

[News story: Foreign Secretary attends November 2017 EU Foreign Affairs Council meeting](#)

We are here on the European end of the efforts to keep the Iran nuclear deal going after what we were doing last week in Washington, trying to make sure that they don't unscramble it on the Capitol Hill and the White House.

And clearly the effort is all about seeing what we can do to push back on some of the disruptive things that Iran is doing in the region, whilst not throwing the baby out with bathwater and keeping an essential nuclear deal going. The deal whereby Iran pledges not to develop nuclear weapons in exchange for economic co-operation. There will be obviously discussion on the Middle East more widely, the stability of the region. Everybody wants to see for instance a sovereign and independent Lebanon as I said in a statement last night.

More widely than that we got new sanctions on Venezuela – which we, the UK has been leading on, trying to get Mr Maduro to see sense about what he is doing and we'll be looking at the new European plans for defence and security co-operation. The UK is supportive of these as I often say. We are there as a flying buttress to support the cathedral and we think there's a lot of promise in the ideas and we'll be backing them up.

[News story: UK and Australia step up defence relationship as ministers meet](#)

Amongst the discussions was a meeting with her Australian counterpart, Minister Christopher Pyne, who is responsible for procurement for the country's military.

Australia is the UK's 13th biggest export market, with £8.6bn of goods and services sold in 2015 and the Type 26 Global Combat Ship has been shortlisted for Australia's Future Frigate programme.

The Type 26 is an advanced Anti-Submarine Warfare frigate that will provide essential protection to Britain's nuclear deterrent and new aircraft carriers.

Defence Minister Harriett Baldwin said:

From the first world war to defeating Daesh in the Middle East right now, the UK and Australia continue to fight side-by-side for the values we both share.

In the face of mutual intensifying threats, the strong relationship between our countries allows vital discussions over how best to protect ourselves. As the Australian Navy looks for a new frigate, the Type 26 is a very strong candidate and I hope to see it form the backbone of our Five Eyes partners' navies for decades to come.

Minister Baldwin touring Australian Navy Fleet Command facilities in Sydney.

The visit to Australia comes shortly after Minister Pyne came to London and met Minister Harriett Baldwin earlier this month.

During his visit, BAE Systems announced that they had awarded a further 15 manufacturing contracts to suppliers of the Type 26 programme. Not only did that increase the number of UK maritime jobs supported by the programme to over 4,500, but it also included contracts with two Australian companies, showing the deepening co-operation between the British and Australian defence industries.

The Australian Army show Minister Baldwin the Bushmaster vehicle.

On the flipside of the countries' export relationship, the UK was Australia's fifth largest export destination in 2016, valued at almost A\$15bn. Whilst in the country, the Defence Minister viewed a Bushmaster Protected Mobility Vehicle demonstration.

The Bushmaster protected vehicle, already in service with the Australian Army, is manufactured by Thales Australia and is one of two potential solutions under consideration as the UK looks for another troop-carrying vehicle and protected battlefield ambulance. A decision on the procurement, package two of the UK 'Multi-Role Vehicle-Protected programme' (MRV-P), is anticipated next year.

Alongside Australian Defence Minister Pyne the Defence Minister announced the intention to look at the feasibility of fitting a cutting-edge Australian radar on future British warships. The pair announced that a capability study to fit CEA Technologies' 'CEAFAR' radar to British ships will begin early next year at the second Australia/UK Defence Industry Dialogue in Adelaide. The radar is already in-service with the Australian Navy.

Minister Baldwin at CEA with British High Commissioner to Australia, Menna Rawlings, looking at radar systems.

The Defence Minister also laid a wreath on behalf of the UK at a Remembrance Sunday commemoration event in Canberra on Saturday.

Press release: Lead non-executive director appointment for Cabinet Office

Sir John Parker has been appointed as the lead non-executive director for the Cabinet Office and will take up the role from 15 November.

