

Speech: Opening remarks from the Prime Minister in Japan

Shinzo Abe, Prime Minister of Japan

I'd like to once again welcome Prime Minister May on her very first visit to Japan. When I visited the United Kingdom in April of this year, she gave me a special welcome by inviting me to the Chequers. As I return a favour, I had the pleasure to invite Prime Minister May to Kyoto and it was a delight that we were able to enjoy tea in a very traditional Omotesenke. And of course, at the Kyoto State Guest House, it's a very traditionally Japanese architect, unlike here at the Akasaka Guest State House, but we did have a very candid and deep conversation together over dinner.

And in that sense, I very much was delighted that we were able to have a very candid conversation about the regional issues together. At a time of change and unpredictability, I put great and ever more importance with the United Kingdom as a global strategic partner that shares fundamental values such as freedom, democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law.

I also would like to offer my respect to Prime Minister May's leadership as she steers her country towards the departure from the European Union. Taking the opportunity of, Theresa, your visit to Japan, I hope to make it a huge step forward to elevate our relationship to a new level and would like to work hand in hand with you to robustly develop our bilateral ties between Japan and the United Kingdom.

Theresa May, UK Prime Minister

Thank you, thank you very much, and I am delighted to be able to be here in Japan, and I would like to thank you for the welcome that you have given me. And I was particularly pleased on, as you say, my first visit to Japan, to be able to sample some traditional Japanese culture, as well as some very productive meetings.

As you say, this is an important time for the United Kingdom as we are preparing and negotiating for our exit from the European Union. And as we do so, we are looking to enhance our partnerships, our ties and our links with countries around the world with whom we have had good longstanding relationships, but with whom we can build further cooperation in the future, and Japan is a key country for the United Kingdom. And we already have good cooperation and partnerships in investment between our two countries, with – between businesses, and the Business Forum today was a very good opportunity for further links to be made.

And there will be further work for us to do on enhancing our trade relationship, but also in security and defence, as we both see the same challenges and threats around the world. And as two nations, island nations, that believe in the rule of law, in the rules-based international order, and

have the same values, I believe it is important that we work together. And I look forward to our further discussions.

News story: UK and Japan: Prime Minister's visit 2017

The Prime Minister will be accompanied by a delegation of business leaders on her trip to Japan. The visit will focus on defence and security cooperation, and trade and investment opportunities.

The business delegation will showcase the strength of British business, the shared confidence in the UK-Japan economic relationship as we leave the EU, and the potential for future growth.

Thursday 31 August: Tokyo

Wednesday 30 August: arrival in Kyoto

[The Prime Minister visits Japan – Day 1](#)

Speech: Prime Minister's Press Statement in Tokyo

Thank you, Prime Minister Abe, for welcoming me to Kyoto and here to Tokyo.

The close cooperation between our two countries is particularly important at this critical juncture, with North Korean provocation presenting an unprecedented threat to international security.

I want to begin by expressing the UK's strong sense of solidarity with the Japanese people at this time.

The UK and Japan are natural partners. We share common interests as outward-looking, democratic, free-trading island nations with global reach.

We are committed to the rules-based international system, free and open international trade and the fundamental values of freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

And today we have committed to elevating the UK-Japan partnership in a number of areas.

Security and Defence Cooperation

As two outward-facing countries with many shared priorities and shared challenges, Japan is a natural partner for us on defence and security issues. We are each other's closest security partners in Asia and Europe.

And today we have agreed a "Joint Declaration on Security Cooperation" to enhance our collective response to threats to the international order and to global peace and security, through increased cooperation on defence, foreign policy, cyber security, and counter-terrorism.

Our defence cooperation is already particularly strong, with our Typhoon fighter jets exercising in Japan last year – the first time that a country other than the US has done so.

And we are now taking this even further with the deployment of HMS Argyll to the region in December 2018, and UK troops exercising jointly with their Japanese counterparts next year in Japan for the first time ever.

And we must also tackle new and emerging threats together, from counter-terrorism through to cyber security. And today we have agreed a new programme of cooperation to ensure a safe and secure Rugby World Cup and Olympic and Paralympic Games here in Japan.

We have highlighted our opposition to any actions on the South and East China Seas likely to increase tension. Stability in this region is of global concern and we encourage all parties to resolve their disputes peacefully and in accordance with international law.

