

Speech: Times Law Awards 2019: David Gauke speech

I am delighted to be here tonight as we recognise and reward the writing abilities of a new generation of legal thinkers.

It has become a tradition for the Lord Chancellor to be on the judging panel for this competition. But such has been the longevity of those in this post in recent years that I am the first Lord Chancellor for some time to have the honour of judging the competition 2 years in a row.

Last year I was struck both by the quality of the essays and might I add how enjoyable it was to take a break from the day to day issues facing the government to participate in the judging.

So, imagine my delight when I learnt that this year's essay question focused on Brexit – whether leaving Europe is a threat or an opportunity for the legal profession. I was relieved, however that the quality of the essays continued to be very high.

So high was the quality of the answers that I wonder whether I could convince the entrants to consider taking jobs at the Department for Exiting the European Union.

There was a real variety in the answers, a lot of original thought, and some creative arguments. Some were positively enthusiastic about the potential opportunities that lay ahead in Brexit for lawyers and legal London.

Others made the case for cautious optimism. Others focused on the risks – and there are real risks – if we get this wrong.

One common feature of the essays was an acceptance that, the implications for legal services of Brexit depend on how the UK reacts to it – what we do next in response to our changing position in the world.

Our justice system is one that is envied across the globe. So much so that the world looks to us to be their counsel and courtroom. Brexit should not change that. And in fact, the reason our system maintains that reputation is because of its ability to adapt and evolve; to react as the world changes.

English Law, legal services and UK courts give businesses around the world the certainty, clarity and flexibility they require. A small window into its wider value is that we know English Law is used in 40% of all global corporate arbitrations.

If we want to carry on building on that success and continue to be a global, outward looking nation then we must carry on embracing change. That's what will enable us to seize every opportunity associated with Brexit and remain a competitive and attractive legal centre internationally.

One essay in particular made reference to Britain's LawTech sector as one factor that gives us an edge to seek new opportunities in Brexit.

I couldn't agree more.

As we all know, LawTech is changing the way the law is done. Functions that were previously carried out by legal professionals are now becoming automated. Consumers increasingly expect not just to be able to access services virtually and digitally but to see technology embedded in service delivery.

I understand that some are even refusing to pay for junior associates' time – expecting firms to use technology to deliver functions they would have previously carried out.

Around the world LawTech is a fledgling sector but in the UK it is already flourishing and the government is determined to support that. We want to create an environment that fosters innovation and allows LawTech to thrive.

That's why we created the LawTech Delivery panel – so that experts from the legal sector could identify both barriers and catalysts to growth and support the UK to become a LawTech centre of excellence.

Other essays in this competition pointed to the robustness of the English legal system.

It is undoubtedly true that our legal services sector is in good shape, with an annual contribution to the economy of around £25 billion and a trade surplus that has doubled over the past decade to £4 billion in 2016.

The government continues to work with the sector to understand how we can best support that success and we are utilising our international relationships to help the sector to grow overseas – securing and improving its international market share.

We have been clear that our future relationship with the EU should preserve the mutual benefits and stability of our uniquely integrated markets and protect consumers and businesses across the UK. That must include a new economic and regulatory partnership that strikes a balance between stable and predictable access to each other's markets and autonomy over regulatory decisions through domestic equivalence processes.

We will continue to work with the EU to improve our domestic market access frameworks to the greatest economic benefit and keep our equivalence frameworks under review.

Ultimately, our flexible common law system, world leading judiciary and support for the growth and adoption of LawTech in the legal services market will ensure we continue to be a world leading legal centre through Brexit and beyond.

I only wish I could have said all that with the same elegance employed by the legal scholars we are honouring this evening. The essays they entered into

this competition all made well-conceived, interesting arguments that were a real pleasure to read. I am certain that all those who entered have very bright futures ahead of them.

Our runners up this year are:

- William Beddows
- Sam Dayan
- Elijah Bossa

In third place:

And in second place:

Congratulations to all!

Our winner this year made the argument that disentangling ourselves from the European Union represents an opportunity to underpin the Rule of Law, improve on legal clarity and improve access to justice.

What's clear is that this bright young man will have no problem whatsoever accessing career opportunities in the law.

Please join me in congratulating George Croft.

News story: UK and Romania signal shared commitment to Black Sea security

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson and Romanian Defence Minister Gabriel Les today signed a memorandum of understanding to enhance defence co-operation between the two countries.

News story: UK and Romania signal shared commitment to Black Sea security

Welcoming Mr Les on his first visit to the UK as Defence Minister, Mr

Williamson hosted discussions on issues of shared interest between the two NATO Allies – including security in the Black Sea and the Western Balkans.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

The deployment of RAF Typhoons to Romania last year – where our pilots policed Romanian territorial airspace – demonstrated the benefits of our vibrant defence relationship to European security.

Today's discussions underlined our two countries' commitment to deepening that relationship for many years to come.

