

Press release: Minister for the Middle East statement on settlement plans across the West Bank

[unable to retrieve full-text content]Minister for the Middle East Alistair Burt condemns the advancement of plans by the Israeli Authorities (10 January) for 1,122 settlement units across the West Bank.

News story: Education Secretary makes first visit to Cambridgeshire school

Damian Hinds met with pupils and teachers at a primary school in Cambridgeshire today (11 January) during his first visit as Secretary of State for Education.

Mr Hinds was given a tour of St Andrew's Church of England Primary School in Soham, one of nearly 19,000 good or outstanding schools across the country, which included watching pupils taking lessons. Pupils in Year 5 showed him around the school library and asked him about the world of politics, ahead of a forthcoming visit they have to the Houses of Parliament.

St Andrew's – which is in Fenland and East Cambridgeshire, one of the Department for Education's twelve Opportunity Areas – has a strong focus on encouraging every child to realise their potential and raising standards. Recent results have shown pupils are above average for reading.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

It has been an absolute pleasure to meet the talented and hardworking teachers at St Andrew's and meet school children benefiting from a school which is inspiring them to make the most of their lives.

Up and down the country, schools like St Andrew's are raising educational standards for our young people and helping the government to deliver on its bold reforms. There are 1.9 million more children in good or outstanding schools than in 2010 and our pupils are now amongst the world's best readers.

I want to make sure everyone in this country gets a world-class education and look forward to visiting more nurseries, schools,

colleges and universities to see for myself some of the excellent progress being made and what more needs to be done.

Standards in primary schools are rising across the country, with latest national assessment results in reading, writing and maths up 8 percentage points on last year and 154,000 more six-year-olds now on track to become fluent readers than in 2012.

The school is also part of a high-performing multi-academy trust, which has 86% of schools rated good or outstanding. 1.9 million more children are now in good or outstanding schools than in 2010, and a record nine out of ten schools were given this rating at their last inspection. Fenland and East Cambridgeshire is one of twelve areas receiving a share of £72million pounds to help create opportunities and raise education standards in parts of the country where children and young people face greater challenges.

News story: Chief medical officer advises NHS staff to make sure they are vaccinated against flu

The Chief Medical Officer is among a group of leading doctors and nurses who have written to NHS staff urging them to get vaccinated as soon as possible to help reduce the spread of flu.

The letter reminds healthcare workers of the key role they play 'in protecting the health of the public'. It states their 'shared professional responsibility' to protect patients.

It is signed by Professor Dame Sally Davies (England's Chief Medical Officer), Professor Sir Bruce Keogh (NHSE Medical Director), Professor Paul Cosford (PHE Medical Director) and Professor Jane Cummings (NHSE Chief Nursing Officer).

Across the NHS, 59% of staff have had the vaccine but in some Trusts less than 3 in 10 staff are protected.

Statistics last week showed:

- an 86% increase in people newly admitted to intensive care (ICU) with confirmed influenza from the previous week (114 compared to 61 the week before)
- 114 people were admitted to ICU with flu, compared to 78 cases of at this time last year, and 35 in 2015/16.

- a 3-fold increase in the rate of people admitted to hospital with confirmed flu since the previous week (6.8 per 100,000 compared to 2.33 per 100,000 before)

Professor Dame Sally Davies, Chief Medical Officer said:

Flu can kill and it is important we all take it seriously.

The best way to protect yourself and those around you is to get the flu jab. If you are suffering from flu-like symptoms you should catch your coughs or sneezes in tissues, bin the tissue immediately, and wash your hands regularly with soap and warm water.

Professor Sir Bruce Keogh, NHS England Medical Director said:

The recent flu figures are a reminder that NHS staff should protect themselves, patients and their loved ones by getting vaccinated. We should have a measured debate about making this the norm for doctors, nurses and other frontline NHS staff before next winter.

[News story: Applying for the 2018 Clinical Excellence Awards](#)

The 2018 Clinical Excellence Awards round will open on Tuesday 13 February and close at 5pm on Thursday 12 April.

ACCEA will accept applications for new national awards and from those due to renew their award in 2018. Consultants will need to put in a renewal application if:

- they received their current award in the 2014 round
- their award was last renewed in 2013 (awarded in 2009, 2004, 1999)

In some cases, consultants will be renewing out of the usual cycle. Awards are reviewed earlier if there is a change in job or a significant change in job plan.

Please check that your contact details are up to date on our [online system](#) to make sure you receive reminder emails about your renewal and other communications from ACCEA.

We will publish 2018 application guidance ahead of the round opening.

Press release: Dr Liam Fox holds UK-India talks as UKEF boosts trade finance support

International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox, today met with the Indian Minister for Commerce and Industry, Shri Suresh Prabhu, to discuss greater cooperation between the 2 countries and identify barriers to trade and investment that must be addressed in order to boost future prosperity.

Ministers were joined by a delegation of senior UK and Indian officials for the 12th meeting of the UK-India Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO), which will build on progress made by the UK-India trade working group that was established in 2016.

Dr Fox announced that the national export credit agency, UK Export Finance (UKEF), has more than doubled its financial support to enable UK businesses to trade with India. It means £4.5 billion will now be available for UK companies exporting to India as well as Indian buyers of UK goods and services.

India and the UK already enjoy a strong trading relationship, worth £15.7 billion in 2016, with UK exports to India amounting to £5.8 billion. Indian foreign direct investment (FDI) in the UK was worth £1.5 billion in 2016, while UK investment into India rose to £13.2 billion in 2016.

There is huge potential to expand bilateral trade and investment as the UK prepares to leave the European Union.

UK and Indian businesses, including UK engineering consultancy Arup and Indian infrastructure firm Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services (IL&FS), also met alongside the JETCO to discuss ways of boosting co-operation in growing sectors such as advanced manufacturing and smart cities.

International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox said:

I am delighted to be meeting with the Indian Minister and business leaders today, to map out how we will build a stronger trading relationship between our 2 nations. India is the world's seventh-largest economy and the fourth largest investor into the UK, while UK investment in India grew by 8.8% in the year to 2016.

For the first time in 40 years, the UK is preparing for its own

independent trade policy, and expanding our bilateral trade and investment with India will be central to that task. It's in our shared interest to boost prosperity, generate jobs, develop skills, and enhance the competitiveness of both our countries.

As an international economic department, we will continue to work closely with the Indian government to break down the barriers to boosting trade. That includes more than doubling trade finance support for UK exporters and Indian buyers of our goods and services.

Following the talks, the ministers issued a joint statement setting out their vision for a continued trading partnership in which the 2 governments and businesses work hand-in-hand to achieve shared prosperity.

Notes to editors

UKEF support is made available in Indian rupees, allowing Indian buyers to access finance in their own currency and making sourcing from the UK even more competitive.

The UK will host the [Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting](#) (CHOGM) in April, where 52 Heads of State and thousands of businesses will be in attendance. India will be central to UK efforts to reenergise the Commonwealth, representing over half its population, a huge growing economy and the world's largest democracy.