

FCO statement following the death of Robert Mugabe



A Foreign Office spokesperson said:

There are mixed emotions in Zimbabwe today at the death of Robert Mugabe.

We express our condolences to those who mourn Robert Mugabe's death. However, Zimbabweans suffered for too long as a result of Mugabe's autocratic rule.

We hope that in this new era, Zimbabwe can continue to be set on a more democratic and prosperous path.

Published 6 September 2019

Get your business ready for Brexit



Supporting businesses to prepare for Brexit on 31 October is our top priority. We want businesses to prepare so that they can take advantage of

the opportunities that lie ahead. Some businesses will have specific questions and concerns, but the whole of government is stepping up a gear and increasing the pace of our preparations as we get ready to leave on 31 October.

Sign up for news and events

We hold regular Business Readiness Forums for trade associations, business representative bodies and business intermediaries. Experts across government speak about the areas that will affect businesses and how best to prepare for Brexit. These forums are available online through WebEx and are held at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy in London. A weekly bulletin follows providing the latest guidance to signpost your networks to with resources to help businesses prepare for Brexit.

A series of regional events for individual businesses will be commencing shortly, further information will follow.

For further details on how trade associations and business intermediaries can register for the forum or to subscribe to the bulletin email sed@beis.gov.uk.

Additional help and support

As we leave the EU, there's a wide range of support available that can help your business thrive and grow.

Further Support

Help to Export

- [Exporting is GREAT](#) have comprehensive export advice, trade finance and live market opportunities for small or mid-sized businesses interested in or currently selling internationally

Help to Grow

- The [British Business Bank Finance Hub](#) can help you understand the finance options available to grow your business
- [Local Growth Hubs](#) join up national and local business support so it is easy for businesses in England to find the help they need
- [Be The Business](#) for inspiration, practical tools and resources to boost your business's productivity

Help to innovate

Published 6 September 2019

New guide for parents of LGBT+ children

The guide provides advice to parents of LGBT+ children who are part of the armed forces community and features case studies of a number of individuals working in the military or as civil servants.

Military life has unique pressures which can affect the children of service personnel, including regular relocation and change in schooling. The guide raises awareness of LGBT+ issues and includes advice and personal experiences of how military life can affect the parents of LGBT+ children.

It includes a number of tips and general advice for parents to create the best possible experience and covers a number of the common myths around having an LGBT+ child.

The new document also features the unique perspectives of Group Captain Tony Keeling OBE, a Station Commander at RAF Wittering, and his wife Mrs Bobby Keeling, whose son came out at the age of 15. Sergeant Major Mark Hill MBE, a Youth Engagement Officer, also provides his perspective in having a transgender daughter.

The guide also outlines a number of the resources available that provide a wide range of advice, support, meet-ups and events with other parents in similar situations.

Ministry of Defence LGBT+ Allies have created a guide to help parents currently going through related circumstances, whilst providing valuable information and raising awareness.

Chief of Defence People Richard Nugee said:

As a parent myself, it is important for the next generation to have the support they need and for parents to know that there is plenty of support out there for them too.

This guide will help raise awareness for defence personnel and underlines our commitment to being an organisation which reflects UK society.

The armed forces has long recognised the valuable contribution LGBT+ service personnel make to defence and this year all three services again featured in Stonewall's Top 100 Employers for LGBT+ people. The earlier in the year MOD announced new measures to create more modern and flexible accommodation, including allowing cohabitation of same-sex couples, in MOD properties.

View the: [Guide for parents of LGBT+ children](#) (PDF, 1.08MB, 20 pages)

Detailed guide: Exporting animals and animal products in a no-deal Brexit

What you'll need to export animals, products of animal origin and animal by-products in a no-deal Brexit.

Liz Truss hosts first meeting of the Freeports Advisory Panel

Trade Secretary Liz Truss MP, Chief Secretary to the Treasury Rishi Sunak MP and Maritime Minister Nusrat Ghani MP hosted the first meeting of the Advisory Panel on Freeports yesterday in London (Thursday 5 September).

