017* provides the Secretary of State for Education with the power to introduce [regulations](#) making PSHE statutory at all schools in England. The Government has stated that it will conduct an engagement process on the scope and content of PSHE and will provide more details on this shortly.¹⁰¹

[The British Red Cross states](#) that currently 24% of secondary schools in England teach first aid.

¹⁰⁰ PSHE Association, [PSHE Education Programme of Study \(Key Stages 1-4\)](#), October 2014, p16.

¹⁰¹ [PQ 3151](#), 14 July 2017.

First aid education in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland

Scotland

Scotland does not have a mandatory national curriculum. The national [Curriculum for Excellence](#) has Health and Wellbeing as one of its eight areas, within which the ability to respond in a range of emergency situations is stated as a skill to be taught.¹⁰² However, education authorities decide themselves what specifically to teach to match the criteria of the framework. In November 2016, a spokesperson for the Scottish Government was reported as saying the following in response to calls for all primary school children to be taught first aid: "Under Curriculum for Excellence, schools already have the flexibility to provide first aid training. It is up to individual schools and local authorities to decide if, and how best, to deliver this."¹⁰³

Wales

Personal and Social Education (PSE) forms part of the statutory basic curriculum, which must be taught by maintained schools in Wales alongside the Welsh National Curriculum. The framework for PSE states that at key stage 3 pupils should be given the opportunity to "develop the practical skills necessary for everyday life, e.g. basic emergency first aid procedures". At key stage 4, the framework states that pupils should be given the opportunity to "develop the practical skills necessary for everyday life, e.g. administer basic first aid."¹⁰⁴ A new curriculum is currently being developed for schools in Wales. It is expected that a final version of the new curriculum will be available in January 2020 and that it will be taught in schools from 2022. Further information is available on the website of the Welsh Government at: [New school curriculum](#).

Northern Ireland

Personal Development forms a statutory part of the curriculum in Northern Ireland at key stages 3 and 4. The statutory minimum content requires pupils to be provided with opportunities to "develop preventative strategies in relation to accidents in the home, school and on the road" and to be able to "develop an awareness of emergency first aid procedures".¹⁰⁵ Non-statutory guidance states that this content could include "safe practices in relation to appliances and equipment, chemicals, machinery, vehicles, road safety; knowing what to do in the event of cuts, burns and fire; knowing emergency first aid, etc."¹⁰⁶

Training and resources from other organisations

A number of organisations, including St John Ambulance, the British Red Cross and the British Heart Foundation offer training and resources to schools for teaching first aid.

As part of the support it provides to schools, the British Heart Foundation offers free CPR training packs – the "Call Push Rescue Training kit" – to all secondary schools in the UK. The training kit is suitable for students aged 12 and over and includes, among other things, an education DVD demonstrating how to do CPR and inflatable manikins.¹⁰⁷ The Government has stated that it will "work with the British Heart Foundation to continue to promote this kit to schools".¹⁰⁸

¹⁰² [Curriculum for excellence: health and wellbeing – experiences and outcomes](#), p3.

¹⁰³ [Primary pupils 'should learn first aid'](#), BBC News, 25 November 2016.

¹⁰⁴ Welsh Assembly Government, [Personal and social education framework for 7 to 19-year-olds in Wales](#), 2008, pp21b and 23b.

¹⁰⁵ [The Education \(Curriculum Minimum Content\) Order \(Northern Ireland\) 2007](#), SI 2007/046.

¹⁰⁶ Northern Ireland Curriculum, [Personal Development: Key Stage 3 Non Statutory Guidance for Personal Development](#), 2007, p26.

¹⁰⁷ ["CPR training for schools"](#), British Heart Foundation, last accessed 19 September 2016.

¹⁰⁸ [PQ3525, 25 June 2015](#).

6.2 Automatic external defibrillators in schools

In November 2014, the Department for Education (DfE) published [non-statutory advice for schools on automatic external defibrillators \(AEDs\)](#), which was last updated in June 2017.

What is an automatic external defibrillator?

An AED is a machine used to give an electric shock when a person is in cardiac arrest in order to restore their normal heart rhythm. From when they are first switched on, AEDs provide voice and visual prompts to guide the rescuer through the process, including positioning and attaching the pads, when to start and restart CPR, and whether or not a shock is advised.¹⁰⁹

The advice encourages schools to purchase AEDs as part of their first aid equipment and states that the DfE has “negotiated an arrangement with NHS Supply Chain for schools to purchase AEDs from them at reduced cost”.¹¹⁰ The advice additionally states that:

- Schools may wish to consider raising awareness of AED and CPR training across the whole school and this may be done through PSHE.
- The Resuscitation Council (UK) states that untrained bystanders should not be discouraged from using an AED in an emergency, but individuals who have received training will feel more confident doing so if needed.
- Secondary school pupils and older primary school children are generally capable of successfully administering CPR. Training can also give children the confidence and skills to talk an adult through the administration of CPR.
- Younger primary-aged children may lack the physical strength to carry out CPR on adults, so general awareness training (including, for example, how to dial 999 and put someone in the recovery position) may be considered more appropriate.¹¹¹

Consensus paper on out of hospital cardiac arrest

A [consensus paper on out of hospital cardiac arrest \(OHCA\) in England](#), developed by the British Heart Foundation, NHS England and the Resuscitation Council, was published in October 2014. It reported that:

- In 2013, the emergency medical services attempted to resuscitate approximately 28,000 cases of OHCA in England. Of these cases, 8.6% survived to be discharged from hospital.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Department for Education, [Automated external defibrillators \(AEDs\): A guide for maintained schools and academies](#), July 2017, p4.