Of course, I am here at a critical time. North Korea's missile launch this week was an outrageous provocation and an unacceptable threat to Japan's national security. We condemn North Korea in the strongest terms possible for this reckless act, which was a clear violation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

In response to this illegal action, Prime Minister Abe and I have agreed to work together and with others in the international community to strengthen pressure against North Korea, including by increasing the pace of sanctions implementation and working towards the adoption of a new and effective resolution at the United Nations Security Council.

Trade and Investment Relationship

Japan is also a natural partner for the UK on the economy: in building a rules-based international system, and encouraging WTO reform to ensure a global economy that works for everyone.

Japan is the world's third largest economy and we benefit more from Japanese investment than any other country in the world apart from the US.

Japanese companies already invest more than £40 billion in the UK and over 1,000 Japanese companies including Honda, Hitachi, Fujitsu and Sony employ 140,000 people in the UK.

And we welcome the commitment from Japanese companies to a long-term presence in the UK. Nissan, Toyota and Softbank in particular have made commitments to the UK since the EU referendum, in a powerful vote of confidence in the long term strength of the UK economy.

I have had the opportunity to meet a number of major Japanese investors here in Tokyo, who have reiterated to me their belief in the strength of the UK economy and their commitment to a mutually beneficial partnership.

And Prime Minister Abe, it was good to hear you reaffirm your continued faith in the UK economy, including after Brexit, as we addressed business leaders earlier today.

As we announced earlier this month, our intention is that the UK will be free to sign new bilateral trade agreements with partners around the world in any interim Brexit period.

And we have agreed here today that we want to see a swift conclusion of the ambitious EU Japan Economic Partnership Agreement. Prime Minister Abe and I have agreed that as we exit the EU, we will work quickly to establish a new economic partnership between Japan and the UK based on the final terms of that agreement.

We will set up a new joint working group to examine how we can unblock remaining barriers to trade and take steps to build the closest, freest trading relationship between the UK and Japan after Brexit.

And we have agreed to build cooperation in industrial policy across science, innovation, and energy, to ensure thriving and competitive economies.

Conclusion

So thank you, Shinzo.

My first visit to your country has been a memorable one. I have seen your rich traditional culture and the modern dynamism of Japan.

And our personal friendship reflects the deep friendship and bonds between our two countries.

This visit marks a great step forward not only in enriching our existing ties, but agreeing our shared vision of even deeper cooperation in the future.

And I know that we both believe these steps will not only increase our own security and prosperity, but also see us together playing a unique role as standard-bearers for the open, liberal, innovative and secure world order both our great nations rely upon.

Press release: 30 hours free childcare launches

- New 30 hours childcare offer saves families around £5000 per year per child
- Around 390,000 families across the country are eligible
- Scheme backed by an extra £1 billion per year by 2020

The government's landmark offer for working parents of 30 hours of free childcare per week rolls out across the country from tomorrow (Friday 1 September).

Parents of three and four-year olds who have registered for a place will join the 15,000 families benefitting in the 12 areas of the country that introduced the offer early.

The offer should save families around £5,000 per year on childcare, helping them to balance their jobs and family lives, and around 390,000 working families are eligible to benefit. The [latest evaluation](#) shows 8 out of 10 childcare providers were willing and able to double their current 15 hours offer.

This offer is backed by the government's record investment of £6 billion per year in childcare, which includes an extra £1 billion per year by 2020 to deliver the free entitlements.

It builds on the government's Tax-Free Childcare offer already available to many families, which cuts childcare costs by up to £2,000 per year for each child under 12 years old.

Education Secretary Justine Greening said:

High quality childcare not only helps our children get the best start in life, it supports many parents who want or need to work.

For too long lots of families really struggled to manage the cost of childcare and that's why we have delivered on our promise to provide 30 hours free – saving working families around £5,000 a year.

Alongside the support we are giving through Tax-Free Childcare and Universal Credit, it will make a real difference to families' lives.

The 30 hours offer has been delivered early in several areas across the country and an [independent evaluation](#) which included a survey of providers

and parents in eight of the councils that started the offer from last September found:

- **Improved family finances**

84 per cent of parents reported improved finances as a result of 30 hours;

- **There was a better work/life balance**

More than three quarters (78 per cent) of parents reported greater flexibility in their working life as a result of 30 hours;

- **Parents were able to increase their working hours should they wish**

Nearly a quarter of mothers (23 per cent) and one in 10 fathers (9 per cent) reported they had been able to increase their working hours as a result of 30 hours; and

- **Childcare provider confidence**

Providers were willing and able to offer 30 hours and there was no evidence of funding being a substantial barrier to its delivery.

