

PM call with Prime Minister António Costa of Portugal: 12 August 2019

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The Prime Minister spoke to Prime Minister António Costa of Portugal this afternoon.

Prime Minister Johnson spoke about how Portugal is one of the UK's oldest allies and both leaders agreed that they have a strong relationship to build on, including cooperation on defence, science and innovation.

On Brexit, Prime Minister Johnson set out that whilst we want to leave with a deal, it will require compromise from the EU to change the Withdrawal Agreement, which has been rejected by Parliament three times. He said that he will energetically pursue a deal, but any deal must abolish the backstop. Prime Minister Johnson also explained that the UK will continue to fully prepare to leave the EU on 31 October, whatever the circumstances.

Prime Minister Johnson also acknowledged the valuable contribution of Portuguese nationals who live in the UK and stressed that their rights will be protected after Brexit. He welcomed Portugal's commitment to do the same for UK nationals living there.

Letter to the HASC confirming appointment of the Independent Reviewer of Prevent

[unable to retrieve full-text content]Letter from Home Secretary Priti Patel to Yvette Cooper MP, Chair of the Home Affairs Select Committee.

Actuarial placement programme at GAD – Zeeshan's story

What are you studying?

I am studying Mathematics with Economics at the University of Leicester. I'm working at the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) as an analyst for my 'year in industry'.

Have you always been interested in an actuarial career?

I have always enjoyed studying mathematics and it's one of my strongest subjects. This degree in mathematics with economics has enabled me to gain a broader understanding of the real-world application of mathematics. This further grew my interest in the analytical and statistical type data. So, I chose modules closely related to this. These have led me to investigate a career that is a combination of everything I enjoy.

I'm fascinated by actuarial work as it involves the core competencies of statistics, probability and assessment of risk. To me this career path offers challenging yet rewarding incentives.

What drew you to doing a placement programme?

I knew it would give me a chance to put classroom theory into practice. It would allow me to understand real-world applications of theory learnt at university and achieve a much deeper understanding of my degree.

I felt that working in an actuarial role for an extended period would allow me to gain valuable insight and exposure to the actuarial world. It would also offer me the chance to make a material difference in my role. This first-hand experience of actuarial work has helped prepare me for my future career.

Finally, one of the perks of earning as a student is that I have savings going into my final year and, more importantly, I can fund my summer holidays!

What interested you about GAD?

When researching GAD, I found it to be the perfect sized department. It was not too big where hard work could be easily overlooked, and it was not too small where there would be limited exposure to a variety of projects and diverse areas of focus.

What do you most like about working at GAD?

I like that I am not treated as less capable than, for example, other graduates and analysts even though I am on a placement programme. This really motivates me to be proactive on all my projects and make the best contribution that I can.

I have developed my skills and knowledge by asking a lot of questions to my team, manager and other seniors. They are always willing to help and to see people develop. If I am not sure about anything, I am taught in a way I can understand and given the opportunity to implement what I have learnt.

The fact that I am surrounded by highly experienced people who have consistently supported me in my work and given me advice has been incredible for my personal development.

GAD also provides a rotation scheme and I have been able to work in 2 completely different areas within the actuarial field ie pensions and insurance and investment. This has given me a lot of exposure and, as I said before, it's been fascinating to apply the theories I learnt at university in practice at GAD.

What projects have you been involved with at GAD?

I have been involved in several interesting projects such funding valuations for the public service pension schemes, annual pension scheme accounting disclosures (where I took on a leading role), the transition of GAD's pension valuation software, the personal injury discount rate and the sale of the student loan book. All these projects involved an exciting and dynamic learning process.

I always look forward to upcoming projects because I know I will learn something new and become more project-oriented in my approach.

What do you think of the social life at GAD?

GAD is a great place to work. I have found that there is a strong emphasis on the importance of work-life balance at GAD. Because of the flexible working hours, it is easy to make plans with friends and families, so you don't feel like you are missing out. The best part is everyone at GAD is very sociable and friendly. We have sports clubs such as badminton, cricket, football and many more. There really is something for everyone!

What advice would you give to someone considering a placement at GAD?

My advice is to research the different areas of work. This information is easily available on the GAD website. It would give you a better understanding of the work you could be involved in and what an actuarial career could entail for you.

Being a university student means you might already have a lot of useful transferable skills. It's important to showcase the relevance of these skills and how you would be able to apply these during the recruitment process and your placement.

I would strongly encourage someone on their placement to ask as many questions as you possibly can. Your colleagues will know that you are here to learn.

I am certain that, like me, other placement students from GAD will return to university with more experience, knowledge and skills to complete their degree successfully, and in a better position to pursue a career as an actuary.

Finally, a placement at GAD can be very challenging so the most important advice I would give to someone is to treat every single obstacle as an opportunity to learn and to continue developing.

Lord Carlile to lead independent review of Prevent

The government has today (12 August) announced that Lord Carlile has been appointed as the Independent Reviewer of the Prevent programme, which safeguards vulnerable people from being drawn into terrorism.

Prevent is one of the four strands of the government's counter-terrorism strategy, [CONTEST](#).

In January, the government announced the creation of the Independent Review of Prevent as part of the Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Act.

Security Minister Brandon Lewis said:

Lord Carlile brings a wealth of experience and skills to this role. As the former Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, he showed independence and rigour and I am pleased he has agreed to lead this review.

Prevent is vitally important in stopping vulnerable individuals being drawn into terrorism and has been instrumental in turning people's lives around for the better and keeping our communities safe.

Our Prevent Network across the country – from mentors giving individual support, to raising awareness of the dangers of radicalisation – works tirelessly to tackle all forms of terrorism.

We are continually improving and evolving the programme, and I look forward to seeing Lord Carlile's recommendations on how we can learn more about what works and where we need to improve.

Independent Reviewer of Prevent Lord Carlile said:

The nature of the terrorist threat is ever-changing and government policy must evolve in order to tackle it.

I look forward in my new role to seeing Prevent work in action and hearing views from supporters, critics and everyone in between to see the evidence of what is and isn't working. The review will be strongly evidence based.

As the former Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, I have a strong track record of asserting and sustaining my independence of government in assessing the effectiveness of legislation, and this role will be no different.

The review will focus on the current delivery of the Prevent programme and make recommendations for the future and is expected to report to Parliament by August 2020. The terms of reference for the review will be published shortly.

The purpose of Prevent is to safeguard vulnerable people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism, by engaging with those who are identified as being vulnerable to radicalisation or targeting by terrorist recruiters.

Prevent deals with all forms of terrorism, including Islamist and extreme right wing, and does not focus on any one community.

As part of Prevent, the Channel programme provides tailored support for a person vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism and works in a similar way to safeguarding processes designed to protect people from gang activity, drug or sexual abuse – with individuals offered dedicated support and advice. Since 2012, 1,267 people have been successfully supported through the scheme.

Of the 394 individuals who received Channel support in 2017/18, 179 (45%) were referred for concerns related to Islamist extremism and 174 (44%) were referred for concerns related to right wing extremism.

In 2018/19, 203 community-based projects were also delivered by Prevent reaching over 142,000 participants. Of these projects, 47% were delivered in schools, aimed at increasing young people's resilience to terrorist and extremist ideologies of all forms, including right wing extremism.

As one part of the CONTEST strategy, Prevent, alongside Pursue (stopping terrorist attacks happening in the UK and overseas), Protect (strengthening protection against a terrorist attack in the UK or overseas) and Prepare (mitigating the impact of a terrorist incident if it occurs) comprise the

four strands of the strategy.