¹¹⁰ As above, p10.

¹¹¹ As above, pp17-8.

¹¹² British Heart Foundation, NHS England and Resuscitation Council (UK), [Consensus Paper on Out-of-Hospital Cardiac Arrest in England](#), 16 October 2014, pp2-3.

- When an individual has a cardiac arrest, every minute without CPR and defibrillation reduces their chances of survival by 7-10%.¹¹³ (The Government has stated that it accepts this figure.)¹¹⁴
- Survival rates from other developed countries indicate that there is potential to improve survival rates in the UK.¹¹⁵

The paper argued that countries with the highest rates of OHCA survival have strengthened all four links of the chain of survival:

- early recognition and call for help;
- early CPR;
- early defibrillation; and
- post-resuscitation care.

The paper reported that the rate of initial bystander CPR in England was 43%, but that this figure included situations where CPR was initiated following an instruction from a medical dispatcher after a 999 call. The paper noted that such situations “may result in a delay of up to several minutes before the victim receives CPR”.¹¹⁶ The paper stated that a number of factors contributed to this “low” level of bystander CPR:

1. Failure to recognise cardiac arrest
2. Lack of knowledge of what to do
3. Fear of causing harm (such as breaking the victim’s ribs) or being harmed (acquiring infection from a stranger when giving rescue breaths)
4. Fear of being sued
5. Lack of knowledge of the location of PADs [public access defibrillators]
6. No access to a PAD at the time of the cardiac arrest.¹¹⁷

It argued that:

...more immediate 999 calls and immediate CPR given by bystanders could increase the number of people who receive CPR by the EMS [emergency medical services]. This will increase the number of people who are given a chance of surviving, and ultimately increase the number of people who do survive when they are given CPR.¹¹⁸

6.3 Previous calls for compulsory first aid education

There have been a number of previous attempts to make first aid education a compulsory part of the National Curriculum in England. Most recently, in the 2015-16 parliamentary session, Teresa Pearce MP

¹¹³ As above, pp2-3.

¹¹⁴ [HC Deb 16 January 2017, c747](#).

¹¹⁵ As above, p2.

¹¹⁶ British Heart Foundation, NHS England and Resuscitation Council (UK), [Consensus Paper on Out-of-Hospital Cardiac Arrest in England](#), 16 October 2014, pp2-3.

¹¹⁷ As above, p2.

¹¹⁸ As above, p2.

introduced a [private members' bill](#) that would have required all state-funded secondary schools in England to teach emergency first aid education, including CPR and defibrillator awareness.¹¹⁹

The Bill had a [second reading debate](#) on 20 November 2015 but time to discuss it ran out before a vote was taken and the Bill made no further progress. During the debate on the Bill, and in other debates during the 2010-15 parliament, arguments in favour of making first aid education compulsory in schools included:

- Only a small proportion of the population currently have the confidence to carry out emergency first aid.¹²⁰
- Increasing the number of people who know what to do in an emergency could increase survival rates.¹²¹
- Emergency first aid is as important as many subjects currently part of the National Curriculum and only takes a short amount of time to teach.¹²²
- Free resources from organisations like the British Heart Foundation, St John Ambulance, and the British Red Cross mean that there would be minimal costs involved for schools.¹²³
- There can be a lack of consistency in current provision as it can be affected by teachers leaving a school etc.¹²⁴

Arguments raised against making first aid education compulsory included:

- The quality of provision could be reduced if it were made compulsory as pupils and teachers would be doing it because they had to rather than because they wanted to.¹²⁵
- Teachers and head teachers should be trusted to decide whether to provide first aid education rather than being told to do so by the Government.¹²⁶
- There are many competing demands and a limit to what can be put on the National Curriculum. It should focus on the key areas only.¹²⁷
- There is currently nothing to stop schools teaching emergency first aid if they wish to do so.¹²⁸
- Costs could be considerable for schools.¹²⁹

Government position

In his response to the second reading debate on the *Compulsory Emergency First Aid Education (State-funded Secondary Schools) Bill* the then education minister, Sam Gyimah, noted the importance of

¹¹⁹ [Compulsory Emergency First Aid Education \(State-funded Secondary Schools\) Bill 2015-16](#).

¹²⁰ For example, [HC Deb 20 November 2015, cc938-9](#).

¹²¹ For example, [as above, c946](#).

¹²² For example, [as above, cc940-1](#) & [c950](#).

¹²³ For example, [as above, cc944-5](#).

¹²⁴ For example, [HC Deb 10 March 2015 c33WH](#).

¹²⁵ For example, [HC Deb 20 November 2015, c947](#).

¹²⁶ For example, [as above, c949](#).

¹²⁷ For example, [as above, c960](#).

¹²⁸ For example, [as above, c994](#).

¹²⁹ For example, [as above, c1003](#).

emergency first aid skills and set out what the Government was doing to encourage schools to buy AEDs.

The Minister stated, however, that he did not believe an addition to the National Curriculum was the best way to encourage schools to provide first aid education. He added that a National Curriculum that prescribes too much specific content risks not properly addressing the most important issues:

It has somehow been routine for Education Ministers to come to this place to make the case against the inclusion of a particular new requirement in the national curriculum. Such proposals, like the one in this Bill, are often supported by a persuasive argument, but their sheer number means that I start from a position of caution...Some of those proposals are niche, to say the least, but when made they all have a strong and persuasive argument behind them, with support from a strong campaign. If we were to include each of them in the national curriculum, we would have to ask what they displace, how we account for the time and how things develop. If the Government were to tell schools that they should teach about [all these issues], we would be prescribing a very long list of specific content that should be covered, which would be unproductive. It could lead to a tick-box approach...that does not properly address the most important issues.¹³⁰

7. Mental Health

Mental health is a **devolved policy area**, and as a result, **the information below covers England only**, unless otherwise stated.