A [second independent evaluation](#) of the government's early roll out programme published today builds on those findings and shows:

- **Benefits for parents**

Parents reported that they were planning to increase their working hours from September and others said the additional help made it worthwhile to remain in full-time work, while others said it reduced the burden on grandparents.

- **Majority of providers are willing and able to offer the extended hours**

83 per cent of free entitlement providers and 62 per cent of all registered providers were willing and able to offer the extended hours.

The providers in the 12 areas across the country that implemented the offer early have helped to share examples of best practice for other providers to follow. This has been bolstered by the work of local authorities across the country in supporting their local early years sector to deliver the offer.

Kurstie, a working parent in Staffordshire – another of the Early Implementers – split her 30 hours for her four-year-old son between a preschool and a childminder. She said:

It has been the greatest gift a working parent can be given. Any working parent will know what a struggle it is trying to work and balance the bills, so 30 hours for me has been the best gift of the year.

Lesley Calvert, manager of Funfishers Preschool in York, one of the 8 areas to start delivering 30 hours one year early, said:

Delivering 30 hours has been a real success for us, and our parents have been able to go back to work or increase their hours without worrying about the cost of childcare.

For us, a big part of this has been working closely with our local council and in partnership with other providers in the area. I encourage other businesses to do the same to make it work as smoothly.

This landmark offer is backed by the government's record investment of £6 billion per year in the childcare early years sector. By 2019-20, we will be investing an extra £1 billion per year to deliver the free entitlements, including over £300 million a year to increase our hourly funding rate to local authorities.

This investment has already helped us increase our total hourly funding rate to local authorities to a national average of £4.94. Recent research by Frontier Economics shows that our funding rates compare favourably with the average hourly cost of providing childcare, which it found to be £3.72.

Notes to editors

For media enquiries, interview bids and parent or provider case studies please contact the Department for Education press office on 020 7783 8300 / 0207 340 7488 / 0207 340 7691

The first eight Early Implementer areas were Hertfordshire, Newham, Northumberland, Portsmouth, Staffordshire, Swindon, Wigan and York, launching 30 hours in September 2016. Dorset, Leicestershire, North Yorkshire and Tower Hamlets joined the scheme in April 2017.

Evaluation from all 12 early roll out areas give a robust analysis of the programme to date, although there are limitations for generalising all findings to national roll out.

Today's evaluation, carried out by Frontier Economics, conducted in-depth interviews with parents and providers and surveyed all registered providers in the four areas that have been delivering the 30 hours offer under rollout conditions (Dorset, North Yorkshire, Leicestershire and Tower Hamlets). In Dorset, parents applied using the government's online Childcare Service.

The [Childcare Choices](#) website provides information on the government's

childcare schemes and explains how parents can pre-register or apply. It also includes a childcare calculator to show eligible families how much they could receive.

News story: UK Government extends guarantee for Scottish farmers and crofters

The Less Favoured Areas Support Scheme (LFASS) supports hill farmers and crofters in difficult to farm areas. The UK Government has confirmed that it will guarantee applications made in 2019, offering financial support and certainty for farmers and crofters in Scotland for another year.

The Government has also guaranteed other CAP Pillar 2 projects signed before the UK leaves the EU, as previously announced by the Chancellor. These moves will give farmers certainty in the short to medium term, while we develop a post-Brexit agriculture strategy which works for Scotland and the whole of the UK.

Speaking ahead of his visit Lord Duncan said:

Crofters and farmers are the lifeblood of the Highland economy. Battling challenging conditions they produce world-class food while serving as custodians of the natural environment. Put simply, they shape Scotland, and merit support and certainty as we leave the EU.

It is for that reason that the UK Government is guaranteeing an additional £42 million to extend the Less Favoured Areas scheme for an extra year. This will mean payments of up to £10,000 each for Scotland's eligible hill farmers. This will give farmers greater certainty while we develop a strategy to support our agriculture sector once we leave the EU.

Lord Duncan will also host a roundtable later this year with Scotland's farming sector, to hear about their priorities as we leave the EU.

In Scotland, 85 per cent of Scottish agricultural land is classed as Less Favoured Area (LFA), compared to just 17 per cent in England. This underlines the difficult physical and climatic conditions facing Scotland's farmers and crofters.

Lord Duncan announced the funding during a visit to Deskie Farm in Ballindalloch, Moray, where he met representatives of Scotland's farming

sector.