Sir John has a wealth of leadership and boardroom experience in industry ranging from shipbuilding and mining, to utilities, aerospace and central banking. He is currently Chairman of Pennon group and Laing O'Rourke, as well as holding non-executive director roles at Carnival Corporation and Airbus. On 31 October 2017, he stepped down as Chairman from Anglo American plc after 8+ years. He previously chaired National Grid plc and the Court of the Bank of England. Sir John has also held senior non-executive roles at British Gas, the British Coal Corporation and the Industrial Development Board of Northern Ireland.

Last year, Sir John completed a review of the UK Naval Shipbuilding Strategy for the Ministry of Defence and chaired the review for government on Ethnic Diversity on Boards.

First Secretary of State and Minister for the Cabinet Office Damian Green welcomed Sir John's appointment, saying:

I am delighted that Sir John Parker is joining the Cabinet Office Board as the lead non-executive director. He brings to this role significant experience from a number of businesses, as well as a passion for inclusion and diversity. His commercial expertise and experience of driving reform will be of huge benefit to the department and I look forward to working with him.

Sir John Parker said:

I am honoured to accept this appointment and look forward to endeavouring to add value in the role.

Press release: £600,000 funding of 12

projects by PHE to help prevent HIV

Public Health England (PHE) has announced the projects which have been awarded funding from the HIV Prevention Innovation Fund for 2017 to 2018. The projects have been chosen from across England to receive total funding of £600,000 from the Department of Health through PHE.

PHE received over 70 submissions from different organisations for funding for local HIV prevention initiatives. Projects that provided innovation were welcome, especially those that:

- acknowledge and address the wider determinants of high risk behaviour
- promote the prompt diagnosis of both HIV and other STIs, especially among men who have sex with men (MSM)
- address stigma associated with HIV
- integrate HIV prevention into health promotion and service delivery in other health areas
- support increased knowledge, awareness and understanding including of pre-exposure prophylaxis for HIV, especially in currently underserved populations

HIV remains a public health concern despite major advances in treatment and reductions in diagnosis. In 2015, an estimated 101,000 people in the UK had HIV with 13,500 unaware and at risk of unknowingly passing on the virus to others. The risk of infection is higher in certain groups of the population; such as gay and bisexual men and Black African communities. However, targeted and innovative local initiatives that reach out to these and other groups can help reduce the risk of people contracting or passing on HIV.

Two examples of local initiatives receiving funding from PHE are the Sex Talk project run by National Prison Radio which will create information designed for prisoners to address issues of stigma around HIV and the Sholay Love project run by [NAZ](#) which aims to raise awareness of HIV and STIs and encourage testing amongst south Asian gay men in London, Bradford and Leeds.

Commenting on the innovation fund and the winning projects, Public Health Minister Steve Brine said:

Now in its third year, the HIV Prevention Fund continues to foster local innovation projects which aim to tackle HIV in more targeted and impactful ways, especially for those most at risk. The 12 projects announced today will boost local action and spread best practice to further reduce rates of HIV across the whole country.

Professor John Newton, Director of Health Improvement, PHE said:

The HIV Innovation Fund continues to foster new approaches to HIV prevention. The 12 projects receiving funding have been chosen as

they offer new and exciting ways to address key issues in HIV prevention, working particularly with groups at high risk. These projects will help share innovation and best practice around the country, helping other areas to replicate progress in London on lowering rates of HIV.

More information

The 12 HIV Innovation Fund projects are:

- Digital anti-stigma campaign (developing digital content, videos and social marketing targeting higher risk communities) – Martin Fisher Foundation, Brighton and Hove
- I Am Because We Are (Challenging HIV issues and stigma within Black African communities) – BHA For Equality, Greater Manchester
- Improving uptake and safe use of PrEP in underserved populations (creating online assessment tools for PrEP and facilitating safe usage) – Terence Higgins Trust, Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire
- MAP Tyne and Wear (capturing local knowledge about male sex workers to inform and shape other sexual health services) – Gateshead, Sunderland and North Tyneside
- “MIND” The Gap (developing a HIV and sexual health training programme for mental health service staff) – Herts Aid, Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire
- PrEP (raising awareness of PrEP amongst MSM, BME and trans communities) – Spectra, South West London
- Prepping for PrEP (improving awareness of PrEP amongst at risk African communities by engaging key community members) – Positive East, East London and Hertfordshire
- PROMOTE (creating digital outreach and support services for male sex workers and their clients) – Bristol Drugs Project, Bristol
- Reducing Barriers to Testing (facilitating self-testing within Black African communities – Terence Higgins Trust, Wolverhampton
- Sex Talk on National Prison Radio (creating information for prisoners to address issues of stigma around HIV) – Prison Radio Association, England, Wales and Scotland
- Sholay Love (raising awareness of HIV and STIs and encouraging testing amongst south Asian gay men) – NAZ, London, Bradford, Leeds
- The Morning After Project (providing education and harm reduction in chemsex via a dedicated project worker) – Summit House Support, Dudley

Background

PHE Innovation Fund:

The National HIV Prevention Innovation Fund is funded by the allocation from the Department of Health to PHE for HIV prevention and sexual health promotion. This is the third year of the innovation fund in which PHE have awarded funding to a total of 32 projects (7 in 2015 to 2016, 13 in 2016 to

2017 and 12 in 2017 to 2018). Projects submitting HIV prevention proposals to the HIV Innovation Fund must have local authority endorsement in order to be eligible for the fund. The innovation fund is advertised at the [HIV Prevention England website](#) where application details are available.

HIV in the UK, 2016 PHE report:

The [HIV in the UK 2016 report](#), estimated 101,200 people were living with HIV in the UK in 2015. Of those, 13,500 or 13% were unaware of their infection and at risk of passing on the virus to others. The majority, 69% were men and 31% were women. The HIV prevalence in the UK is estimated to be 1.6 per 1,000 population, or 0.16%. HIV incidence among gay, bisexual and other MSM remains high. HIV incidence (the number of new infections) among gay, bisexual and other MSM, hereafter referred to as gay or bisexual men, remains consistently high; in England an estimated 2,800 gay or bisexual men acquired HIV in 2015 with the vast majority acquiring the virus within the UK. Overall in 2015, 47,000 gay or bisexual men were estimated to be living with HIV, of whom 5,800 or 12% remained undiagnosed. (Updated estimates of the number of people living with HIV will be published by PHE on 15 November 2017).

HIV: Surveillance, data and management:

The HIV in the UK Health Protection Report and [annual HIV data tables](#) comprise the number of HIV diagnoses, late HIV diagnoses and numbers accessing HIV care. Data can be interrogated and analysed at Local Authority level via an [online tool](#) allowing a range of outputs to be generated. The [December 2016 edition of Health Matters](#), PHE's resource for local authorities and health professionals focuses on increasing HIV testing.

HIV testing:

It is easy to get tested for HIV. Testing is freely available through GP surgeries, local hospitals and sexual health clinics as well as on self-sampling and self-testing (see [NHS Choices](#) for further information). As well as getting tested, using a condom with new or casual partners protects against HIV and other STIs.

Public Health England (PHE)

[Public Health England](#) exists to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. We do this through world-leading science, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships and the delivery of specialist public health services. We are an executive agency of the Department of Health, and are a distinct organisation with operational autonomy to advise and support government, local authorities and the NHS in a professionally independent manner. Follow us on Twitter: [@PHE_uk](#) and Facebook: [www.facebook.com/PublicHealthEngland](#).

Speech: Environment Secretary sets out plans to enhance environmental standards

I am the last person to shy away from criticising the European Union when they get it wrong. Indeed, one of the reasons I campaigned for us to leave the EU was because I've seen first hand the damage it has done to our environment.

I grew up in Aberdeen in the Eighties all too vividly aware of how the Common Fisheries policy depleted fish stocks, damaged sustainability and, in the process, undermined the long-term health of our coastal communities.

And as a worker at one point in a Farmers' co-operative, I also saw how another arm of EU environmental action, the Common Agricultural Policy, damaged our countryside.