Whilst visiting RAF Typhoons deployed to Romania as part of NATO's Air Policing South mission, the Defence Secretary announced his intention to sign an MOU that would lay out a path to enhanced defence co-operation.

The document signed today confirms the two countries' aim to build a new industrial partnership to develop cutting-edge defence capabilities and to work directly with one another on defence intelligence, military medicine, health support services and developing green initiatives on defence estates. Romania will also encourage the UK's continued involvement in collective defence capability projects.

The MOU also provides a strong foundation for future co-operation in the Black Sea and the Western Balkans regions following HMS Echo's deployment to the Black Sea at the end of last year – the latest of many UK engagements in the region, with the aim of reassuring European Allies and Partners of collective NATO resolve, and safeguarding European security.

News story: Access all areas – Innovation experts opening doors for UK businesses

The Defence and Security Accelerator has a team of Innovation Partners around the UK supporting industry and academia.

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Go-to Defence and Security Innovation Accelerator

The Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) is the go-to organisation in government for defence and security innovation. As well as being approached with great ideas from our networks, we actively find and fund exploitable technologies and innovations that could fulfil a capability gap and/or security challenge or perhaps improve government processes to create efficiencies in the way staff operate. We do this because we believe that by reaching out and working with others, we can make a difference in government and help to co-create solutions within our networks.

We have built, and are continuing to build, a thriving innovation ecosystem by developing partnerships across the UK and internationally by integrating and liaising with innovation hubs, academia, incubators, industry clusters, primes and small businesses.

We believe that integration at a local level is one of the most effective ways of accessing all areas of the UK's burgeoning innovation communities. We do this with our team of specialist, full time innovation and technology advisers, called our 'Innovation Partners'.

Regional outreach

Our team of 12 Innovation Partners (IPs) are based across the UK and provide outreach to innovators in all sectors in their region. Their role is to engage with their innovation ecosystem to stimulate their regional networks and proactively seek relevant and interesting innovation opportunities for defence and security. They also support businesses to grow and be successful, contributing to the local economy and UK prosperity.

Our IPs can gauge and generate innovation interest within their region's marketplace. And the IPs work closely together as a virtual team, matching synergies within projects and putting their contacts in touch with each other. Their ability to gather and share market intelligence is central to ensuring that our competition calls attract the right companies to come forward with their ideas and apply for appropriate funding.

Collectively our IPs bring an unparalleled depth of experience as they are recruited from a range of specialist backgrounds. The team is comprised of professionals with a unique and complementary skill set that includes material science knowledge, CBR experience, software, cyber defence, radar and military expertise.

DASA has the ability to reach out across government, military services, and organisations such as police forces. The IP team is therefore able to seek appropriate applications for novel innovations in the relevant department, for example the Ministry of Defence, Department for Transport, Home Office, or Police. It is essential to successful innovation that the idea or product has an end user and is considered exploitable. The IPs collectively have cross-government knowledge of defence and security challenges so that different government departments can work together on their shared goals, for greater efficiency and effectiveness.

North East – new position

Anna Taylor is appointed our very first DASA IP for the North East – The North East being from the Scottish borders to Hull and all places in-between.

Anna is a self-professed, native Northerner; she has spent the last 15 years working for RTC North, a business support and technology transfer organisation. One of her clients was the NHS where she developed innovation, identifying and promoting transferrable technology and licensing intellectual property for wider market development. Anna was also responsible for delivering business support to local companies, advising companies on their IP, commercialisation, as well as their market potential.

Anna is getting stuck straight into promoting the work of DASA, integrating in networks and scoping the region for innovations. Anna says:

I was drawn to the DASA model as it spans such a wide range of government end users, and enables successful applicants to de risk relevant research and development projects.

You can find DASA next in the north east at www.xrtgo.com.

DASA benefits

DASA can unlock innovation potential by offering a unique set of benefits to the innovator:

- We do not take any of the Innovators' Intellectual Property or equity
- We provide 100% funding – with no expectation on the Innovator to provide matched funding
- We can provide access to un-paralleled expert government advice

Developing novel ideas to fill capability gaps

Technology is developing so rapidly that we need to harness the latest thinking and capabilities of innovators and match them to end users as quickly as possible. Our IPs are quick to link innovators to potential customers in UK Defence and Security sectors.

The f1m development of a new generation of pioneering British deployable

satellite antennas has been made possible by one of our IPs. The IP met Oxford Space Systems at an event. This led to the IP reaching back into government to identify a customer and an application for the innovation, which created the stimulus to establish a cross government partnership. Additionally, the project will actively contribute to UK prosperity by creating jobs and increasing export opportunities.

We are passionate about investing in UK companies, growing their innovation and success. We want our suppliers to thrive and to contribute to UK prosperity. All our IPs are continually mindful of the support that small businesses require to develop their innovations and to bring them to market.