



**Baroness Barran**

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23 November 2021

Dear Janet,

## **SKILLS AND POST-16 EDUCATION BILL: REPORT STAGE**

I would like to thank you for your contributions during the Skills and Post-16 Education Bill's Report stage in the House and commend your continued efforts to highlight the interests of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) communities. The role you play as Chair of the department's GRT Stakeholder Advisory Group is an extremely important one. As I mentioned in the chamber, I would like to take this opportunity to respond to questions you raised during this stage in the Bill's passage.

Post-16 education is vital and it supports people to get the skills our economy needs throughout their lives, wherever they live in the country and whatever their background. It can also be a lifeline for disadvantaged young people and adults who may need a fresh chance at education. Our commitment to Further Education and skills is an important element of our commitment to levelling up, and supports a diverse range of young people, including those from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities.

### **National Strategy for the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities**

We know that some people in GRT communities have some of the worst outcomes of any other group in the UK in terms of health, housing, employment, but in particular education. This is why the Government is delivering the £1 million GRT Pilot Education Areas programme across five Local Authority areas to improve the education attainment and life chances of GRT children and young people.

During the debate, you asked specifically about the National Strategy for the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities. This is a policy area held within the Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) and I understand Ministers are currently developing their priorities around this work.

### **16-19 year old tuition catch up and small group tuition**

Turning to your question around the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities and tuition for those who need to catch up, I would like to reassure you that we have made funding available to support disadvantaged students in schools, colleges and other 16-19 providers. The additional funding has been used to extend the 16-19 Tuition Fund. On 24 February 2021, the Government announced a further investment of £102 million to extend the fund into the 2021/22 academic year. On 2 June 2021 we announced a further £222

million to extend the fund for a further two years from 2022/23 academic years. And to help education recovery, Spending Review 2021 also provided £324 million in 2024-25 for additional learning hours for 16-19 year-olds.

We are currently unable to provide figures for how many students from the Gypsy, Roma, Traveller communities have received tuition via the fund. However, we are pleased that eligibility for the 2021/22 academic year has been broadened to include economic disadvantage in addition to low prior attainment in English and maths. Including these students allows providers to offer tuition to all disadvantaged students who have been impacted by the pandemic, while still maintaining focus on English, maths, and vocational catch up.

### **Centres for Excellence in Maths**

You also asked about the Centres for Excellence in Maths, which are now in their fourth year of delivery. This is a national improvement programme aimed at delivering a step-change in mathematics teaching for Level 2 mathematics teachers in FE settings. It is led by 21 Centres for Excellence (Further Education and Sixth Form Colleges), who are testing new teaching approaches, developing quality teaching resources, building teachers' skills and spreading best practice across the country through maths networks.

Crucially, with at least one Centre located in each geographical region across the country, teachers and their students across the country, regardless of their background, are able to benefit from the programme.

Further information about the programme and its activities can found at: <https://www.et-foundation.co.uk/supporting/professional-development/maths-and-english/cfem/>

### **Functional skills and apprenticeships**

Finally in relation to your question about Functional Skills qualifications and apprenticeships, I would reassure you that a key part of the apprenticeship offer is supporting apprentices without the required level of English and maths to achieve the relevant Functional Skills qualifications before they complete their apprenticeship. Information about these requirements and the funding arrangements for Functional Skills qualifications are communicated via Gov.uk in both our [guidance for employers](#), and the apprenticeship funding rules.

I hope you have found these answers helpful, and I would like to thank you again for your questions and your continued contribution during the passage of the Bill in the House.

I will place a copy of this letter in the House of Lords Library.

Yours sincerely,



**BARONESS BARRAN**  
**PARLIAMENTARY UNDER-SECRETARY OF STATE**