It paid farmers according to the amount of land they farmed, not the way they managed it, and has harmed biodiversity. Outside the EU – once we have taken back control of our agricultural, fisheries and environmental policies – we can do so much better.

But it is also important to acknowledge that there have been some changes which have occurred during our time in the EU which have helped improve our environment.

Indeed, British politicians, from Margaret Thatcher to Stanley Johnson, John Gummer to Owen Paterson, have played a part in shaping policy at the European level to improve environmental protection.

Rules and protocols that protect important habitats and endangered species have been drafted by British authors working internationally. And I want to preserve the gains we have made.

Indeed, this Government has pledged that we must be the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than we found it.

I have argued therefore that we must not only maintain but enhance environmental standards as we leave the EU. And that means making sure we secure the environmental gains we have made while in the EU even as we use our new independence to aim even higher.

Our first task is to ensure that we have a coherent, functioning body of law in place on the day we leave. That is why we are transferring all existing European law, including environmental protections, into UK law through the EU (Withdrawal) Bill. Rules and regulations in place the day before Brexit will still be in place the day after.

However, this alone is not enough. Some of the mechanisms which have

developed during our time in the EU which helpfully scrutinise the achievement of environmental targets and standards by Government will no longer exist in the same way, and principles which guide policy will have less scope and coverage than they do now.

Without further action, there will be a governance gap. The environment won't be protected as it should be from the unscrupulous, unprincipled or careless.

Of course, in the UK we benefit from a vibrant democracy and robust legal system which allow individuals and parliaments to hold the powerful to account when they do the wrong thing – whether it's turning a blind eye to pollution or damaging our beautiful countryside.

But when it comes to protecting the environment, this is not sufficient on its own. Nature is, by definition, voiceless. Animals and plants, habitats and coastlines cannot petition parliament or defend themselves through judicial review.

That is why the EU asked the European Commission to play a role as environmental watchdog. It's been far from perfect.

Sometimes the Commission makes decisions which fail to protect the environment, or even harm it. But on other occasions the Commission has contributed to helping raise environmental standards.

Outside the EU, we have an opportunity to learn from both the Commission's successes and failures. We can develop new institutions which do a better job and hold us to higher standards.

So we will consult on using the new freedoms we have to establish a new, world-leading body to give the environment a voice and hold the powerful to account. It will be independent of government, able to speak its mind freely.

And it will be placed on a statutory footing, ensuring it has clear authority. Its ambition will be to champion and uphold environmental standards, always rooted in rigorous scientific evidence.

We will consult widely on the precise functions, remit and powers of the new body, but we are in no doubt that it must have real bite.

We also need to ensure that environmental enforcement and policy-making is underpinned by a clear set of principles. Environmental principles are already central to Government policy.

However, besides their mention in the EU treaties, we do not set these principles down anywhere or define their role in policy making.

So as we leave the EU, we will create a new policy statement setting out the environmental principles which will guide us. This statement will draw on the EU's current principles and it will underpin future policy-making.

By early next year, we will launch a formal consultation on both the new environmental body and the new policy statement.

There are significant questions to answer – such as exactly what functions and powers the new body has to enforce environmental laws, exactly how a new policy statement is embedded into public policy making, and whether Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland wish to take a different or similar approach.

Of course, we will be engaging widely before bringing forward a final proposal and want to hear from as many people and organisations as possible – from business, NGOs, the farming sector, civil society, and others.

We are already working with the devolved administrations on which powers coming back from the EU should be devolved further.

We will discuss this proposal with them as part of wider conversations on how and where powers should be exercised on return from the EU, and the need or otherwise for common frameworks across the UK.

Nothing can be more vital than the future of our environment and the natural world. We are their custodians and we must safeguard their future if our ambition for a Green Brexit is to become a reality.

We have the chance to set the gold standard for environmental science and become a home to centres of environmental excellence. A new independent, statutory body and a strong statement of principles will ensure that outside the EU, we become the world-leading curator of the most precious asset of all: our planet.