

Speech: Address by the International Trade Secretary to the British Ports Association

Thank you Lord Berkely. I am delighted to join you today – and to see so many people from across the ports and related industries here.

It demonstrates the diversity of this sector which is so important to our international trade performance and Britain's future as a great maritime nation.

Ports are a vital part of this country's economy.

Not only are they important economic entities in their own right – acting as hubs for jobs, industry and innovation across industries far broader than just the maritime sector – but they also play a vital role in facilitating imports and exports – moving 95% of our trade in goods – and in maintaining our international competitiveness as a global trading hub.

They handle almost 500 million tonnes of freight each year – an £8 billion contribution in Gross Value Added to the UK economy.

They employ more than 100,000 people, supporting families across the country.

Ports are, quite simply, Britain's gateway to the world.

And they have a brilliant future at the forefront of our global economic ambitions as Britain leaves the European Union.

We know how important it will be to preserve vital existing trading links with our current partners in the EU.

And for the first time in four decades, we will determine our own independent trade policy, able to seize the opportunity to establish new economic relationships across the globe.

Our experts in the Department for International Trade are working hard preparing for negotiations on new trade agreements with key partners including the United States, Australia and New Zealand.

We are also considering the potential of new regional partnerships such as accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, which would allow the UK to further establish its presence in the world's fastest growing regions.

Boosting our international trade will bring jobs and prosperity to not only the places where goods are loaded and unloaded, but to the wider economy too.

And to make sure this happens it is vital that our ports can match the best

facilities in the world and adapt to new trends and technologies.

I know that you have invested significantly to improve capacity and capabilities and will continue to do so.

But this is only one piece of the puzzle – the cost of exports and imports is also influenced by the effectiveness of inland transport networks.

That is why I was pleased to see the Department for Transport publish a study of port connectivity earlier this year.

This study firmly made the case for investment in effective freight transport links as an enabler of economic growth and trade and that this should be a default factor in infrastructure investment decisions.

It was also a timely reminder of the importance of the ports and maritime sector in our fortunes.

And I look forward to taking discussions with the sector forward as the Government develops its five-year maritime strategy.

But for now, I'd like to thank Richard Ballantyne for supporting the Ports for International Trade Campaign. The BPA is a founding member and has been integral to its development.

This campaign will promote the essential point I referred to earlier – that ports play a vital role in our international trade as the gateway to the UK, facilitating and promoting our vibrant export sectors.

And it will make the case for the huge opportunities that are out there – not just to port towns and cities, but to all regions of the UK to grow high quality jobs and improve living standards.

This is a very important mission. We think it is essential to work with industry to make this case clearly to the public.

Because Government can't do this alone. It will be your efforts in the ports industry that will be vital to its success. I know that some of you have already given your support to the campaign, and we're hoping others amongst you will join in the days ahead.

And I am looking forward to speaking at its official launch event in October.

I understand invitations are on their way – so if you can bear listening to me again I hope you will attend!

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Press release: UK Government announces £23.5m to fund teachers' pay increases in Wales



Teachers' pay

The UK Government has today (13 Sept) announced that the Welsh Government will receive additional funding of £23.5m as a result of the Department for Education's decision to increase pay for teachers in England and Wales.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns today confirmed that the Welsh Government will receive £8.7m in 2018/19 and £14.8m in 2019/20, representing the cost of the pay award for teachers in Wales.

This is in recognition of the unique devolution circumstances for teacher's pay in Wales, where setting pay is a reserved matter whilst meeting of the costs of the award is devolved.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

I am delighted to confirm today that teachers in Wales will soon be seeing an increase to their pay packets with the additional funding we are delivering for the Welsh Government.

Today's announcement underlines the UK Government's commitment to the fair application of the rules underpinning the Welsh Government's funding. I hope that this will go some way in providing the Welsh Government with the additional levers to be able to attract and retain the teachers Wales needs to educate its young people.

