

Speech: “Together, let’s make a difference”– PM marks Black History Month

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to Downing Street for this special reception.

For 30 years, Black History Month has called on us to look back and recognise the enormous contribution which African and African-Caribbean people have made to life in Britain.

The excellent timeline on display in the State Dining Room has been provided by the Black Cultural Archive. It tells the story of over two thousand years of black history in Britain.

I’m very grateful to the Black Cultural Archives for helping us with this event and I was delighted that I have just been able to meet Dawn Hill, the Archives’ chairwoman, and present her with a Point of Light Award today.

It recognises her activity and voluntary work she has put into the Black Cultural Archives.

The Archives’ collection, and the uplifting and inspiring stories of Black history which they tell stretching from Roman times to the present day are now on display in the UK’s first national Black Heritage Centre.

Housed in a beautifully restored Georgian building on Windrush Square in Brixton, it is a great asset for this city and our country.

It serves to remind us of a very simple truth: that Black history is British history and the history of our country is the history of all our people, of every ethnicity.

Black History Month also provides us with an opportunity each year to celebrate the success of Black British people in every walk of life.

And there is so much to celebrate.

People of African and African-Caribbean heritage make an invaluable contribution to our life in the UK.

From leading figures in the arts and culture, in sport and academia, business and public service black Britons make our country a better place.

But it is not just the most prominent people – the contribution of Black British people in communities right across the UK in our NHS and schools, running or working for a small business, volunteering in their communities help to make twenty-first century Britain the strong and diverse country we are today.

But while there is much to celebrate, there is also even greater potential which is going untapped.

Because despite all the progress which we rightly celebrate, we know we still have a long way to go not just to root out hatred and prejudice from our society, but to tackle the injustices that still hold people back.

The Britain I want us to build is a country where everyone has the chance to succeed and go as far as their hard work will take them.

A country where no one suffers discrimination because of their background or ethnicity.

That is why, within weeks of becoming Prime Minister, I commissioned an unprecedented audit of public services to analyse how a person's ethnicity affects their experience of public services and how that affects their daily lives.

We published the findings last week. They expose some uncomfortable truths about the injustices that still exist in our society today – from health and education to the welfare and criminal justice systems.

As Prime Minister, it is my job, my duty, to shine a light on these injustices and lead the national effort to address them.

That will require work from Government – and it has already started.

So for example we are providing targeted employment support in 'hotspot' areas with big BAME employment gaps, so everyone has the best opportunity to make the most of their talents.

We are taking forward a number of recommendations from the Lammy Review into the experience of black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals in the criminal justice system.

There will be an external review to improve the practice in our schools on exclusions.

And the team in the Cabinet Office which produced the audit will not be disbanded – it is going to continue its work in the future, alongside other departments and the wider public sector to drive real and meaningful change.

As a number of people have said it is all very well producing this review. But when I say we will work to drive real and meaningful change I mean it.

I hope that each of these steps will make a positive difference.

I am under no illusions about the scale of the challenge but the opportunity is enormous. Just think of the potential which is there, which I say is untapped.

Think of the talent, enthusiasm and ambition of our young people.

I saw it last week, when I visited Dunraven School in Streatham.

And an interesting story encapsulates this. One young man told me that his ambition was to pursue a career in law but he didn't see himself represented in the judiciary, and he wondered if he could make it.

But no-one's ethnicity should stop them from pursuing their dreams and as a country, we cannot afford to squander the talent and ambition of our young people.

We need to do much more to make the public sector more representative of wider society and we are taking action through initiatives like the Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, which was launched on Monday.

The contribution that young black people make to Britain is already enormous.

If we remove the barriers that remain, the potential for the future will truly be without limit.

It will take sustained work over time to overcome age old injustices.

My pledge this Black History Month is that we will see it through.

I hope all of you here, and leaders across communities, will work with me to make it a reality.

Black History Month encourages us to look back and learn from the past to look around us and understand the present and to look forward to shape the future.

To inspire the next generation to make our country and our world an even better place.

Thank you all for being here to celebrate it and I hope you enjoy the rest of this reception.