Proposal before the Youth Parliament:

Services should be improved with young peoples' help.

One in four people on average experience a mental health problem in any one year, with many of these beginning in childhood. A report by the Chief Medical Officer in 2014 found that half of those with a psychiatric disorder at age 26 had a psychiatric disorder before the age of 15, and three-quarters by the age of 18.¹³¹

7.1 Government policies on children and young people's mental health

In January 2014, the Government published [Closing the Gap: priorities for essential change in mental health](#). This included commitments to improve children and young people's mental health care:

- There will be improved access to psychological therapies for children and young people across the whole of England, so that early access to treatment is available. The government has invested in a psychological therapies programme for children and young people, and aims for this to be available throughout England by 2018
- Schools will be supported to identify mental health problems sooner through guidance published from the Department of Health. A new Special Education Needs (SEN) Code of Practice will also provide statutory guidance on identifying and supporting children and young people with mental health problems who have a special education need.¹³²

In July 2014, a Taskforce led by the Department of Health and NHS England, examined how to improve child and adolescent mental health care. Its 2015 [Future in Mind](#) report set ambitions for improving care over the next five years, including establishing stronger links between schools and specialist services, tackling stigma, and introducing more access and waiting time standards for services.¹³³

7.2 The 2016 Mental Health Taskforce

In 2016, a new Mental Health Taskforce, launched by NHS England and independently chaired by Paul Farmer, Chief Executive of Mind, made a

¹³¹ Chief Medical Officer Annual report, [Public mental health priorities: Investing in the Evidence](#), September 2014

¹³² Department of Health, [Closing the Gap: Priorities for essential change in mental health](#), February 2014

¹³³ Department of Health and NHS England, [Future in Mind: promoting, protecting and improving our children and young people's mental health and wellbeing](#), March 2015

series of recommendations for improving outcomes in mental health by 2020/21 in [The Five Year Forward View for Mental Health: A report from the independent Mental Health Taskforce to the NHS in England](#).

These recommendations included specific objectives for children and young people, including the recommendation that by 2020/21, at least 70,000 more children and young people should have access to high-quality mental health care when they need it.

The taskforce also called for the recommendations of the 2015 children and young people's taskforce report - *Future in Mind* - to be implemented in full. In addition, it called for an additional investment of £1 billion by 2020/21 to implement change in the priority areas identified by their report. These included:

- An end to the practice of sending people out of their local area for acute inpatient care;
- Providing mental health care to 70,000 more children and young people by 2020/21;
- Supporting 30,000 more new and expectant mothers through maternal mental health services by 2020/21;
- New funding to ensure all acute hospitals have mental health services in emergency departments for people of all ages;
- Reducing the suicide rate in England by 10% by 2020/21;
- Combatting stigma, and improving attitudes towards mental health by at least a further 5% by 2020/21.¹³⁴

In response, the Government pledged that an extra £1 billion would be invested in mental health care by 2021 and a million more people would get access to mental health support.¹³⁵ In its [2017 response to the report](#), the Government accepted most of the taskforce's main recommendations.¹³⁶

7.3 Prime Minister's January 2017 speech

On 9 January 2017, the Prime Minister, Theresa May, gave a speech entitled [The shared society](#), which included a number of commitments on mental health, including for children and young people. These included:

- Every secondary school to be offered mental health first aid training, teaching people how to better identify symptoms;
- Trials on strengthening links between schools and NHS specialist staff;

¹³⁴ The Independent Mental Health Taskforce, [The Five Year Forward View for Mental Health](#), February 2016

¹³⁵ 'New investment in mental health services', *Department of Health press release*, 16 February 2016

¹³⁶ Department of Health, Public Health England and NHS England, [Five Year Forward View for Mental Health: government response](#), January 2017

- A review of mental health services for children and young people across the country;
- By 2021, no child will be sent away from their local area to receive treatment for mental health issues;
- Investing £67.7 million in digital mental health services;
- Publishing a [cross-governmental suicide prevention strategy](#).¹³⁷

The Prime Minister also committed to producing a Green Paper on children and adolescent mental health, which is expected later in 2017.

7.4 Other Government commitments

In December 2014, the Government announced funding of £150m over five years for investment in children and young people's eating disorder services.¹³⁸ A waiting time standard for children and young people with an eating disorder was introduced in July 2015, that treatment should be received within four weeks of contact with a health professional (or one week in urgent cases).¹³⁹ This standard came into force in April 2017, and the Government aims for it to be fully achieved by 2020.¹⁴⁰

In February 2015, the then Secretary of State for Education, Nicky Morgan, announced an investment of £8.5 million for new schemes to provide families with mental health support and to support early intervention for young people.¹⁴¹

In March 2015 the Government published a [blueprint for school counselling services](#), which provided schools with practical, evidence-based advice on delivering high-quality school based counselling.¹⁴² The Department for Education also funded the PSHE Association to produce [guidance](#) on providing age-appropriate lessons about mental health problems.