The Welsh Government will take responsibility for setting teachers' pay in Wales from October 2018 when they will have the power to determine the future pay and conditions of teachers in Wales for academic years 2019/20 onwards.

Today's announcement follows the multi-billion NHS staff pay deal announced in by the UK Government in March which is expected to deliver more than

£1.3bn a year for the Welsh Government by 2022/23.

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News story: £200 million Derby rail upgrade works to deliver more reliable services and tackle bottlenecks, says Rail Minister

- works nearing completion on new platform, track layout and signal upgrade
- passengers already benefitting from partial re-opening of lines in early September
- work is part of the wider £1.5 billion Midland Mainline upgrade

Passengers will benefit from more punctual services, shorter waiting times and faster intercity journeys thanks to £200 million of government investment in upgrades at Derby station, Rail Minister Jo Johnson announced today (13 September 2018).

On a visit to the station to see the massive infrastructure project being carried out by Network Rail, he met with representatives from Network Rail who began work earlier this year and are due to complete in early October.

The upgrade will include a new platform, new track layout and upgraded signalling. Passengers are already benefitting from a partial re-opening of lines at the start of September.

Mr Johnson said:

We are investing in the biggest rail modernisation programme since Victorian times to deliver the improvements that passengers want.

I've come to Derby today to see the progress for myself and to thank passengers for their patience during the works.

When this vital upgrade is complete, it will give passengers visiting and travelling through Derby the faster, more reliable services they deserve.

The upgrades in and close to the station replace signalling equipment that

was 50 years old and improve a track layout that had been in place for more than a century.

The project is a key part of the £1.5 billion the government is investing in upgrading the Midland Mainline. This will mean faster services and more seats from 2020, as well as more seats on brand new trains from 2022.

News story: UK Government Agriculture Bill – Scotland myth-buster

The UK Government's Agriculture Bill was introduced on 12 September 2018. Agriculture is devolved to the Scottish Government and will remain devolved. This Bill does not change that. Claims of 'power grab' are completely false and misleading.

The UK Government is not seeking consent from the Scottish Parliament on this Bill as we are not legislating in areas of devolved competence in Scotland.

No powers that could constrain devolved policy choices in Scotland are being introduced.

For example, there is nothing in the Agriculture Bill which will stop existing Scottish Government policies – including the Voluntary Coupled Support and Less Favoured Area Support Scheme. They will still be possible under both retained EU law and the Agriculture Bill.

Contrary to claims, Scottish farmers will continue to receive the same level of funding as they currently do until the end of this Parliament in 2022

As we leave the EU, it is our intention that each administration can independently design policies that support their farming sectors and enhance their environment.

While these policies are still under development, the Agriculture Bill demonstrates a continued commitment by the UK Government to World Trade Organization (WTO) obligations on domestic support.

The Scottish Government has claimed powers enabling us to comply with our WTO obligations should be exercised jointly; however, the Scottish Parliament does not have the legal competence to act in this area.

While this is a reserved matter, the UK Government will work closely with the devolved administrations on this given their interest. Just as we did ahead of the Agriculture Bill's introduction.

We have offered to extend powers in the Agriculture Bill to the devolved administrations which would enable them to create their own farming support

systems to replace the CAP.

Wales and Northern Ireland have accepted the offer.

The Scottish Government has chosen not to take any powers in this Bill. Agriculture is devolved and that is their choice. But our offer remains on the table.

We remain in discussions with the Welsh and Scottish Governments regarding red meat levy funds and legislative options.

We will continue to work with all parts of the UK to put in place a wider common framework relating to agriculture once we leave the EU.

Scottish Secretary David Mundell said:

The UK Government has already agreed to commit the same cash total in funds for farm support for Scotland until the end of this Parliament.

This Bill ensures that new systems of farming support can be put in place after 2020 in England and Wales.

Farmers in Scotland need the same reassurance – and time is running out for the Scottish Government to act.

It is simply not acceptable for Scottish farmers to be kept in the dark about the future of agricultural policy in Scotland.