Together, working together in the future, let's make a difference.

[News story: Baroness Williams speech to National Black Police Association](#)

It is an absolute pleasure to be here today.

The National Black Police Association is a key Home Office partner and I would like to begin by thanking you for all of the work that you do.

My colleagues and I value the advice you provide as we develop policy – on

workforce strategy, race relations, community ties and tensions, on hate crime and diversity in the police.

In fact, it was this organisation that provided the platform for the Prime Minister – when she was Home Secretary – to lay down a major challenge to police leaders to do better on diversity.

She spoke at this conference in 2015 and since then police leaders have taken concerted action on workforce diversity and police forces are making great progress.

Now, police forces are more diverse than ever before. But there is still some way to go until forces fully represent their communities. For instance, when it comes to having BME representation in senior ranks, this picture is less promising.

As a government we have implemented measures to expand the pool and diversity of senior police officers by introducing direct entry and by opening up appointments to those with equivalent experience from overseas. And the College of Policing has also been doing important work in this area.

Because we know that diversity is not a nice to have. It is an operational necessity. Because people from all communities want the police to fight crime while having confidence that their individual needs will be understood and respected.

A year ago the Prime Minister pledged to carry out an audit of the data held by government in order to shine a light on how our public services treat people from different backgrounds. The goal was to help the public assess how their race affects how they are treated on key issues such as health, education, criminal justice and employment, broken down by geographic location, income and gender.

The audit exposes a number of uncomfortable truths: there are significant disparities in the way public services are experienced based on a person's ethnicity and between police force areas. And while progress has been made in many areas, through police reform and the good work underway in forces, the data clearly shows that there is more to be done.

As the Prime Minister said herself:

the message is very simple: if these disparities cannot be explained then they must be changed.

The Race Disparity Audit makes it alarmingly clear that while we have made significant progress across a range of measures relating to crime and policing, for many people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, their experiences and expectations fall well short of what is acceptable.

The Home Secretary, along with ministers at the Home Office, is drawing together national work to consider these findings. There will also be an

important role for national partners such as the College of Policing, and locally for police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables to ensure that those communities where people are more likely to be a victim of crime, and live in greater fear of crime, receive the support that they need.

This government believes that how far you go in life should be based on the talent you have and the hard work the you put in – and nothing else.

We want to build a country that works for everyone – and that means tackling the injustices that hold people back in life, both within policing and indeed in the wider community.

The theme of today's conference is 'exploring the dynamics of hate' and as the Home Office minister responsible for countering extremism – I want to tell you what we are doing to tackle hate crime in all our communities.

I am particularly glad to be addressing you during the sixth annual Hate Crime Awareness Week. Hate Crime Awareness Week is being marked up and down the country, with charity and voluntary sector organisations, public services, and others leading the way. There are so many ideas, from attending local events to showing your support on social media which aim to encourage local authorities and services to work with communities affected by hate crime to raise awareness of the issue.

And I want to make it absolutely clear that hate crime of any kind, directed against any community, race or religion, has absolutely no place in our society, and it remains a serious concern. For my part I will always continue to push for robust action to address the causes of hate crime and improve our response to it.

We need to do this effectively because these crimes have a deep impact on victims because they are targeted against some intrinsic part of their identity. The effect of these crimes is often felt not only by the victim, but of course their family, friends, neighbours and others in their community. Hate crimes also go against the fundamental values of tolerance and respect for others that underpin our diverse society. Through fear, abuse and violence, hate crime can limit people's equality of opportunity and infringe their basic human rights.

The latest statistics show that there continue to be too many cases of hate crime. In 2016/2017 there were 80,393 offences recorded by the police and this is a 29% increase compared with the year before. The increase over the last year is thought to reflect both a genuine rise in hate crime around the time of the EU referendum and following the Westminster Bridge attack as well as ongoing improvements in crime reporting by police and of course the terrorist attack in Manchester. We certainly cannot be complacent when we read these statistics.

We already have a strong legislative framework to tackle hate crime and a hate crime action plan launched by the Home Secretary in July 2016 and due to be updated next year.

