

## **Press release: PM statement on Confidence and Supply Agreement with the DUP**

“A Confidence and Supply Agreement has been made between the Conservative and Unionist Party and the Democratic Unionist Party.

“This means the DUP will support the Conservative government on votes on the Queen’s Speech, the Budget, and legislation relating to Brexit and national security.

“The agreement makes clear that we remain steadfast to our commitments as set out in the Belfast Agreement and its successors, and in governing in the interests of all parts of the community in Northern Ireland.

“I welcome this agreement which will enable us to work together in the interest of the whole United Kingdom, give us the certainty we require as we embark on our departure from the European Union, and help us build a stronger and fairer society at home. In the interests of transparency, the full terms of this agreement have been published.

“Time is running short for the parties to come together and reach agreement to re-establish a power-sharing Executive by 29 June. I hope the parties will look beyond their differences and come together with a shared sense of common purpose to serve all communities in the best interests of Northern Ireland. Northern Ireland needs a functioning devolved government at this important time.

“Her Majesty’s government will continue to do everything we can to work with the parties in Northern Ireland, alongside the Irish government, to bring back a strong voice at Stormont for a positive future for everyone in Northern Ireland.”

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## **News story: Jobs boost as North Sea field makes first oil delivery**

Located around 125 km east of the Shetland Islands, the £2 billion investment in the Kraken oilfield by oil and gas development and production company EnQuest, was made possible by the UK Government’s support for the sector.

The oilfield is expected to contain around 128 million barrels of oil and support more than 1,000 jobs in the UK for each year of its more than 20 year

lifespan.

Business and Energy Secretary Greg Clark said:

This is a landmark project for EnQuest and the UK oil and gas sector as one of the largest new oil fields to come on-stream in the North Sea in a decade.

This has been made possible through significant UK government support worth £2.3 billion over two years to encourage investments of this type in the North Sea, supporting thousands of highly-skilled jobs.

We'll continue to build on this support for the oil and gas sector as it looks to seize the significant opportunities that lie ahead.

The North Sea currently supports around 330,000 jobs across the UK with a supply chain that had an estimated turnover of £28 billion in 2016.

Scottish Secretary, David Mundell said:

This is fantastic news and will help ensure skilled, secure jobs in the vital North Sea oil and gas industry, which is very much still open for business.

The UK Government is committed to helping the oil and gas industry maximise future prosperity. We stand ready to continue to support the industry as it seizes this tremendous opportunity.

The UK Government is continuing to encourage investment to ensure industry is able to maximise the recovery of oil and gas from the UK Continental Shelf in the North Sea.

The Kraken Area (Kraken and Kraken North) is estimated to have 3% of remaining UK oil reserves, 2% of total oil and gas reserves and, at peak in 2019, to be responsible for 3% of total UK oil and gas production.

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## **[Press release: Low Pay Commission visit to Newport and Gwent](#)**

The visit to Newport and Gwent in June is part of a programme of visits the Low Pay Commission (LPC) is making around the UK during 2017 to gather information on how the National Living Wage is operating.

Peter Donaldson and Professor Sarah Brown will meet a number of representatives in Newport and Gwent to hear first hand what impact the National Living Wage is having on businesses and workers.

Low Pay Commissioner Peter Donaldson said:

Hearing directly from those affected by the National Living Wage and other minimum wage rates is an important part of the Commission's work and informs our recommendations to the government. Our visits take us around the UK and we welcome the opportunity to hear how the National Living Wage has affected people in Wales.

### Notes:

1. The Low Pay Commission is an independent body that advises the government about the National Living Wage and the National Minimum Wage.
2. The LPC is responsible for:
  - carrying out extensive research and consultation, and commissioning research projects
  - analysing relevant data and actively encouraging the Office of National Statistics to establish better estimates of the incidence of low pay
  - carrying out surveys of firms in low-paying sectors
  - consulting with employers, workers and their representatives and taking written and oral evidence from a wide range of organisations
  - making fact-finding visits throughout the UK to meet employers, employees and representative organisations
3. There are 9 Low Pay Commissioners drawn from a range of employee, employer and academic backgrounds:
  - Bryan Sanderson
  - Kay Carberry
  - Neil Carberry
  - Professor Richard Dickens
  - Peter Donaldson
  - Professor Sarah Brown
  - Clare Chapman
  - John Hannett
  - Brian Strutton
4. All the Commissioners serve in an individual capacity. They are supported by a secretariat, which has 8 members of staff and is based in London.
5. If you are are involved in a business, are a worker, or have information you would like to share with commissioners about the effects of the National Living Wage or Minimum Wage, and would like to meet the Commissioners, please contact the LPC secretariat using the contact details below.