Alongside the £1 billion over the next five years (see above), the March 2015 Budget announced £118 million to be invested by 2018/9 to complete the roll-out of the Children and Young People's Increasing Access to Psychological Therapies (CYP IAPT) programme.¹⁴³

In January 2016, during a speech on improving life chances, the former Prime Minister, David Cameron, announced investment to enhance mental health services across the country, including specific funding for

¹³⁷ Prime Minister's Office, [The shared society: Prime Minister's speech at the Charity Commission annual meeting](#), 9 January 2017

¹³⁸ 'Deputy PM announces £150m investment to transform treatment for eating disorders', [Department of Health press release](#), 2 December 2014

¹³⁹ NHS England, [Access and Waiting Time Standard for Children and Young People with an Eating Disorder: Commissioning Guide](#), July 2015

¹⁴⁰ [PO 7487 \[on Eating Disorders\], 12 September 2017](#)

¹⁴¹ Department for Education, [Nicky Morgan speaks at Early Intervention Foundation conference](#), 12 February 2015

¹⁴² Department for Education, [Counselling in schools: a blueprint for the future](#), March 2015

¹⁴³ HM Treasury, [Budget 2015](#), March 2015, pages 59-60

perinatal mental health.¹⁴⁴ This funding amounted to £365 million in additional spending between 2015/16 and 2020/21.¹⁴⁵

The Government also committed to commissioning a new prevalence survey of children and young people's mental health, and anticipates publication of its findings in 2017.¹⁴⁶

Further information can be found in the Commons Library briefing paper, [Children and young people's mental health – policy, CAMHS services, funding and education](#) (June 2017).

7.5 Age appropriate services

Changes to the *Mental Health Act 1983*, brought in in 2010, put a duty on hospital managers to treat patients aged under 18 in a hospital setting suitable to their age. According to the Mental Health Act code of practice, this means children and young people should have:

- appropriate physical facilities
- staff with the right training, skills and knowledge to understand and address their specific needs
- a hospital routine that will allow their personal, social and educational development to continue as normally as possible, and
- equal access to educational opportunities as their peers, in so far as that is consistent with their ability to make use of them, considering their mental state.¹⁴⁷

The code of practice states that children aged under 16 should not be admitted onto adult wards, whilst for those aged 16 and 17, there must be good reason for doing so.¹⁴⁸ The Government's 2014 [Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat](#) states that children and young people should not be treated on an adult mental health ward "unless their particular needs make it absolutely necessary."¹⁴⁹

Although legislation and Government policy is meant to prevent this, 2015 Government figures show that a number of children and young people are still treated in adult wards:¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁴ ['Prime Minister pledges a revolution in mental health treatment'](#), *Prime Minister's Office press release*, 11 January 2016

¹⁴⁵ [PQ 23806 \[on Mental Health: Females\]](#), 2 February 2016

¹⁴⁶ Health Committee, [Children's and adolescents' mental health and CAMHS: Government Response to the Committee's Third Report of Session 2014-15](#), 10 February 2015, HC 1036, para 8

¹⁴⁷ Department of Health, [Code of practice: Mental Health Act 1983](#), 2015, para 19.90-19.104

¹⁴⁸ Department of Health, [Code of practice: Mental Health Act 1983](#), 2015, para 19.90-19.104

¹⁴⁹ HM Government, [Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat: Improving outcomes for people experiencing mental health crisis](#), February 2014

¹⁵⁰ [PQ 227900 \[Mental Health Services: Children\]](#), 23 March 2015

Patients under 18 admitted to adult inpatient mental health wards					
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14
England Total	980	1,032	357	219	355
15 or under	378	341	147	74	43
16-17	602	691	210	145	312

According to a 2016 report in *The Times*, this included children as young as five.¹⁵¹

In order to help combat this, in 2015 the Government announced provision of:

£7 million additional funding in 2014/15 for NHS England to provide additional Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Tier 4 beds for young inpatients in the areas with the least provision. 53 of these beds have now opened bringing the total number of beds to over 1,400, the highest this has been in the last 15 years.¹⁵²

¹⁵¹ [‘Five year old children on adult mental health wards’, *The Times*](#), 15 February 2016

¹⁵² [PQ 227900 \[Mental Health Services: Children\], 23 March 2015](#)

8. Make the invisible visible

Proposal before the youth parliament:

Not all debilitating illnesses and conditions are visible e.g. epilepsy, autism and diabetes can be isolating. Young people should work together to raise awareness.

8.1 Invisible conditions

The [Care Quality Commission \(CQC\) reports that](#) **nearly one in three** people in England have a long term condition and a large number of these are 'invisible.'¹⁵³ Examples of these conditions include depression, osteoporosis, inflammatory bowel disease, diabetes and heart disease.

The table below provides some estimates of the number of children affected by a range of "invisible conditions". In the absence of precise registries of children suffering from each condition, estimates are made by applying the most recent prevalence/incidence rates available to population or birth figures.