Where the police can really help is by encouraging an increase in reporting – which I know many forces have been doing. Because no one should suffer hate crime in silence. This involves increasing awareness of what hate crime is and engaging with communities to make sure that victims have greater confidence to come forward and that they actually know how to report it.

But more needs to be done.

A key part of this will be tackling online hate. As a government we have already provided over £450,000 towards the development of an online hate crime hub in the Metropolitan police area. Following the success of London's online hub, we are now pleased to announce the development of a national online hate crime hub which – when up and running in the coming months – will help the police to respond more efficiently and effectively to reports from across the country. Following referral to the national hub via True Vision, the police website to report hate crime, individual complaints will be assessed, and relevant cases will be assigned to the appropriate local force for investigation. As such the hub will streamline and simplify current processes, avoiding duplication, make full use of expertise and improving the efficiency of local forces to respond. Victims will be kept updated throughout, as police forces seek to bring perpetrators to justice.

We have committed funding for communities to protect against hate crime, with £2.4 million to protect places of worship and £900,000 to support community projects. We are engaging with groups to ensure that we understand the public's experience of hate crime, and make it easier for victims to come forward. As part of this, the Home Office has – just this week – announced a funding package of over £750,000 to tackle hate crime covering all 5 strands of the monitored hate crime strands across England and Wales. This will fund 7 innovative community projects, for example a project that works with schools to improve education on hate crime and a project working with young disabled people to raise awareness of hate crime and how to report it.

We are also committed to refreshing the Hate Crime Action Plan in 2018, working with the police and our wide network of stakeholders to make sure it is fit for purpose as well as asking Her Majesty's Inspectorate of the Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services to carry out inspection work on hate crime to build a national picture of how police forces deal with hate crime.

So I don't think I could be clearer, this government believes that it is utterly unacceptable that people should suffer abuse or attacks because of who they are – we must stand together against hate crime and ensure that it is stamped out. The police service is a key partner in this and I look forward to continuing to work with you.

As I have said, this government believes that how far you go in life should be based on talent and hard work – and nothing else. Hate must never impact how people live their lives, how comfortable they feel or where they end up.

We want to build a country that does work for everyone – and that means tackling the injustices that hold people back as well as taking a stand against intolerance.

That is why the work of this association is so important. We need your wise counsel not only on making sure that police officers and staff can progress in their careers and serve their communities but also on issues across all our communities.

Thank you.

[News story: Boost for electric and driverless car industry as government drives forward green transport revolution](#)

- chargepoints for electric vehicles at all UK motorway services and large petrol retailers
- new bill will enable drivers of automated cars to be insured on UK roads
- driverless technology market set to be worth up to £50 billion to UK economy by 2035

Motorway services and large petrol retailers will be required to install chargepoints for electric cars, under plans announced in the House of Commons today (18 October 2017) by Transport Minister John Hayes.

The Automated and Electric Vehicles Bill will increase the access and availability of chargepoints for electric cars, while also giving the government powers to make it compulsory for chargepoints to be installed across the country and enabling drivers of automated cars to be insured on UK roads.

Automated vehicles have the potential to greatly reduce road traffic accidents – in 2016 85.9% of collisions causing injury involved human error, while official research estimates that the market will be worth £50 billion to the UK economy by 2035.

Transport Minister John Hayes said:

We want the UK to be the best place in the world to do business and a leading hub for modern transport technology, which is why we are introducing the Automated and Electric Vehicles Bill in Parliament and investing more than £1.2 billion in the industry.

This bill will aid the construction of greater infrastructure to support the growing demand for automated and electric vehicles as we embrace this technology and move into the future.

Drivers of electric vehicles will be able to easily locate and charge at any chargepoint, using information from sat navs or mobile apps, regardless of the vehicle make or model – making running an electric vehicle even easier. All chargepoints will have to be ‘smart’, meaning they can interact with the grid in order to manage demand for electricity across the country.

Roads Minister Jesse Norman said:

Automated and electric vehicles will help improve air quality, cut congestion, boost safety and create thousands of skilled jobs in the UK. We have already supported the purchase of 115,000 ultra-low emission cars and there are already more than 11,500 publicly available chargepoints, but the demand continues to grow as more people purchase electric vehicles to cut fuel costs and boost the environment.

