

Media Freedom Coalition launched to address attacks on journalists

Following their landmark Global Conference for Media Freedom, Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt and Canadian Foreign Minister Chrystia Freeland have announced the launch of a new Media Freedom Coalition.

The Coalition will be formed by governments who sign up to a Pledge that commits them to speak out and take action together when media freedom is at risk, and to champion the cause around the world.

Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said:

2018 was the deadliest year for journalists.

The fact that over 100 countries were represented at the Global Conference for Media Freedom, with over 1500 delegates from all regions of the world, demonstrates the global resonance of this issue.

I am delighted that governments are committing to firm action and to working together as an international community to create a safer environment for journalism across the globe. By shining a light on attacks against journalists, the new Coalition will aim to change political calculations and increase the costs to those who abuse media freedom.

The Conference is set to become an annual event, gathering the world's governments, civil society and media to take stock of the state of media freedom around the world, with Canada hosting the next conference in 2020. As part of the ongoing global campaign, media freedom will be bolstered through the new Global Media Defence Fund, an international task force to help governments design better national frameworks and action plans, and an independent high-level panel of legal experts, chaired by former President of the UK Supreme Court Lord Neuberger and involving prominent international lawyers including Amal Clooney, the Foreign Secretary's Special Envoy for Media Freedom.

The UK government is determined to set an example for the rest of the world by continuing to improve media freedom at home in the UK. The government has announced the creation of a new National Committee for the Safety of Journalists, which is expected to bring together representatives from journalism organisations and relevant government departments. The Committee will be asked to devise a National Action Plan on the Safety of Journalists and ensure that those who threaten journalists are held to account. The plan will examine current protections offered to journalists in the UK, and consider how to work together to build on existing strengths.

The government has also decided to establish an autonomous UK human rights sanctions regime once it leaves the European Union. The sanctions could be used against individuals and governments that abuse human rights, including acts against the media.

Notes to Editors

- The new Media Freedom Coalition will shine a light on violations and abuses of media freedom, bringing them to the attention of the global public and working towards accountability; stand together to intervene at the highest level with the governments of countries where media freedom is at risk and to show solidarity with countries that work to build media freedom; and consider all available measures to address violations and abuses of international human rights, including rights related to media freedom. A number of governments signed up to the Pledge and joined the Coalition while at the Conference, while others have indicated their interest to do so once Cabinet approval has been completed. The list of participating governments is expected to be announced in September at the UN General Assembly.
- The text of the Pledge is available here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/global-pledge-on-media-freedom/global-pledge-on-media-freedom>
- More information on announcements from the Global Conference for Media Freedom can be found here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/topical-events/global-conference-for-media-freedom-london-2019>

Further information

[First generation of Unlocked prison officers graduate as scheme expands to north](#)

The first ever cohort of Unlocked graduate prison officers celebrated the success of the scheme with the Justice Secretary and the Prisons Minister on Tuesday afternoon (9 July).

First generation of Unlocked prison officers graduate as scheme expands to north

- Graduation follows two years working in prison alongside experienced officers
- Scheme will now be rolled out across prisons in the north
- Success down to efforts of all involved, with best practice being spread across estate

The 36 graduates of the two-year programme joined staff from the prisons in which they have been working at a reception at 10 Downing Street.

Working with experienced prison staff, the Unlocked officers were challenged to identify positive changes they could implement while also integrating as dynamic officers on the wings. Meaningful changes that the graduates have brought about range from revamping the induction process at HMP Brixton to changing how medicines are dispensed at HMP Wandsworth.

The scheme has been so successful that it will now place officers in several prisons around Manchester from September 2019, in addition to prisons in London and the south east.

The graduates are part of a wider recruitment drive across the prison estate, with more than 4,700 additional officers recruited since 2016 and staffing levels at their highest in seven years. This comes alongside an additional £70 million investment in prison safety, security and decency, with £16 million to improve conditions for prisoners and staff and £7 million on new security measures.

Justice Secretary David Gauke said:

I want to congratulate all of the Unlocked Graduates, and the prison officers who have supported them, for their tireless and innovative work. Their desire to make a difference is inspiring.

We want our prison officers to come from the broadest possible range of backgrounds in order to reflect the society they serve, and I am delighted to see that the scheme will soon be expanding to Manchester.

Officer numbers are at their highest level since 2012 which is vital to ensuring our prisons can fulfil their purpose of protecting the public, reducing reoffending and rehabilitating

offenders.