Estimated number of children within invisible conditions, UK - 2016

	Incidence/prevalence estimate	Estimated numbers affected
Anxiety disorder ¹	3.3%	409,000 children aged 0-15
Asthma prevalence ²	33%	4.1 million children aged 0-15
Childhood cancer incidence ³	158 per million	20,000 diagnoses among 0-15 year olds
Congenital heart disease incidence ⁴	9 per 1,000 births	7,000 babies born in 2016
Depression prevalence ¹	0.9%	112,000 children aged 0-15
Diabetes (type 1) prevalence ⁵	195.4 per 100,000	24,210 children aged 0-15
Epilepsy prevalence ⁶	0.33%	40,900 children aged 0-15
Juvenile arthritis prevalence ⁷	0.15%	18,600 children aged 0-15
Mental health disorders prevalence ⁴	9.6%	1.2 million children aged 0-15

Sources:

1. ONS survey *Mental health of children and young people in Great Britain* (2004)
 2. Atopic dermatitis, asthma and allergic rhinitis in general practice and the open population: a systematic review. D. H. J. Pols et al. *Scand J Prim Health Care*. 2016 Jun; 34(2):
 3. Cancer Research UK Cancer stats
 4. NHS Choices Congenital Heart disease information
 5. National diabetes paediatric audit 2015/16
 6. NICE: Epidemiological data on the prevalence and incidence of epilepsy
 7. Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis Organisation UK
- ONS mid 2016 population estimates
UK Birth Registration data

8.2 Raising awareness of the invisible conditions that affect young people

There are a number of organisations that are specifically focused on supporting young people with long term conditions. For example, [Epilepsy Action](#) has sections on its website providing advice and support for children and [young people](#) with epilepsy. This sets out that whilst it

¹⁵³ CQC, [Invisible conditions](#), May 2017

can be difficult to talk about your epilepsy with other people, raising awareness will help people understand the condition:

Sometimes other people might seem to treat you differently. And it may feel like this is because of your epilepsy. It might be, but it might not be. It's important to remember that there could be other reasons for someone's behaviour. You could try checking with the person you think is treating you differently. They might be able to explain what they're feeling.

Sometimes someone can treat you differently through ignorance. It's normal to feel scared of something you don't understand. If you feel able to, you could just try and answer their questions and deal with their fears yourself. If it doesn't feel okay to do this, you could point them to this website.

If it's at school or college where this is happening, you could ask if it's possible to arrange for someone to do epilepsy awareness training. It's important that you feel okay about having this happen.

Find out more about [epilepsy awareness training by Epilepsy Action](#)

There are over 600,000 people in the UK with epilepsy. So getting a group of people, like your class or year group a bit more aware of it will be a great thing. It should help you because people will understand more about epilepsy. It will help other people with epilepsy. And the more people there are who understand about epilepsy, the better the world will be.¹⁵⁴

Diabetes UK also provides specific information for children and young people on living with diabetes. The [teenager section](#) encourages individuals affected by diabetes to send in stories and blogs of their experiences.¹⁵⁵ You can [read a collection of these stories](#), and the [website also has several films](#) that can be used to raise awareness of diabetes.

The website, [healthtalk.org](#) is produced by The Health Experience Research Group at the University of Oxford, and the Oxford-based charity DIPEX. It provides information about health issues, through showing people's real-life experiences. [One section](#) is focused on young people's experiences.¹⁵⁶

Some young people have successfully used social media to raise awareness about chronic conditions. For example, in 2016, Niamh was named as [a Radio One teen hero](#) for her work setting up [a support group for young people with chronic conditions on Instagram](#).¹⁵⁷

As well as increasing understanding of a condition, raising awareness of the potential needs of these individuals can help with making living with these conditions easier. A recent example where this has helped is a campaign to change the signage on public toilets. [Crohns and Colitis UK](#) explain that whilst people suffering with a condition such as inflammatory bowel disease, "*might look 'okay' on the outside, they may be in a daily battle with a serious medical condition and urgently*

¹⁵⁴ Epilepsy Action, [Having a social life](#), November 2014

¹⁵⁵ Diabetes UK, [Info for teenagers](#) [accessed 5 October 2017]

¹⁵⁶ Healthtalk, [Young People's experiences](#), [accessed 5 October 2017]

¹⁵⁷ BBC Radio One, [Radio 1 Teen Hero – Niamh](#), 2016

need to use that 'disabled' or 'accessible' toilet." They should not have to face questions or confrontations about why they use the disabled toilet. Tesco, Morrisons, Asda, and marks and Spencer all responded to this campaign and rolled out new signage that states that 'not every disability is visible.'¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁸ Crohn's and Colitis UK, [Tesco announces new toilet signage for 'invisible' conditions](#), January 2017

9. Protect school budgets from damaging cuts

School funding is a devolved issue. This section relates to England only.

Proposal before the Youth Parliament:

The Government should reverse the proposed cuts to schools so that each young person has an equal chance to succeed.

9.1 Government plans for school funding in England

The Government is planning to introduce a new national funding formula (NFF) to calculate the amount of core revenue funding that mainstream schools in England will attract. There are also new formulas for high need (largely special educational needs funding) and for services still centrally provided by local authorities. The new funding arrangements will be transitioned in from 2018-19.

In July 2017, the government signalled some changes to its original funding reforms¹⁵⁹ and said there would be “£1.3 billion for schools and high needs across 2018-19 and 2019-20 in addition to the schools budget set at spending review 2015”.¹⁶⁰ It confirmed these and other modifications in September 2017.¹⁶¹

Under the original school funding proposals, which the 2015 Government consulted on just prior to the 2017 General Election, there would have been cash ‘gainers and losers’ from the schools NFF in 2018-19 and 2019-2020, compared to baselines. The Department for Education says that the final NFF arrangements:

[W]ill provide for up to 6% gains per pupil for underfunded schools by 2019-20 and, as a minimum, a 0.5% per pupil cash increase in 2018-19, and a 1% increase by 2019-20 compared to their baselines, in respect of every school.¹⁶²

The schools NFF will operate as a ‘soft’ formula in 2018-19 and 2019-20. This means that it will not be used to work out actual funding allocations for individual schools. Plans for beyond 2019-20 have not been confirmed yet, but the Government says it intends to introduce a ‘hard’ formula in time.

