Angela Rayner Visits School to Support Student Foodbank Collection as Part of Youth Engagement Initiative

Tuesday 16 June, 2026

Set for Success helps students develop essential life and employability skills as national debate continues over young people at risk of falling out of education and work.

Angela Rayner MP visited Dixons Ashton Academy on Friday 5th June to meet students taking part in the Set for Success programme, an intensive youth leadership initiative using sport and physical activity to help young people develop key life skills and improve engagement with pathways into education and work.

The visit comes after the publication of the interim Milburn Review, which highlighted the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) could reach 1.25 million by the early 2030s without urgent government action.

During Friday's visit, students showcased a social action project they had developed as part of the programme, leading a donation drive in support of a Cedar Park food bank. Rayner, MP for Ashton-under-Lyne, spent time speaking with students about their experiences on the programme and hearing first-hand how it has helped their personal development and future ambitions. The school were also joined by Ayaz Bhuta, British Paralympic wheelchair rugby player and Youth Sport Trust Athlete Mentor.

Speaking about the visit, Rayner said, "It was brilliant to meet the pupils taking part in this wonderful project and hear how the sessions are helping to build their confidence and self-esteem. I am delighted they have decided to collect items for a local food bank!"

Funded by the Wimbledon Foundation, in partnership with Barclays and delivered by the Youth Sport Trust, Set for Success supports young people from under-served communities who may face barriers to achieving their full potential for a number of reasons. Through mentoring from inspirational athletes and a structured programme of personal development activities, participants build essential life, leadership and employability skills.

The Milburn Review's interim report pointed to school absence and exclusion as the biggest driving forces behind children falling out of education, training and employment. More broadly the review highlights the economic scale of the crisis, with the current numbers of young people not in education, employment or training resulting in an estimated annual cumulative cost of around £125 billion to the UK. Meanwhile, research by Sheffield Hallam University's Sport Industry Research Centre into Set for Success' impact found for every £1 invested in Set for Success, £5.63 of social value is generated in year 1 delivery. As a direct result of their involvement in Set for Success, most pupils participating in the programme are expected to remain in education, training or employment. The estimated contribution of Set for Success to improving young people's future prospects is 47%.

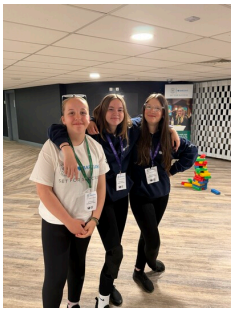
During the 2024/25 academic year, 92% of participants reported improvements in at least one of three key employability skills, while 82% know more about how their skills can help them in the future. Furthermore, more than three-quarters (77%) of teachers reported improvements in pupil attendance at school as a result of taking part in Set for Success.

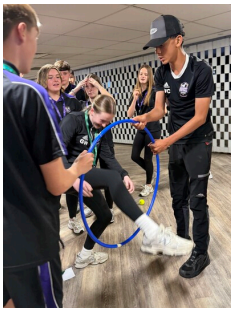
Ali Oliver MBE, Youth Sport Trust CEO, said, "With the worrying predictions released by the Milburn Review's interim report and at a time when too many young people risk becoming disconnected from education and future employment, programmes such as Set for Success provide essential opportunities to build confidence, develop employability skills and strengthen engagement with school. Whilst there are wider social and economic issues that need to also be tackled to support young people's future prospects, the results we are seeing through the programme are incredibly encouraging, with improvements in attendance, skills development and future aspirations demonstrating the transformational role sport can play in young people's lives. We are proud to partner with the Wimbledon Foundation and Barclays to help create brighter futures and create lasting social impact in communities across the country."

Paige Murphy, Head of the Wimbledon Foundation, said, "Our Set for Success programme uses the power of sport to help young people around the UK who may be at risk of not achieving their full potential to identify future goals and develop the skills required to achieve their goals. Together with mentoring and

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taking part in sport, the social action projects are a key part of Set for Success and give young people the opportunity to lead, connect with others, and create positive change in their communities. We believe that when we invest in young people and surround them with the right support, they don't just transform their own futures; they lift those around them too."

Eden Barnes OBE, Head of Regional Corporate Affairs at Barclays said, "Set for Success is a fantastic example of what can be achieved through strong partnerships. At Barclays, we're committed to supporting initiatives that help young people build confidence, resilience, and the skills they need for the future."

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