Natasha Porter, founder and CEO of Unlocked Graduates said:

Our pioneer officers have achieved amazing things in their two years. They have literally saved lives and made a thousand tiny differences in the prisons where they have worked.

Their achievements have only been possible thanks to the support and experience of the prison officers they have worked alongside and learned from.

Jack, one of the first generation of Unlocked Graduates and currently a prison officer at a central London prison said:

I can't quite believe this amazing two years are over but I'm so proud of what the first generation of Unlocked Graduates has achieved. Our work would not have been possible without the support of amazing colleagues in the prison service, as well as our brilliant mentors.

I'm looking forward to seeing what my fellow Unlocked officers do next. I know many of us will carry on working as prison officers continuing to play a crucial role on the frontline of the prison service, some will progress even further up the ranks of the prison service and others will go on to give prison officers a voice in government, civil society and charities.

Unlocked is a two-year leadership programme specifically aimed at encouraging the brightest and best graduates and career changers to become prison officers. The programme is aimed at raising the status of the profession by attracting a different kind of leader to work in prisons and help identify ways to reform the prison system, reduce reoffending and improve rehabilitation.

While working as full-time frontline prison officers in HMPs Brixton, Coldingley, Downview, High Down, Isis and Wandsworth, the graduates were also required to undertake a rigorous programme of study to complete a Master's degree focused on system reform in prisons.

More information about the scheme can be found at <https://unlockedgrads.org.uk>

£100 million migration fund helps alleviate council pressures across England

From tackling rogue landlords, helping alleviate rough sleeping or boosting community integration through English language lessons, the fund has helped deliver rapid results for communities.

£100 million migration fund helps alleviate council pressures across England

Councils across England are set to receive a further £28 million to help ease pressures on local services resulting from recent migration. This brings total funding from the government's Controlling Migration Fund to over £100 million.

From tackling rogue landlords, helping alleviate rough sleeping or boosting community integration through English language lessons, the fund has helped deliver rapid results for communities.

The latest funding, announced by Communities Minister Lord Bourne, will be allocated to 123 projects across England.

Communities Minister Lord Bourne said:

Whether its tackling rogue landlords who exploit vulnerable migrants, helping new arrivals learn English or supporting care leavers to access education, the Controlling Migration Fund is delivering results across the country and providing services for the benefit of all.

Each community is unique in the challenges it faces, but the projects we've funded have shown that positive change is possible when people come together and think innovatively about how to support the whole community.

Case Studies

Stockport

Stockport council used funding to develop a bilingual teaching assistant programme to support children in early years who start school or nursery with little or no English. These assistants provide these young children with the support they need to have a successful start. The initiative has delivered impressive results; and in 2017/18 after providing bilingual support to 201 children with English as an additional language, only 26 (13%) required support the following year while only three of the 65 nursery children benefiting from the intervention needed ongoing support.

Manchester Strangeways

Manchester city council, a recipient of today's additional funding, has already shown great results from its joint work with other agencies, including immigration enforcement, to disrupt and dismantle counterfeit trade in the Strangeways area. The project has removed over 100 counterfeit traders from the area using the council's corporate landlord powers as well as achieving significant seizures of counterfeit goods, illicit tobacco and arrests for various offences including immigration offences.

Fenland

Fenland council is receiving ongoing funding to support the continued operation of Wisbech Emergency Night Shelter which helps people to find more settled housing, employment and training and to access medical services more efficiently. The Fund has already supported an additional four beds at the shelter. This has reduced pressures on local services and community tension in the area with 84% of the clients not returning to the streets in 2016/17, rising to 86.4% in 2017/18.

Enfield

Enfield has secured funding to extend its 'Operation Rogue Landlord' project. The project will focus on targeted inspections and enforcement in areas where more vulnerable residents in the community are most likely to be affected by poor housing conditions, overcrowding and exploitation.

The project's interventions have yielded positive outcomes so far including 1,950 property inspections and 1,014 enforcement notices.

Further information

The [Controlling Migration Fund](#) was first announced in November 2016 and is designed to support local areas facing pressures linked to recent immigration.

View a summary of funding for projects announced today, which will run over 2018 to 2020:

This file may not be suitable for users of assistive technology. [Request an accessible format.](#)

If you use assistive technology (such as a screen reader) and need a version of this document in a more accessible format, please email alternativeformats@communities.gov.uk. Please tell us what format you need. It will help us if you say what assistive technology you use.

The Fund delivers on many of the priorities set out in the [Integrated Communities Strategy](#) published on 14 March 2018.