## **Press enquiries**

8th Floor  
Fleetbank House  
2-6 Salisbury Square  
London  
EC4Y 8JX

## **General enquiries**

8th Floor  
Fleetbank House  
2-6 Salisbury Square  
London  
EC4Y 8JX

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# **[Press release: Additional responsibilities for Medicines Discovery Catapult](#)**

Catapult to be centre for medicines; diagnostics; biomarkers; trial support.

The board of directors of the Medicines Discovery Catapult (MDC) and the Precision Medicine Catapult (PMC) have proposed the transfer of some aspects of the scientific mission of PMC to the MDC.

MDC will now focus on: medicines; diagnostics; biomarkers; early-stage clinical trial support. They believe the move reflects the change in precision medicine becoming mainstream and integrated within modern drug discovery, and will drive efficiencies and serve as a community one-stop shop for all drug-based approaches. The PMC will close as an entity in its own right.

This proposal is endorsed by Innovate UK under its commitment to developing targeted and efficient innovation support through its network of Catapults throughout the UK.

To deliver a more distributed approach to precision medicine and with reduced need for a centralised resource, Innovate UK will instead use its funding to maintain its support for the precision medicine sector, providing funding for competitive grants open to applications from businesses and precision medicine regional centres of excellence from all over the UK.

This will provide many expert groups with the capability to set their own strategies beyond the previous constraints of the PMC.

Contact PJ Taylor, media and stakeholder communications partner, for more information: 07950 225 001 or email [pj.taylor@innovateuk.gov.uk](mailto:pj.taylor@innovateuk.gov.uk).

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## [Press release: UK takes centre stage in global marine protection](#)

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey has today set out how the UK continues to play a leading role in protecting the world's oceans and turning the tide on marine litter.

Speaking in Cork for the 25th annual meeting of the [OSPAR Commission](#) – an international convention to protect the marine environment of the north-east Atlantic – the Minister outlined how the UK is leading international efforts to tackle plastic pollution, protect marine species and habitats, and support cutting-edge marine science.

Earlier this month the UK made a number of voluntary commitments at the first-ever [United Nations Ocean Conference](#) in New York. These include joining the UN's Clean Seas campaign to reduce the use of disposable plastic by 2022, strengthening global ocean observations, and working with Overseas Territories to protect the diverse range of marine life in their waters.

Speaking at the meeting, Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

The UK continues to be a global leader in protecting beaches, oceans and marine life around the world.

Our seas are critical to the future of our planet – they supply the oxygen we breathe, absorb the carbon dioxide we produce, and provide us with a magnificent array of marine species and habitats. That's why we must act now to protect them for future generations.

The introduction of the 5p plastic bag charge was a great step forward – cutting the number of bags found on beaches by nearly half – and alongside our work to ban harmful microbeads, reduce plastic packaging, and create a series of marine protected areas, I am determined for us to remain a heavy-hitter on the marine world stage.

Today's meeting of the OSPAR Commission, jointly co-hosted by the Environment Minister and Ireland's Minister of State for Housing and Urban Renewal, Damien English, brings together 15 countries across Europe to set out ongoing

work to create a network of marine protected areas and launch a new report on the status of marine species and habitats in the north-east Atlantic.

Through OSPAR, the UK and neighbouring countries have developed and are implementing a Regional Action Plan on marine litter. This covers 55 actions to address land-based and sea-based sources of litter, including education and awareness activities, marine monitoring, and removing litter that has already reached the marine environment.

At the UN Ocean Conference the [UK reiterated its continued commitment](#) to conserving and sustainably using the world's seas – one of the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals, which aim to tackle poverty, end hunger and protect the environment.