

Under Employed/Minimum Hour Contracts Support in Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP (OC12S19P1495)

Call to run a project to provide additional support to address skills shortages or needs where there are gaps or specific barriers preventing individual progression and up-skilling for those in work in the GBSLEP area.

International Trade minister visits Washington DC and New York City

During her four day visit between Tuesday 6 and Friday 9 August Liz Truss will meet United States Trade Representative in charge of trade negotiations Robert Lighthizer, United States Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross and other senior officials and figures from Congress.

She will meet with businesses as well as the U.K.-US Business Council to discuss the opportunities presented by a US-UK Free Trade Agreement for businesses on both sides of the Atlantic.

On Thursday she will give a speech to an audience at the Heritage Foundation in Washington DC.

On Friday in New York City, she will meet UK-US businesses and to visit the New York and New Jersey Port Authority, one of the largest contiguous foreign-trade zones in the United States.

Recent stats show that the US is now the UK's biggest export and import partner.

Speaking about her visit the International Trade Secretary said:

Negotiating and signing an exciting new free trade agreement with the US is one of my top priorities. Having already laid the groundwork, we are working at pace to make sure our businesses are able to take advantage of the golden opportunity to increase trade with the US as soon as possible.

The US is our biggest trading partner and we have more than \$1 trillion invested in each other's economies. We want to get formal talks moving quickly.

Both governments are committed to negotiating and securing a free trade agreement as soon as possible.

Both countries have more than \$1 trillion invested in each other's economies. Every day a million Americans go to work for British companies and a million Britons work for US companies.

The UK has already made great progress on UK-US FTA preparations. The 6th UK-US Trade and Investment Working Group concluded in London on Thursday 11 July and involved more than 100 officials from both sides. The UK and US negotiation teams held exploratory discussions on all the major policy areas typically found in free trade agreements. DIT also recently published a summary of the public consultation – one of the largest consultation exercises the UK Government has ever undertaken.

In parallel, work between our governments has ensured continuity for businesses after the UK leaves the EU, notably through Wines and Spirits Agreements, the UK-US 'Open Skies' Air Services Arrangement, and a Mutual Recognition Agreement on Conformity Assessment which covers trade in sectors worth up to £12.8bn.

- Recent stats show that the US was our largest import source for the year ending 2019 Q1, at £78,271 million (11.4% of total imports), whereas we imported £78,263 million from Germany (11.4% of total imports) over the same period
- The US was the UK's largest single export market, accounting for 18.4% of all UK exports. The US was the UK's second largest single source of imports (10.8% of total imports).
- Total trade in goods and services between the UK and the US in 2018 was £190.5bn, up 4% on the previous 12 months.
- In 2018 the UK exported £54.9bn of goods to the US, and £63.2bn of services
- The United States was the top destination for UK FDI in 2017, accounting for 19.6% of total UK outward FDI stock
- The United States was the top investor in the UK in 2017, accounting for 26.3% of total UK inward FDI stock.
- The UK is a top five export market in 33 states, supporting jobs across the country.

[Addressing the Syrian government's persecution of its own people](#)

Thank you very much indeed, Madam President. Thank you to the Under-Secretary-General and thank you very much to our two briefers from civil society.

I think we join others in welcoming the fact that this long overdue subject is now being debated in the Security Council. And it is worth recalling that the arbitrary detention of civilians by the Syrian regime is one of the factors that catalysed protests in 2011. And as others have noted, more than eight years later, this repressive practice is still ongoing. Tens of thousands of Syrians have been detained, tortured, subject to sexual violence and killed in detention centres by the regime since the start of the conflict. This is not to underplay, Madam President, what Da'esh has done. We agree there is a very clear need for those who have committed appalling crimes for Da'esh also to be brought to justice. But today's debate is about government's persecution of its own people.

This year, after waiting for years, thousands of families were informed that their loved ones had died in the detention centres with no explanation, no accountability. And many more are still waiting to find out if their relatives are alive or dead, which is unbelievably cruel. Other speakers have made reference to Resolution 2474, and in line with that resolution, the families must be informed of what has happened to their loved ones.

So I'd like to echo the call of the US representative today, Madam President, in calling for the release of all those arbitrarily detained. That is quite a dramatic step. It is important. It is important it happens soon. It is an important element of any political process. But I wanted to pick up on the calls from the civil society briefers for an immediate step that the Syrian authorities could do straight away, Madam President. They could agree to give the UN and the Commission of Inquiry access to detention facilities. And they could agree to provide a list of names of all the detainees and their location. Those are easy steps. And I look to the Syrian representative to undertake to transmit these requests to his government. And I would suggest that he lets you, Madam President, on behalf of the Security Council, have an acknowledgement from his government this week that those lists will be provided. And I would like to include access to burial grounds amongst that list.