Jesse Norman will also announce further funding for local authorities at the Smarter Travel Conference in Milton Keynes on Thursday (18 October 2017) to fund install chargepoints in residential areas where cars are parked on the street.

Steve Gooding, Director of the RAC Foundation said:

We are pleased to see the provisions of the Automated and Electric Vehicles Bill re-starting their passage through the Parliamentary process

It is clear that government needs to do more to accelerate the take-up of electric vehicles, tackling the issues that are currently persuading motorists to stick with conventional fuels, as well as paving the way for autonomy

The test, though, will be how effectively those powers are exercised

All drivers of automated vehicles will be required to be insured and victims of collisions involving an automated vehicle will have quick and easy access to compensation, in line with existing insurance practices.

James Dalton, ABI:

Insurers wholeheartedly support the development of automated vehicles, as they have the potential to significantly reduce the large number of road accidents caused by driver error. We support the approach the government has taken in the bill, as this will give the industry time to prepare for the commercial rollout of fully automated driving technology.

The bill will receive its first reading in the House of Commons today.

Press release: Minister for the Middle East comments on the situation in Kirkuk

I call on all parties to maintain calm and take steps to de-escalate tensions in Kirkuk, avoiding any provocative statements or actions. It is essential that efforts in Iraq are focused on the defeat of Daesh, stabilisation of liberated areas and on enabling those displaced to return to their homes.

The UK supports the development of sustainable governance arrangements for Kirkuk and all disputed areas which are representative of, and responsive to, all Iraq's communities, in line with the Iraqi Constitution. We believe in a stable, democratic and unified Iraq, one that is able to provide the security, jobs and services that all Iraqis want and deserve. We stand ready to assist Iraq as it works to deliver this future for its people.

Press release: Flood warning service improvements go live for winter

People who live near the River Foss in York will now be able to benefit from an improved flood warning service from Wednesday, October 18.

After the Boxing Day 2015 floods, one of the recommendations of the York Flood Inquiry report was for the Environment Agency to conduct a review of the flood warnings on the River Ouse and Foss.

The Environment Agency commissioned consultants to review all flood warnings in the city.

Along the River Ouse catchment, the review found the existing service meets the needs of the community.

However, the River Foss flood warnings underwent a thorough review and changes have been made.

A new rain monitoring station is being installed upstream on the Foss in the village of Yearsley, 20 miles north of York, as well as a river level

monitoring station near Strensall.

These two monitoring stations will automatically feed information into the Environment Agency's systems and forecasts for the River Foss, supporting a better understanding of the amount of water flowing down the river towards York.

This will help the Environment Agency's flood duty officers to issue flood warnings with more confidence and more accurate information included within the warning messages.

The River Foss catchment area within the City of York boundary previously had six flood warnings, covering the Foss, Tang Hall Beck and Osbaldwick Beck.

As part of the improvements this will increase to ten and include warnings for South Beck and Westfield Beck.

Zoë Pattinson, Environment Agency flood risk officer, said:

Along the River Foss corridor, there is one long warning that is for the properties most at risk from river flooding, and a wider warning that covers the properties at lower risk of flooding.

The Environment Agency also worked with members the River Foss Society in redesigning the flood warning boundaries and trigger levels.

The Foss Society and local residents have provided valuable input into the review of the flood warning service for the River Foss community.

She continued:

Local community input is important because it gives us an insight from those who have seen how the river and catchment behaves in heavy rainfall. It also helps raise awareness of our flood warning service.

John Millett, chairman of the River Foss Society, said:

The River Foss Society supports and fully endorses the work the Environment Agency is doing to improve the flood warnings that are being introduced to protect the City of York and neighbouring areas and their residents and businesses along both the River Ouse and the River Foss corridors.

People who are already signed up the flood warning service will automatically be transferred to the new relevant flood warning area that covers their

property. If you want to register to receive free Environment Agency flood warnings then you can either at [flood warnings](#) or call on Floodline 0345 988 1188.