

Press release: PM phone call with President Trump and President Macron: 10 April 2018

The Prime Minister held separate telephone conversations earlier today with the US President Donald Trump and the French President Emmanuel Macron.

They agreed that reports of a chemical weapons attack in Syria were utterly reprehensible and if confirmed, represented further evidence of the Assad regime's appalling cruelty against its own people and total disregard for its legal obligations not to use these weapons.

They agreed that the international community needed to respond to uphold the worldwide prohibition on the use of chemical weapons.

They agreed they would continue working closely together and with international partners to ensure that those responsible were held to account.

News story: Civil Procedure Rule Committee: Open meeting 11 May 2018

The open meeting will take place on the above date at the Ministry of Justice, Petty France from 10am – 1.30pm. Guests will be observers only and not be able to participate in the Committee's business or contribute to items in the agenda. However, there will be an opportunity at the end of the meeting for guests to ask pre-submitted questions to the Committee.

Attendance

Accommodation is limited, so we are asking potential guests to complete a short [application form](#) (MS Word Document, 39KB) and return it to:

Jane Wright
Post Point 3.42
Ministry of Justice
102 Petty France
London SW1H 9AJ

DX 152380 Westminster 8

Email: jane.wright@justice.gov.uk

Applications to attend close on 27 April 2018

Format of the meeting

The nature of the Committee's work means that we cannot exactly say what topics will be under discussion. A full agenda, accompanying papers and further details will be sent prior to the meeting.

[News story: Measures to deliver quality education across all settings](#)

A package of measures to help make sure children receive the best possible education either at home or outside of school have been announced by School Systems Minister Lord Agnew today.

The announcement will support the families of the estimated 45,500 children that are educated at home, providing parents and local councils with strengthened guidance so both understand their rights and responsibilities.

A [Call for Evidence](#) has been launched to ask for the views of parents and local authorities on how to ensure children receive the expected standard of education at home, including:

- How local authorities can monitor the quality of home education to make sure children are taught the knowledge and skills they need;
- How effective registration schemes are for children who are educated at home; and
- How government can better support those families who choose to educate their children at home.

The Education Minister also announced £3 million to support the joint working of local authorities, the police, Ofsted, the government and other agencies in tackling the minority of out of school settings that seek to undermine British values or expose children to other harmful practices. This work will help to share best practice across the country.

Today's announcement builds on the recently launched [Integrated Communities Strategy](#), which had education at its core. It is part of the drive to ensure all children receive the best possible education, with 1.9 million more pupils in good or outstanding schools than in 2010 thanks to the government's reforms and the hard work of teachers.

Minister for School Systems Lord Agnew said:

Across the country there are thousands of dedicated parents who are

doing an excellent job of educating their children at home, and many selfless volunteers working for clubs and organisations that help to enrich children's education outside of school.

It is right that we should build on the high standards we've set in our schools so that every child receives a suitable and safe education – no matter where they are being taught – and that we can act quickly in the rare instances when this is not the case. This support for families and local communities will help ensure all children get the education they deserve.

The Call for Evidence will run for 12 weeks and will ask for views from families that choose to educate their children at home, local authorities and home education support groups. The issues raised include the registration of children who are home educated and the monitoring of home education provision by local authorities. It will build on the existing requirements for local authorities to identify children they believe are not receiving a suitable education and their powers, which can ultimately include serving a School Attendance Order.

The government is also [consulting on revised guidance for parents and local authorities](#) to support them in making sure home education provision is of the highest possible standard. This guidance will set out the processes by which local authorities should identify children who are being educated at home and how best to intervene if they are not receiving a suitable education. For parents, it will offer support and advice on whether or not home education is the right decision for them and their child, while also making clear the powers that local authorities have and the steps parents should take if concerns arise.

The Department for Education has also published its [response to the consultation on regulation for out of school settings](#) – environments that enrich children's education. The department has carefully considered over 18,000 responses and has already taken action by establishing a £3 million targeted fund which will go to selected areas to support work between local authorities and relevant agencies. It will be used to show how existing legal powers can be most effective in addressing safeguarding and welfare concerns, alongside community engagement and outreach. This work will inform the need for any future regulation.

A consultation on a voluntary code of practice for out of school settings will be published later this year to set out what is expected of providers, and the Department will work with local authorities to provide guidance to parents on out of school settings.

News story: Joint Forces Command seeks out innovation in Silicon Valley

General Sir Chris Deverell, Commander JFC (centre) at United States Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command (SPAWAR). Crown Copyright 2018.

General Deverell met with academics, innovation units, tech startups and investors in San Diego, Los Angeles, Silicon Valley, and San Francisco. He also visited the US Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command (SPAWAR).

As the Ministry of Defence's information command, Joint Forces Command (JFC) seeks to explore innovative new technology already being developed by partners, allies and the private sector. The mission for the trip was to explore how artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, data analytics and autonomy could be used to bring advantage to the joint force.

Accompanying General Deverell on the trip was Lieutenant Colonel Henry Willi, from JFC's innovation unit, the [jHub](#).