Madam President, the United Kingdom is the penholder for the Syria Human Rights Council resolution. And we will continue to call for the release of the detainees and for access by independent monitors to detention facilities in the Human Rights Council in Geneva. And I'd like to use this occasion also to pay tribute to the work of the UN Commission of Inquiry, as well as to the brave journalists and NGOs that continue to document the violations and abuses. A number of people have mentioned the importance that the Special Envoy attaches to this issue and we too support all his efforts. And we welcome the continued facilitation by Turkey and Russia of prisoner swaps between regime and opposition armed groups, including those released ahead of the Astana meeting on 1 August. This is not the same though, Madam President, by no means the same as the wholesale release of arbitrarily detained persons that the Council has demanded in various resolutions.

A wider point, if I may: delivering justice for the families of those detained is not only the right moral thing to do, it is also necessary if we are to tackle the drivers and root causes of serious conflict. A credible, substantive and genuine political settlement will need to address the issue

of political detainees. And all Syrians, all Syrian citizens, need to be able to live free from fear of arbitrary arrests, torture and execution.

As we have said several times in this Council, Madam President, if Syria cannot resolve the issues that led to the original conflict in 2011, she has no hope of internal rehabilitation and reconstruction and no hope of rehabilitation into the international community of nations.

Thank you.

Anglers urged to protect fish stocks in warm weather

The Environment Agency has linked up with Angling Direct for a trial scheme to beam live water temperature data from a water quality device in the Broads to Angling Direct's tackle shop in Wroxham.

Shop staff can then use this information to help advise customers on safe periods to fish for pike in the Broads and some of the alternative fishing experiences available when conditions are too warm for pike. It is hoped this will also be available online, with a view to expanding coverage if the trial is successful.

Environment Agency officers have also produced posters to highlight the risks associated with warm water fishing for pike, which are being displayed in local tackle shops.

Prolonged hot weather can cause problems in rivers, lakes and drains such as low oxygen levels, low river flows, elevated water temperatures and algal blooms, which in turn can lead to increased levels of stress on fish populations and even fish deaths in extreme conditions.

Steve Lane, Fisheries Technical Specialist at the Environment Agency in East Anglia, said:

This is an important step for pike conservation in the Broads.

Here in the east of the country, the shallow waters of the Norfolk and Suffolk Broads can be surprisingly warm in the summer months, which can lead to problems for pike, an iconic and popular predatory fish.

Coupled with an increase in fishing pressure associated with large numbers of holiday makers visiting the area to go fishing, this means Broads pike are often under increased pressure in summer months. Pike anglers have long been concerned about a perceived

decline in pike numbers on the Broads and this is one of a range of factors that could be contributing to pressure on pike stocks.

We're asking anglers to take particular care while fishing as the dry weather continues to help us protect fish stocks.

Please return fish to the water as quickly as possible and avoid using keepnets if practical to do so, particularly on lakes, the Broads and rivers with low flows.

The initiative is a partnership project between the Environment Agency, the Broads Angling Services Group (BASG), the Pike Anglers Club (PAC) and Angling Direct. It builds on recent national guidance for anglers and a scientific literature review commissioned by the PAC, which advises anglers not to fish for pike when water temperatures in the Broads are at or above 21 degrees Celsius.

John Currie, general secretary of the PAC and director of BASG, said:

This is a very simple initiative that has been very successful. It allows the beginner and experienced angler to make an informed decision based on scientific evidence to decide if it is dangerous for pike welfare to fish for them.

A glance at a screen tells you all you need to know. I would hope anglers realise the 21 degrees Celsius water temperature cut off point should be seen as the maximum temperature anyone should be fishing for pike, but 20 degrees Celsius is not much safer. In these extremes we really should not be fishing for pike at all.

Phil Gray, Angling Direct's Wroxham store manager, said:

We are pleased to be helping the Environment Agency and PAC with their initiative to protect pike stocks through the warmer months.

We now have the visual tool to advise our customers of the risks involved in warm weather piking. We see a huge amount of holiday anglers fishing for pike in the summer and want to help create a more sustainable fishery by advising customers of other species that provide superb sport throughout the summer.

Any signs of dead or distressed fish, pollution or illegal fishing should be reported to the 24 hour Environment Agency incident hotline number on 0800 80 70 60.

For further advice and guidance on this issue contact the [Pike Anglers Club](#).

Anglers urged to protect fish stocks in warm weather

An innovative pilot project is set to help protect vulnerable fish stocks in the Broads during the warm weather period.