

Press release: Amber Rudd: West Midlands a standard bearer for helping people into work

Work and Pensions Secretary Amber Rudd will take her UC fact finding tour to the West Midlands today (Friday, 4 January).

The tour forms part of a commitment to review how welfare reforms are impacting people across the country.

Making her first visit of 2019 to the West Midlands, Amber Rudd will be hosted at the Jobcentre Plus in Stoke-on-Trent and Yardley, Birmingham, to meet staff, including the work coaches who've helped many of the 65,000 people who've moved into work in the last year in the region – delivering record employment in 2018.

Work and Pensions Secretary Amber Rudd said:

Universal Credit can be a huge force for good and has produced positive results here in the West Midlands.

One of these is a programme I'll see today in Yardley. It provides special training to British Pakistani and British Bangladeshi women to help get them into work for the first time.

So when I talk about making our welfare system work better and fairer for women, the West Midlands is a regional leader in this respect and these are exactly the type of schemes I want to see more of.

Yet I know there is more to do to make sure Universal Credit is right for every single person who uses it so I'm looking forward to meeting local claimants and our brilliant work coaches to hear directly from them about what is and isn't working for them.

Since 2010 the region has seen 276,000 more people enter work – the vast majority in higher-skilled roles. 128,000 more jobs were created in IT and business services for example.

Since her appointment in November, Amber Rudd has been reviewing the government's key welfare reform, Universal Credit, which replaces 6 different benefits with one single payment.

While the new system has been shown to get people into work more quickly and stay in work longer, Amber Rudd has committed to ensuring it works for all claimants by getting support to people faster.

While in the West Midlands she will also meet local people using the Jobcentre Plus to get back into work, including women from the British Pakistani and British Bangladeshi communities taking part in a special mentoring programme in Yardley.

This follows her new year commitment to make the welfare system work better for women in particular, as well as helping more people into work and ensuring they get the support they need more quickly.

She will also visit Acacia Training in Stoke – which works with local Jobcentres to help unemployed people get the qualifications they need for jobs in nursing, childcare and social care. 75,000 more people have secured health and education jobs in the West Midlands since 2010.

Yardley – British Pakistani and British Bangladeshi mentoring programme

Employment rates among British Pakistani and British Bangladeshi women are among the lowest in the UK.

That's why Job Centre staff in Yardley launched a mentoring pilot in September 2018 for women from these communities, identifying the barriers they faced to entering work.

Working with local MP Jess Phillips to help women into the programme, they offered tailored support such as training, opportunities to gain qualifications and confidence-building exercises. Many of the women have since found jobs and the programme is expected to be rolled out further this year.

More information:

Yardley Job Centre in Birmingham has been running Universal Credit for all new claimants since November 2017, followed by Hanley Job Centre in Stoke from June 2018.

Media enquiries for this press release – 0203 267 5109

Follow DWP on:

[Press release: Navy vessel to be sent to the Channel](#)

A Royal Navy ship has been deployed to the English Channel as part of the UK's response to the recent increase in migrant crossings.

Press release: Navy vessel to be sent to the Channel

HMS Mersey will support Border Force and the Maritime and Coastguard Agency in their efforts to patrol the stretch of water, keep the UK border secure and prevent loss of life.

The Navy vessel was tasked to the Channel this evening following discussions between the Home Office and the Ministry of Defence. The cost of the ship's deployment will be met by the Home Office.

Commenting on the redeployment, Home Secretary Sajid Javid said:

My focus continues to be on protecting the UK border and preventing loss of life in the Channel. For these reasons, the Government has decided to deploy a navy vessel, HMS Mersey, to support our existing efforts. This will be an interim measure while the two Border Force cutters I have redeployed from abroad make their way back to UK waters.

It is vital that we are working on all fronts to tackle this ongoing situation and I am grateful to Border Force and other agencies for the tireless work they have done in response to this activity.

Border Force has 5 cutters and 6 coastal patrol vessels (CPVs) and their deployment is kept under constant review. 2 Coastal Patrol Vessels and 2 cutters, HMC Vigilant and HMC Searcher, are currently deployed in the Channel working as part of an enhanced patrol rotation.

3 cutters, HMC Valiant, Protector and Seeker, are abroad. HMC Protector and Seeker will be returning to the UK shortly. The UK will continue its commitment to the FRONTEX humanitarian mission by retaining a cutter in the Aegean.

Press release: Foreign Office Minister Mark Field visits South Korea

As part of a four-day visit to the region, Mark Field arrives in South Korea.

Press release: Foreign Office Minister Mark Field visits South Korea

FCO Minister of State for Asia and the Pacific, Mark Field, arrived in South Korea today (4 January) to further strengthen UK-Korea relations. The visit will focus on advancing trade links and discussing regional and international global interests.

Minister Field will start his visit in the capital, Seoul, before taking in Korea's second city, Busan, and the city of Ulsan, a leading industrial hub.

While in South Korea, Mark Field will meet key Korean figures including Vice Foreign Minister, Cho Hyun, and the Mayor of Ulsan and Vice Mayor of Busan.

Minister for Asia and the Pacific, Mark Field, said:

"I am proud to say that this is my third visit to South Korea since 2017 which shows mine and the UK government's commitment to the UK-South Korea relationship. It is a long and enduring relationship and as we leave the EU, we are determined to build on our ties with regional powers like South Korea."

"UK-Korea trade is worth almost £14bn a year and has huge potential to grow still further, in particular in renewable energy sectors such as offshore wind. The UK and Korea have also long stood shoulder-to-shoulder to defend our shared values – including during the Korean War – and our cooperation will be important for the continued security and stability of the region and the world."

The Minister will also meet representatives from British businesses operating in South Korea and members of the British community in Busan.

Further information