While visiting the Cedars-Sinai Medical Center in Los Angeles, they had a tour of its Simulation Center for Advanced Clinical Skills, an immersive environment equipped with the latest in human patient simulators and medical devices. Here, General Deverell took part in a simulated operation on a lifelike mannequin patient. He then met representatives from the Cedars-Sinai Health System accelerator, which aims to help technology innovators turn their ideas into practical solutions that can improve the lives of patients around the world.

CedarsSinai Simulation Center for Advanced Clinical Skills. Crown Copyright 2018.

In Silicon Valley, they met with the Defense Innovation Unit Experimental (DIUx), a United States Department of Defense organisation focused on accelerating commercial technologies to the US military. Here they were briefed on DIUx's approach to developing innovation, including how its innovation ecosystem benefits from strong links that have been developed with investors.

General Deverell also met with tech startup companies, including Pilot AI, Shield AI and Orbital Insight. Pilot AI has developed a platform to provide artificial intelligence to devices with low computing power, sufficient to detect people, vehicles, buildings and weapons.

Shield AI, have developed Hivemind, an artificial intelligence platform that enables robots to see, reason about and search the world. Shield AI's first product, Nova, is a Hivemind powered drone that searches buildings, whilst simultaneously streaming video and generating maps.

With more data than ever before being generated by satellites, drones,

balloons, and other unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), Orbital Insight builds software that interprets this data to help businesses and governments to make better business and policy decisions.

Speaking about JFC's appetite for innovation, General Deverell said:

Joint Forces Command aims to provide the UK Armed Forces with an edge over adversaries for wars in the information age. This trip to one of the world's innovation capitals helps us secure advantage for the joint force.

He added:

By speaking to individuals who are already developing some of the most advanced technology in the world, we are closer to understanding how this can be applied in a military setting. We are preparing JFC and wider UK Defence for a future that counts technology such as AI, machine learning and autonomy as part of our armoury, both to deter our enemies and to protect our people.

The jHub, was created to enhance and improve the operation of the UK armed forces through innovation. This trip has reinforced my view that innovation is fundamental to Joint Force Advantage.

DIUx is an impressive player in the innovation ecosystem, so the jHub will forge closer bonds with them through a new liaison officer position.

JFC's [jHub](#) is keen to speak to companies who have solutions which could be adapted and adopted by the military customer in months rather than years. If you would like to get in touch with the jHub, please email jhub@official.mod.uk

Speech: Secretary of State 'Building Peace' speech

It's a great pleasure for me to be here today, at one of Northern Ireland's two outstanding Universities, as we mark the twentieth anniversary of the Belfast or Good Friday Agreement reached on 10 April 1998.

And it's a great honour as a relatively new Secretary of State to be alongside so many of the people who helped to shape history on that day, as we have just seen in the incredibly powerful video.

Let's be in no doubt. The Agreement that was reached twenty years ago was one of historic magnitude, a landmark in the history of Northern Ireland, of Ireland and of these islands.

It was an occasion when politics triumphed over the division and violence that had torn Northern Ireland apart over the preceding two decades.

So on behalf of the UK Government I would like to reiterate our sincerest thanks to those who helped make 10 April 1998 a reality.

People like John Major and Albert Reynolds who began the process in the early 90s and Tony Blair and Bertie Ahern who saw it through its conclusion in 1998.

From the United States, President Bill Clinton and Senator George Mitchell who made such an important contribution and who I am delighted to see receive the 83RD and 84TH Freedom of the City.

And of course to Northern Ireland's political leaders, people like David Trimble, John Hume and others, on all sides whose courage, vision and leadership in 1998 should continue to be an inspiration to all of us in Northern Ireland today.

There's little doubt that as a result of the Agreement Northern Ireland has taken huge strides forward in the past twenty years.

The security situation transformed.

The economy growing.

Unemployment at record lows.

Tourism booming.

Exports thriving.

And, yes, the world's most popular TV show, Game of Thrones!

So let's not be shy in celebrating the successes of the past twenty years.

But let's also be realistic and recognise that there remain huge challenges.

We still face the real threat from dissidents.

Society remains too divided.

Our economy is too dependent on the public sector.

We still need to address the past.

And, we have been absolutely clear in our commitment to avoiding a hard border and no border down the Irish Sea. We've begun discussions between Ireland, the EU and the UK on this and we look forward to making progress together.

And, of course, there is making sure that devolution here is restored so that Northern Ireland has a properly functioning Executive and Assembly so that local decisions are in local hands.

So be assured, the restoration of devolution is the UK Government's number one political priority, as I know it is of the Irish Government and Simon Coveney with whom I work so closely.

The commitment of both our respective governments to the Belfast Agreement remains steadfast.

And if there was ever any doubt as to why the Agreement is as relevant today as it was twenty years ago then we just had such a powerful reminder with the film of those young people we have just seen.

Because at the heart and centre of all that we do in honouring and implementing the Agreement is to build a stronger society and a more secure future, not just for this generation but for generations to come. Only today I had the pleasure of visiting Sullivan Upper School in Holywood and speaking to the young students, the first post-agreement generation, about their hopes for the future.

That's what motivated those who made the Agreement and it's what should motivate everyone in Northern Ireland today.

To spread prosperity and opportunity for all.

To re-establish political stability.

And to build a Northern Ireland which everyone is proud to call home.

A Northern Ireland fit for the future.