

## Government ditches non-disclosure agreements for Brexit preparations

The use of NDAs – legally binding contracts to maintain confidentiality – has been routine for trade groups and businesses working with the government over the past three years.

But Ministers believe that they hinder constructive debate and exchange of information, with some organisations for example saying they restrict their ability to properly tell members how to prepare for Brexit.

As the government continues to accelerate its preparations for Brexit on October 31, the decision to ditch NDAs in the vast majority of circumstances, was made this week by Ministers at a XO committee meeting.

From today, such agreements will only be entered into, or existing agreements maintained, when this is strictly necessary, including for example to protect the interests of third parties.

A government spokesperson said:

As we continue our preparations for Brexit on October 31, it makes no sense to engage processes which hinder constructive debate, transparency and exchange of information. It is vital that trade groups and businesses can speak openly to one another about preparations and so we will no longer enter into such agreements unless absolutely necessary.

---

## New High Commissioner to the Bahamas holds warm introductory meeting with the Prime Minister Minnis

The UK's new High Commissioner to the Bahamas, Her Excellency Sarah Dickson today presented her letter of introduction to Dr The Hon. Hubert Minnis, Prime Minister of the Bahamas.

The presentation of the letter and subsequent meeting at the Prime Minister's office signalled the reopening of the British High Commission in Nassau after 14 years.

Mrs Dickson's letter of introduction from British Prime Minister, The Rt Hon.

Boris Johnson MP noted the UK's intention to maintain "the relations of close friendship which so happily exist" between both countries.

The High Commissioner also expressed her enthusiasm in being appointed to reopen and head the UK's mission to the Bahamas.

"It is a great pleasure and honour to serve in this beautiful island nation as British High Commissioner," Mrs Dickson remarked. She commented that both countries have a long shared history; common values such as democracy and the rule of law; and similar interests including protecting the environment and promoting trade.

The reopening of our Mission in Nassau allows us to supercharge our historic friendship as partners in the Commonwealth whilst signalling the UK's commitment to being truly global.

"I've been warmly received since officially arriving in The Bahamas. Everyone I have met has been kind and friendly. I am confident that the relationship and ties between our two countries will strengthen as a result of reopening the High Commission."

The High Commissioner has served the British Diplomatic Service for more than 20 years. Her last diplomatic appointment was as Her Majesty's Ambassador to Guatemala and Honduras. She has also served in Spain, Argentina and Yugoslavia; as well as various appointments in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London.

Mrs Dickson has just returned from a role as International Director at the Scotch Whisky Association supporting British exports around the world.

The High Commissioner will be accompanied by her husband and two children.

---

## [Education Secretary says post-16 options better than ever, as GCSE results released](#)

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson says there's never been a better time to go into post-16 study, as hundreds of thousands collect their GCSE results today (Thursday 22 August).

Williamson said the rise in the quality of apprenticeships and A levels means young people can be full of confidence as they look to the future, and move into sixth forms and further education colleges.

There were an estimated 5.2 million GCSE entries this summer – up 50,000 on

the previous year.

This year also sees the continuation of GCSE reforms, including exams being graded at 9 to 1 and designed to be more rigorous and better prepare young people for further study and the world of work.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Today is a proud day for students, teachers and parents up and down the country, and I wish them all the very best for their results.

It should also be an exciting day. It's a day that marks the culmination of years of hard work and opens doors that can create life-changing opportunities.

The work this Government has done to drive up standards means there has never been a better time to go onto further study. We will continue to focus on discipline, outcomes and standards, so whatever path they choose, young people will get a better and better education so they can be full of confidence about their future.

Of the 5.2 million GCSE entries this year, provisional data suggests 4.2 million were for EBacc subjects – up almost 4% on the previous academic year and including rises in entries to Spanish (10%) and French (4%).

The increase in EBacc and modern foreign language entries sits alongside a 3% increase in entries to GCSE arts subjects. The increase includes rises in art and design subjects and performing and expressive arts – showing that a focus on core academic subjects and pupils receiving a cultural, well-rounded education go hand in hand.

Thousands of the pupils getting their results today will go on to do an apprenticeship, offering students high-quality training and a wide range of career options. Apprenticeships now offer more off-the-job training than in previous years and are supported by some of the country's leading employers, including Lloyds Banking Group, Royal Mail and Berkeley Group.

Many others will go on to do A levels, following in the footsteps of almost 250,000 pupils who collected their results last week. Data published alongside last week's results showed 26.2% lift in the number of pupils taking STEM subjects at A level, compared with 2010.

---

## [UK and Korea to sign trade continuity](#)

# deal to ensure businesses are ready to trade post-Brexit

The UK and Korea will today (Thursday 22 August) sign a continuity Free Trade Agreement that will allow businesses to keep trading freely after Brexit on Thursday 31 October. Secretary of State for International Trade, Liz Truss and the Korean Minister of Trade, Yoo Myung-Hee will meet in London to sign the agreement, protecting annual trade flows between the two countries, with total trade worth £14.6 billion in 2018.