The Panel met to discuss the objectives of UK Freeport policy, and advise government on the development of the future design and operation of Freeports in the UK. Ports, airports and other interested parties from across the UK will soon be invited to bid for Freeport status.

As part of the Government's work to consider Freeports, the panel discussed how policy could incentivise additional economic activity within Freeports and attract investment to the UK. During the meeting panel members discussed a wide range of potential areas of focus, such as how Freeports could specifically benefit local economies and empower small businesses; liberalising planning laws and the role of technology in the development of Freeports.

The Freeports Advisory Panel is jointly led by the Secretary of State for International Trade and Chief Secretary to the Treasury Rishi Sunak and includes experts including small business champion Emma Jones MBE, Trade Economist Dr. Meredith Crowley and CEO of British Ports Association Richard Ballantyne.

The first new Freeports will be established after the UK leaves the EU, to drive growth and ensure towns and cities in the UK benefit from Brexit trade opportunities.

International Trade Secretary Liz Truss said:

We're establishing Freeports across the UK to drive growth and transform ports, towns and cities all around our coast. As we begin on this journey, I want to ensure we gather expertise from a range of specialists across the country: from business, industry, tech and academia.

I'm delighted to be joined today by these experts to begin formal discussions on how we can ensure our Freeports are a roaring success. Through these meetings, we will make sure the policy works for all of the UK, so that businesses are ready to trade with countries around the world and our local communities reap the benefits of increased investment.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury Rishi Sunak said:

We are exploring the exciting opportunity that Freeports offer to regenerate left-behind communities and generate additional economic growth.

Freeports could support thousands of high-skilled jobs once established in the UK. Today's first meeting of the Government's Advisory Panel is an important step forward.

Freeports are hubs for business and enterprise for both manufacturing and services trade. These could reduce checks and paperwork, and include tariff, customs and tax benefits. These zones reduce costs and bureaucracy, encouraging manufacturing businesses to set up or re-shore. The most successful Freeports globally attract businesses and create jobs for local people through liberalised planning laws.

Tim Morris, CEO of UK Major Ports Group said:

It's good to get down to business with the Freeports Advisory Panel. We've seen a lot of interest in the Freeports concept since the announcement of the Panel. It's important that we start putting some shape on the opportunity across a range of different policy levers so potential free port operators can develop their plans.

Ultimately, what we must be focused on is boosting investment in our global gateways to strengthen the UK's capacity to trade with the world and grow jobs and prosperity.

Richard Ballantyne, CEO of British Ports Association added:

The ports industry is keen to get going on drawing up Freeports proposals that will be genuinely transformational for the industry. We are bursting with new ideas and are looking forward to sharing the details with Ministers and experts today and at future meetings of the advisory panel.

In addition to the panel, the Department for International Trade is hosting a series of industry roundtables to add to the discussions on Freeports. Last week DIT, together with UK Major Ports Group and British Port Association held the first of these with port operators.

Freeports Advisory Panel members

- Tim Morris, CEO of UK Major Ports Group
- Richard Ballantyne, CEO of British Ports Association
- Dr. Meredith Crowley, Trade Economist, University of Cambridge
- Henry Overman, Professor of Economic Geography, London School of Economics
- Dan Korski, CBE, Founder, Public
- Dr Eamonn Butler, Director, Adam Smith Institute
- Tom Clougherty, Head of Tax, Centre for Policy Studies
- Emma Jones, MBE, Enterprise Nation Founder
- Ben Houchen, Tees Valley Mayor
- Adam Marshall, Director, British Chambers of Commerce – Deputising Suren Thiru, Head of Economics
- Andrew Carter, CEO, Centre for Cities
- Karen Dee, CEO, Airport Operators association
- Nusrat Ghani MP, Maritime Minister