One key policy aim of the school funding reforms is to reduce unintentional variation in the funding received by individual schools and pupils in similar circumstances. This aim has been widely supported, and many have welcomed the £1.3 billion for core school revenue funding identified in July 2017.

¹⁵⁹ Justine Greening, [Oral Statement to Parliament](#), 17 July 2017

¹⁶⁰ DfE, [The national funding formula for schools and high needs. Executive summary](#), September 2017, p5.

¹⁶¹ See: Justine Greening, [Oral Statement to Parliament](#), 14 September 2017.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

9.2 How are schools currently funded?

Under the current system, there is a two-step process to calculate and distribute core school revenue funding. First, the Government calculates a local authority area's overall allocation of Dedicated Schools Grant, or DSG. The largest element of this is known as the Schools Block, but there are other elements, and other school funding outside the DSG. Schools Block allocations are strongly influenced by historical factors; there is considerable variation between the per-pupil level of funding for different areas.

Local authorities, in consultation with statutory bodies called schools forums, then draw up a local funding formula following Department for Education (DfE) guidance and regulations, to share out this money between schools in their area.

Sixth forms and 16 to 19 year olds in colleges

Funding for this group is outside the scope of the current NFF reforms. 16-19 funding is already calculated according to a national funding formula. A report by the Institute for Fiscal Studies published in February 2017 said that 16-18 provision had been:

[T]he big loser from education spending changes over the last 25 years [...] the long-run, and continuing, squeeze in resources in 16–18 education poses significant challenges for the sector as a whole.¹⁶³

In response to questions on post-16 funding on 14 September 2017, in the context of the NFF reforms, Education Secretary Justine Greening said:

The formula I set out today covers primary and secondary—up to 16. We are making sure that we continue funding post-16 colleges and A-levels, and the hon. Gentleman will be aware that we have gone beyond that. We announced an additional £500 million in the last Budget to help boost technical education, which will be of benefit not just to further education colleges, but to sixth forms and sixth-form colleges.¹⁶⁴

9.3 Sufficiency of overall school funding and reaction to 2017 Government plans

There has been significant concern about the overall sufficiency of school funding given cumulative cost pressures, inflation and rising pupil numbers. The debate about the school funding formula has taken place in this wider context. Some commentators also argue that any future protections or cash increases under the reformed school funding system from 2018-19 do not adequately address funding pressures schools have already had to deal with.

Responding to the Government's September 2017 Statement, the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) said:

¹⁶³ Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS), '[Long-run comparisons of spending per pupil across different stages of education](#)', 27 February 2017.

¹⁶⁴ [HC Deb 14 September 2017, c1035](#)

We welcome the government's continued commitment to a national funding formula for schools. It is essential that schools are funded fairly wherever they are located, and that historical inequities which have created a postcode lottery are removed.

"Setting minimum funding levels for schools is also a welcome move, but we need to examine whether the levels announced today by the Secretary of State are sufficient. We fear they are still way too low to allow schools to deliver the quality of education they want to provide and which pupils need.

"The fundamental problem is there is not enough funding going into education. The additional £1.3bn announced by Justine Greening in July was a step in the right direction. But schools have already suffered huge cuts and the additional funding is nowhere near enough to prevent further cuts.¹⁶⁵

The newly-formed National Education Union (NEU – a merger between the NUT and the ATL) claimed that the school funding plans fell short:

In anticipation of this [14 September 2017] announcement, the NEU and other education unions set Justine Greening five tests. She has failed every one of them:

School cuts have not been reversed. This announcement means that the vast majority of schools will have less money per pupil next year and in 2020 than when this Government took office in 2015.

There is no new money. These plans are still based on taking money from other areas of education spending and making unrealistic assumptions about 'efficiency savings' which hard-pressed schools cannot achieve.

High needs, early years and post-16 education are not being fairly funded. These areas have suffered the biggest cuts - but she has said nothing about early years and post-16 funding and the funding increases promised for high needs pupils are well below inflation.

She has made no long term funding commitment. Schools need to be able to plan for the future. Instead of announcing and guaranteeing funding for at least the next five years, she has not even confirmed the limited extra funding promised in the manifesto.

Historic underfunding will not be addressed. Schools in historically underfunded areas may receive some extra money, but it will not be enough to protect them against inflation and other cost increases - and it is being taken away from other schools which will now lose even more.¹⁶⁶

The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) published a short briefing, responding to the Government's September 2017 announcements, and comparing the final funding reform proposals to the ones that had been consulted on prior to the 2017 General Election. This concluded:

[..] There were [...] a number of other changes to the original proposals. First, there is more money. The average cash-terms increase in funding in pupil between 2017–18 and 2019–20 is

¹⁶⁵ Association of School and College Leaders press release, '[Prime Minister and Chancellor must act on school funding](#)', 14 September 2017.

¹⁶⁶ National Education Union press release, '[Schools national funding formula](#)', 14 September 2017.

now around 3% rather than just under 1% as under the original proposals (equivalent to a real-terms freeze). Second, there are new absolute minimum levels of funding per pupil for both primary and secondary schools. Finally, protections against losses were extended such that no school could experience a cash-terms increase of less than 0.5% per year between 2017–18 and 2019–20 (as opposed to a cash-terms fall of 1.5% per year). The maximum any school can gain has also increased from 5.6% to 6.1% in cash-terms per pupil.