This agreement, when brought into force, will allow businesses to keep trading freely after we leave the EU on 31 October, safeguarding British jobs in key sectors including manufacturing, technology and professional services.

The agreement will help to further strengthen the trading relationship between the UK and Korea that has already increased by an average of 12% per year since the EU-Korea Free Trade Agreement was signed in 2011.

Trade continuity agreements signed so far now cover countries accounting for £89 billion of trade, an increase from £39 billion in March 2019.

## **Secretary of State for International Trade Liz Truss MP said:**

My priority is to make sure that British businesses are fully prepared for Brexit and ready to trade on Thursday 31 October. That's why I'm delighted to sign this trade deal today with one of the biggest markets covered by existing EU trade agreements.

It will allow businesses like Bentley and Denby to keep trading as they do today, and they will be able to take advantage of the opportunities that Brexit offers.

The UK-Korea FTA replicates, as far as possible, the effects of the EU-Korea trade deal, allowing businesses to continue to benefit from preferential terms. In 2017, there were 6,900 British businesses exporting goods to Korea, worth around £5.8 billion.

## **Trade Minister Yoo said:**

Today's signing of the FTA will remove much Brexit uncertainty out of our long, valuable economic partnership.

In this challenging time, we took a proactive step, and as a result, our Free Trade Agreement today sends a signal to the world of our strong, collective support for free, open, rules-based trade.

Building on today's signing, I hope to see further deepening of our economic partnership, and Korea and the UK walking together on the path of prosperity and a brighter future.

The news has been welcomed by businesses in industries such as automotive, technology, renewable energy, retail and ceramics. Some of the [fastest growing exports to Korea](#) include the sale of British cars, which increased to £943 million in 2018, up by third on the year before.

Bentley's exports of the British classic luxury car to Korea have gone from strength to strength, with a thirty-fold increase in exports between 2006 and 2015, from 10 cars driving on Korean roads in 2006 to over 380 in 2015.

### **Warren Clarke, Bentley Brand Manager South Korea added:**

As the first luxury car brand to enter the market in 2006 Bentley Motors sees South Korea as very significant to our future business plans. The stability this FTA brings is very much welcomed and will enable us to continue to promote the very best of British automotive engineering and craftsmanship as we grow our business in South Korea.

With our fantastic business partner here and a very strong and loyal customer base we are very excited about our future plans for the market.

Exports of ceramic products from the UK to Korea were around £17 million in 2018, an increase of 41% from 2010. Meanwhile, the UK exported £256 million of professional and management consulting services to the country in 2018, up by 8% from the previous year.

Denby, the 200-year-old company based in Derbyshire sells its 100% British-made ceramics in over 40 department stores in Korea, with its assortment of bowls proving especially popular.

### **Sebastian Lazell, CEO Denby Pottery Company said:**

Denby is delighted that the UK-Korea Free Trade Agreement has been signed and that this can guarantee the continued free flow of goods between our two most important markets.

Denby Pottery has become the favourite choice for younger generations in Korea who love table-setting with beautifully crafted Made in England tableware and this will ensure they can continue to do so with confidence for years to come. We congratulate and thank those involved in bringing this important agreement to fruition.

The agreement signed today follows a [joint statement](#) on the terms of the agreement made by the two countries in June.

It also follows a joint statement agreed between Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Korea and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs First Vice Minister in Seoul on Wednesday 21 August. The joint statement reaffirms our mutual commitment to human rights, counter-proliferation and trade liberalisation, and underlines both countries' support for the rules based trading system.

The UK will publish the text of this agreement once it is laid in Parliament.

## Notes to editors

- This agreement will now be subject to the domestic internal procedures of both countries party to the agreement before it can be brought into force.
- The UK will continue to be covered by the EU-Korea agreement while the UK is a member of the EU. This agreement is designed to take effect when the EU-Korea agreement ceases to apply to the UK.
- The UK has signed 13 trade continuity agreements with 38 countries. These include some of our biggest trading partners. A regularly updated list of all signed agreements is available on [GOV.UK](#). Source of trade statistics:
- ONS 'UK total trade: all countries, non-seasonally adjusted January to March 2019 release'. Figures are provided on a nominal basis.
- HMRC Trade in Goods by Business Characteristics 2017, VAT registered businesses exporting to South Korea (accessed July 2019).
- HMRC overseas trade statistics (accessed August 2019). Figures for cars based upon HS4 code (8703) 'Motor cars and other motor vehicles'.

---

## [Transitioning security responsibilities and preparing for equal elections in Somalia](#)

Statement by Stephen Hickey, UK Political Coordinator at the UN, at the Security Council briefing on Somalia