

Press release: British-Irish Inter-Governmental Conference

The British-Irish Inter-Governmental Conference (BIIGC) is a consultative forum established by Strand Three of the Belfast Agreement. It aims to 'bring together the British and Irish Governments to promote bilateral co-operation on all matters of mutual interest within the competence of both governments'.

The BIIGC is not an executive body and, as the Belfast Agreement states explicitly, "there will be no derogation from the sovereignty of either government".

The BIIGC is 'concerned with non-devolved Northern Ireland matters' and will include a discussion on East-West issues. It will take place in Dublin and be co-chaired by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the Rt Hon David Lidington MP, and Simon Coveney TD, Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP, and Charles Flanagan TD, Minister for Justice and Equality, will also be in attendance.

The BIIGC last met in London on 25 July 2018.

Press release: Number of children in long-term workless households at lowest level in over a decade

The [independent figures from the Office for National Statistics](#) today revealed that the number has been falling year on year since 2010, down 74,000 on the last year alone.

This is welcome news for the next generation, with evidence showing that growing up in a home with parents in work is linked to better performance in school and the increased likelihood of being in work as an adult.

Around 9 in 10 children now live in a home with at least one working adult, with 3.3 million more people in work than in 2010.

Latest figures also show that the number of children living in lone parent long-term workless households has fallen 70,000 on the year.

The fall in numbers comes as the government's welfare reforms are making sure it pays to be in work, with flexible payments designed to ensure that claimants are always better off in work.

Work and Pensions Secretary Esther McVey said:

Helping people into work and supporting parents and children is at the heart of what this department does. Over the last 8 years we have achieved something quite extraordinary, transforming this country's employment opportunities and with it, children's futures. And today we should celebrate that the number of children living in long-term workless households is at its lowest level for over a decade.

And with the latest budget announcements for Universal Credit, we intend to help even more families as we increase the amount people can earn by £1,000 before their benefit payment begins to be reduced – making sure it pays to work and helping people come off benefits.

The figures come while the UK has the lowest rate of unemployment since the 1970s and, in more good news for homes across the country, wages are outpacing inflation for the seventh month in a row.

Children who grow up in workless families are almost twice as likely as children in working families to not reach the expected attainment level at all stages of their education – analysis has shown that three-quarters of children in workless families fail to reach 5 full GCSEs at grade C or above, including English and maths.

Compared to children from working families, those from workless families are also more likely to be workless in adult life. The [Improving lives: Helping Workless Families](#) policy paper includes research on the impact of children being in a workless family.

Follow DWP on:

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More information

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[News story: New scheme for NHS staff to tackle AMR abroad opens](#)

NHS staff are being invited to apply for a new scheme to help tackle superbugs abroad.

The [Commonwealth Partnerships for Antimicrobial Stewardship](#) scheme will send 12 teams of NHS staff to work with local health workers overseas in the fight against antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

The teams will be made up of NHS pharmacists, doctors, specialist nurses and other healthcare workers who will work with partners in:

- Ghana
- Tanzania
- Uganda
- Zambia

AMR is a natural occurrence, however, the rate at which AMR is occurring is increasing due to overuse and misuse of antibiotics. Misuse of antibiotics can jeopardise the safety of routine operations and threaten modern medicine.

To tackle this threat, the use of antibiotics needs to be optimised through antimicrobial stewardship. The role of pharmacists, doctors and specialist nurses is key to ensuring antibiotics are used effectively.

The government is inviting multi-disciplinary teams to apply for a grant of up to £75,000 to deliver a partnership project with a health institution in one of the partner countries.

Projects should aim to improve antimicrobial stewardship and support the development of policy and practice for the use of antibiotics in the partner country.

Interested applicants can learn more about the scheme at [launch events taking place across the country.](#)

The events will introduce the scheme, outline the application process and share good practice for project planning. Events will take place in:

This scheme is funded by the Department of Health and Social Care's Fleming Fund and will be delivered by the Tropical Health and Education Trust (THET) and the Commonwealth Pharmacists Association (CPA).

The Fleming Fund is a £265 million UK Aid fund that seeks to enhance AMR surveillance in low- and middle-income countries across sub-Saharan Africa and south-east Asia.

Chief Medical Officer for England, Professor Dame Sally Davies, said:

I am delighted that UK aid – provided through the government's Fleming Fund – will enable these vital partnerships between our fantastic NHS staff and their counterparts overseas to take place.

AMR poses a risk to us all, wherever we call home – collaboration of this kind with our friends and neighbours internationally will be all the more important if we are to tackle this challenge together.

This scheme will play a crucial role in allowing specialists to share expertise and strengthen approaches to antimicrobial stewardship in hospitals both at home and abroad.

Press release: Our vision for legal education

Public Legal Education (PLE) will be given a welcome boost following the launch of a PLE vision statement.

Solicitor General Robert Buckland QC MP will announce the vision today at the All-Party Parliamentary Group Public Legal Education and Pro Bono event.

Legal education is about ensuring people know about the law and their basic civil and criminal rights – from knowing if you’re entitled to a refund in a shop or whether you’ve been a victim of discrimination.

The statement creates a shared vision for the PLE community to aspire to which will help drive forward legal education initiatives. The statement reveals 7 goals for where PLE might be in 10 years’ time.

The goals are:

1. PLE will be supported by a robust evidence base, showing what the need is and what works best.
2. PLE will be of high quality, maintained to ensure that it remains accurate and accessible and useful for the people who need it.
3. PLE will be universal and reach across all demographics, prioritising children, young adults and vulnerable groups
4. PLE will be scaled up through delivery by the legal community
5. PLE will harness technology and be delivered through innovative methods, both on and offline
6. PLE will be embedded into public services and government departments
7. PLE will be understood as beneficial and utilised by other sectors

Speaking ahead of the launch, the Solicitor General said:

Teaching people about their legal rights and responsibilities, together with helping them gain the confidence and skills to get access to justice can really make a difference to people’s lives – as well as our legal system.

The new PLE vision statement creates a shared ideal for the legal education community to aspire to. Focusing all on one common goal – to encourage more people to help educate the public about their legal rights and responsibilities.

Our aim is to create a country where everyone, and every group, is

able to access justice. Where nobody, no community, is denied their legal rights. This is why I'd like attendees to sign up to the vision statement.

There are many ways to get involved in educating people about the law, such as interactive presentations, mock trials and role play exercises to awareness raising campaigns or information in leaflets – which can be tailored to different groups, from educating primary and secondary school pupils to prison inmates, community groups and homeless people.

Commenting on the statement, Michael Olatokun, Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law and James Sandbach, LawWorks said:

Public legal education can enhance knowledge of the law, empowering citizens and communities to give effect to their rights, remedies and responsibilities. The vision published today, developed by a broad range of stakeholders, provides a roadmap to deliver a society in which no-one is denied justice simply through ignorance of the law and the legal system. This is supported by the long-term goals of PLE. The APPG on Public Legal Education and Pro Bono in conjunction with the APPG on the Rule of Law will work alongside MPs and Peers to make the vision a reality.

The statement has been produced by PLE representatives including those from the following organisations: Citizenship Foundation, The Law Society, Bar Council, CILEX, Magistrates' Association, Ministry of Justice, Judicial Office, Solicitors Regulation Authority, Citizens Advice, Law for Life, Bingham Centre for the Rule of Law, Youth Access and Law Centres Federation.