However, none of these changes will affect schools directly. They will affect the amount that each local authority receives and it is the local authority (in discussion with schools themselves through ‘School Forums’) who will decide how much each school actually receives. The minimum funding levels for primary and secondary schools are not obligatory and local authorities are able to reduce individual schools’ funding per pupil by up to 1.5% in cash-terms if they wish. It is sensible that this latter protection is less than the 0.5% increase in the main formula as it will allow local authorities’ funding formulae to respond to the changing circumstances of schools (e.g. if a school is becoming less deprived, its funding can go down).

Given the current state of the school funding system, the latest proposals imply school funding reform is moving in the right direction, albeit it at a slower pace than implied by policy prior to the general election. If implemented, this will get closer to a system where similar areas will receive similar levels of funding. However, the proposals will not ensure that similar schools are funded in a similar way, as local authorities will still be free to implement their own funding formulae.

We don’t know anything, however, about government plans after 2019–20, either in terms of continued transitional protections or the full introduction of a school-level national funding formula. This is a source of major uncertainty. The government still says it is their ‘intention’ to implement a ‘hard’ formula. Whether it actually happens – in particular given that this change would require primary legislation to pass through parliament – remains to be seen.¹⁶⁷

In her July 2017 Statement to Parliament, Justine Greening said that “per pupil funding will now be maintained in real terms for the remaining two years of the Spending Review period to 2019-20”. She also acknowledged cost pressures on schools:

We recognise that many schools have worked hard up to this point to manage cost base pressures on their budgets, and we will take action this year to provide targeted support to those schools where financial health is at risk, deploying efficiency experts to give direct support to these schools.¹⁶⁸

9.4 Further reading

Note that some of these articles and reports were published before the Government’s July and/ or September 2017 school funding announcements.

¹⁶⁷ Belfield, C and Sibieta, L, Institute for Fiscal Studies, ‘[School Funding Reform in England: a smaller step towards a more sensible system, will the final leap ever be made?](#)’, 21 September 2017.

¹⁶⁸ Justine Greening, [Oral Statement to Parliament](#), 17 July 2017.

On overall school funding levels

['We need to ask ourselves: what does it really cost to run a successful school?'](#), Times Education Supplement, 22nd September 2017

[Education Policy Institute Research Note: Where next on school funding and the National Funding Formula?](#) Education Policy Institute, July 2017

[Exclusive: DfE believes more than a quarter of schools spend too much money](#), Times Educational Supplement, 11 May 2017

[Financial sustainability of schools](#), National Audit Office, 14 December 2016

['Long-run comparisons of spending per pupil across different stages of education'](#), Institute for Fiscal Studies, 27 February 2017.

On the new national funding formula arrangements

[The government has rescued the National Funding Formula by the skin of its teeth](#), Schools Week, 18 July 2017

[School Funding Reform in England: a smaller step towards a more sensible system, will the final leap ever be made?](#) IFS, 21 September 2017

10. Work experience hubs for 11-18 year olds

Proposal before the Youth Parliament:

Knowing where to find work experience can be challenging. Government should create an online space to help young people with this.

In the [2016 Employers Perspectives Survey](#), **65% of employers** reported that relevant work experience was a critical or significant factor when recruiting. However only 38% of employers offered any form of work experience in the previous 12 months.¹⁶⁹

The government does not collect information on the number of schools participating in employment schemes.¹⁷⁰

State-funded schools in England are not subject to a specific duty to arrange work experience for pupils aged under 16. The Department for Education expects schools and other 16-19 providers to offer appropriate work experience and/ or 'work related learning' to young people aged 16-19 as part of their broader study programmes.

10.1 Purpose of work experience

The purpose of work experience is stated on the Education Funding Agency's guidance [16 to 19 funding study programmes: work experience](#):

Work experience enables a young person to spend time on an employer's premises, observing the workplace, undertaking tasks (under supervision) alongside adults working there, and learning the skills and behaviours needed at work.

Work experience is designed to bridge the gap between education and the world of work. It can help young people become aware of jobs they have not previously thought of, help inform career choices, offer a chance to prove themselves to an employer, enable young people to develop the relevant occupational skills and help instill the attitudes and behaviours expected at work. Further details of what is expected from quality work experience can be found on [GOV.UK](#).¹⁷¹

One of the findings of the 2016 Employers Perspectives Survey was that employers valued work experience above the qualifications held by a potential applicant when making a decision on whether to recruit them. While 65% of employers reported that relevant work experience was significant or critical, only 56% put equal value in an applicant having an A*-C grade in Maths and English and 46% put equal value in the other academic qualifications held by an applicant.¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ Department for Education, [Employer perspectives survey 2016](#), pg 13, 28 June 2017

¹⁷⁰ [PQ 6639](#), 6 September 2017

¹⁷¹ Education Funding Agency, [16 to 19 funding study programmes: work experience](#)

¹⁷² Department for Education, [Employer perspectives survey 2016](#), pg 47, 28 June 2017

10.2 Work experience – responsibilities of schools and colleges in England

Under 16

State-funded schools in England are not subject to a specific duty to arrange work experience for pupils of [compulsory school age](#); until 2012, maintained schools were under a duty to provide work-related learning at key stage 4 (approximate ages 14 to 16). In 2012, the Coalition Government removed this duty. Giving evidence to the Delegated Legislation Committee, Schools Minister Nick Gibb said the changes were about:

Removing centralised prescription on schools. They can and should continue to provide work-related learning to the students who will benefit most from it, but the thrust of the [Wolf report](#) is that it is more important for work experience to take place post-16, and that our resources and priorities should be on such young people rather than those aged under 16. Nevertheless, where schools believe that it is important, it should continue to happen, but it should be up to schools to decide the extent to which it happens and the quality and type of work-related learning provided for those under 16.¹⁷³

Responding in October 2015 to a Parliamentary Question about whether the then-Government would consider reintroducing compulsory work-related learning, then Minister Sam Gyimah said:

We are making the whole education system much more closely linked to the world of work. We have put more emphasis on mastering vital skills, more respected qualifications, and given employers greater influence over the content of courses, so young people have the skills that universities and employers value.

We want more young people to have the opportunity to take part in high quality work experience that helps to prepare them for the workplace and develop the employability skills that employers require. Work experience is an important element of post-16 provision – new personalised study programmes include some form of work experience or work-related learning that is relevant to the career aspirations of students.

We recognise that younger children benefit from contact with employers but we trust head teachers to decide what is best for their pupils, including when and how to take part in work experience. We are providing valuable support through a new employer-led Careers & Enterprise Company which has been tasked with increasing the level of employer input into schools and colleges.¹⁷⁴

Further information on the Careers and Enterprise Company can be found on the organisation's [website](#).

Aged 16 to 19

The Department for Education expects schools and other 16-19 providers to offer appropriate work experience and/ or 'work related

¹⁷³ [First Delegated Legislation Committee](#), Monday 2 July 2012, c6

¹⁷⁴ [PQ 12267, 21 October 2015](#)

learning' to young people as part of their broader study programmes. Department for Education (DfE) [guidance](#) to schools and colleges states:

All 16 to 19 year old students are funded for an individual study programme. Most study programmes have a core aim. The core aim of a study programme is a substantial qualification which can be academic or vocational or work experience.

The study programme must be tailored to the prior attainment of each individual student, have clear study and/or employment goals reflecting the student's prior attainment and should include:

- Substantial qualifications or work experience
- Maths and English for students who have not achieved grade A* to C, GCSE, new GCSE 9 to 4 or [equivalent qualification](#) in these subjects by age 16
- High-quality work experience
- Added value non-qualification activity.¹⁷⁵

The DfE has also published [additional guidance](#) (March 2015) on post-16 work experience as part of study programmes.¹⁷⁶

The current Government is implementing reforms to technical education in England. It says work placements and work-related learning will be important components of the new technical education routes. Further background on reforms in this area can be found in another Commons Library briefing paper, [Reforms to technical education](#).

10.3 Current work experience schemes for 11-18 year olds

Careers and Enterprise Company

In December 2014 the [Careers and Enterprise Company](#) was created by the Department for Education to provide careers education and advice to school pupils aged 12 to 18.

The company set up the Careers and Enterprise Fund which is allocated to organisations who have "a proven understanding of how to increase the number of encounters young people have with employers". In 2016, £5 million was invested in 50 careers and enterprise programmes.¹⁷⁷

Education Business Partnerships

Education Business Partnerships (EBP) link schools and colleges with local and national employers, and one of the services they provide are work experience placements. There are 80 partnerships across the UK, and over 173,000 employers are registered with an EBP.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ Education (and Skills) Funding Agency, [16 to 19 funding study programmes: work experience](#), updated 16 September 2016.

¹⁷⁶ DfE, [Post-16 work experience as part of 16-19 study programmes and traineeships](#), July 2016.

¹⁷⁷ Careers and Enterprise Company, [Careers and Enterprise Fund](#)

¹⁷⁸ Education Business Partnership National, [Schools & Colleges](#)

Supported Internships

[Supported Internships](#) is a type of study programme aimed at young people aged 16-24 who have a statement of special educational needs or an Education, Health and Care plan, and who want to move into employment and need extra support to do so.

Internships normally last for a year and include unpaid work placements of at least six months. Wherever possible they support the young person to move into paid employment at the end of the programme.¹⁷⁹

Traineeships

[Traineeships](#) provide work experience for people aged 16-24 who are either unemployed or work for fewer than 16 hours a week, and who have little work experience. They are targeted at those “who have been unsuccessful when applying for an apprenticeship or other job due to a lack of skills and experience”¹⁸⁰

Work Experience for those claiming Job Seekers Allowance

The Government has a number of schemes involving work experience placements as part of its wider welfare-to-work policies. These will be set up by a Jobcentre Plus work coach.¹⁸¹

Work Experience, the largest of these programmes, is targeted at young people who are getting Jobseeker’s Allowance and are aged between 16 and 24. The placements will last between two and eight weeks.

Work Trials give someone on Jobseeker’s Allowance the opportunity to try a job for up to 30 working days, and they may be offered the job at the end of the trial.

Work Together provides an opportunity for someone who is seeking work to volunteer with a local organisation.

10.4 Further Reading

- DfE research report, ‘[Work experience and related activities in schools and colleges](#)’, March 2017.
- DfE, [Employer perspectives survey 2016](#), June 2017
- UK Commission for Employment and Skills, [Employer guides to work experience](#), February 2014
- LifeSkills, [A guide to organising and managing work experience for teachers](#), April 2013
- ‘[Government urged to bring back compulsory work experience for under 16s](#)’ in TES, 14 October 2015
- Ofsted press release (and associated report), ‘[Schools should be doing more to prepare young people for the world of work](#)’, 24 November 2016

¹⁷⁹ Department for Education, [Supported Internship for young people with education, health and care plans](#), June 2017

¹⁸⁰ Skills Funding Agency, [Is a Traineeship for me?](#), December 2016

¹⁸¹ Gov.uk, [Help with moving from benefits to work](#)

- [‘How does Ofsted know whether work experience is high quality?’](#) in FE Week, 20 February 2017.

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