

Speech: Children and Families Minister Launches Care Leaver Covenant

I am delighted to be here with you today.

Now, you probably think, he's a politician, I bet he says that at every event he goes to. I will grant you, there might have been occasions in the past when diplomacy required rather more delight than perhaps the situation deserved.

But this most definitely is a most significant event today and not one of those. I am truly very happy to be here.

Gabby just told you there that I came here from Baghdad, but what she didn't tell you was that when I arrived on these shore I couldn't speak English, and I used to sit at the back of the classroom so the teachers didn't ask me to speak in class.

But I had great parents and some great role models in my life and I learned English and then learned that if you are able to communicate with people then people will help you. But sadly there are 74,000 children in care who currently don't necessarily have those role models and trusted people.

And Matthew Gordon, I remember when I first met Matthew to appoint them to deliver the covenant – it was one of the best decisions I've made.

Weren't Big House and Ryan's story fantastic? I can't tell you how inspired I've been to see for myself today how people who have had a really tough start in life can blossom, given the right encouragement and support.

I would like to talk to you now about the care leaver covenant in more detail. I want to tell you how it fits into our wider programme of work to make sure young people who don't have the same advantages many of us take for granted get the same exciting prospects as their more fortunate peers, when they make their way in the world.

Gabby rightly introduced me as the minister with responsibility for care leavers. It is a role I take very seriously. Out of all my ministerial duties it is the one for which I feel the deepest sense of obligation.

When children and young people get taken into care, the state automatically becomes their corporate parent. That sounds really impersonal and uncaring doesn't it? Believe me, it's not. The state needs to be as just as caring, just as ambitious and just as dedicated as any parent would be for their own child.

It needs to provide the care and support that all children need in order to thrive; it needs to help them prepare for the challenges of independent adult life; and it needs to help them make the most of the opportunities they need to progress towards fulfilling and rewarding careers.

This responsibility falls in the first instance to local authorities. They make the day-to-day decisions about where children in care and care leavers live, who supports them and what extra support they need to help them get a leg up where they need one, whether that's improving their grades or getting specialist advice to improve their health and wellbeing.

It goes without saying that what they do must be of the highest quality. It's a tough ask because it matters so much. We cannot afford to get this wrong.

Any young person who has been in care will have had the odds stacked against them from an early age. It is therefore important that enough extra help is available for those care leavers who need it.

The kind of things that may seem inconsequential to us can be very challenging when you don't have the normal family networks to call on for advice: learning to manage the household bills, remembering to put a wash on so that there's always something clean to wear for work or an interview, and managing to keep the fridge stocked.

Which is why we have strengthened the support that local authorities have to give care leavers, in particular we have asked them to consult on and publish their local offer for care leavers, and we have extended support from a personal adviser to all care leavers up to age 25.

As well as setting out care leavers' legal entitlements, the local offer encourages local authorities to think creatively about what more they can do. For example, around half have introduced council tax exemptions for care leavers and I want all councils to introduce council tax exemptions for care leavers.

I am encouraged by the feedback I get from Mark Riddell, our national implementation adviser, who is working with local authorities on what they do for care leavers in their own communities.

Mark has been in post for a year now and will soon publish a report of innovative practice from the visits he made to 40 local authorities. It will show how local authorities are responding positively to the challenges that care leavers face. I encourage you all to read Mark's report and think about how you can replicate these innovative approaches in your own areas.

Key though local authorities are, they can't do it all on their own. Central government and society at large, by which I mean each and every one of us, has a vital role to play too. Which brings me to the care leaver covenant.

I am delighted to announce that every government department has signed the care leaver covenant and today we have published each department's offer to care leavers.

For some departments, the most practical way to support care leavers is to offer them work opportunities. I am delighted therefore that all have volunteered to participate in the care leaver internship scheme, which provides 12-month paid internships in the Civil Service. We are in the

process of recruiting more than 100 care leavers to fill these roles.

This scheme has grown from one DfE internship four years ago, to more than 100 internships across all departments in a range of locations across the country. One of the current interns – Zahra – is my diary manager and is doing an amazing job. I would hire her anywhere, whether in YouGov or anywhere else.

Some government departments have gone the extra mile. Apart from the DfE, the departments of Health, Work and Pensions, Housing, Communities and Local Government and the ministries of Justice and Defence have developed a much more substantial package for care leavers.

Examples include the extra support that DWP provides to help care leavers find work, the support that MoJ provides to care leavers in custody and the priority that MHCLG gives to care leavers in relation to housing. These have now been published on GOV.UK and I urge you to look at how collectively the government is trying to make care leavers' lives better.

I will be using my meetings with ministers in other departments to discuss how we can extend our support even further.

The covenant also seeks to make more of the contribution that the private and voluntary sectors can make as care leavers move from care to independence.

As you know, we appointed Spectra First to raise awareness about the covenant and attract offers from businesses and voluntary sector organisations. We have already heard about some of them today. These will make a huge difference to young people's lives, so thank you so much if you have come forward signed up. In particular I would like to thank Matthew and the team at Spectra not just for organising today's event, but more importantly for all those valuable opportunities they have secured so far for care leavers.

Many of these are employment opportunities – such as work experience, internships, or apprenticeships. This is just brilliant. But what's even better is that it doesn't stop there, Spectra is securing offers from organisations that will help care leavers achieve all of the outcomes set out in the care leaver strategy, Keep on Caring.

For example, Barclays has agreed to support care leavers by developing their financial literacy and money-management skills.

I'd also like to give a cheer to Tottenham Hotspur. Not something I do on a regular basis as I'm a Man U fan. But Spurs have agreed to provide a series of workshops for care leavers on managing a tenancy and avoiding debt.

The homelessness charity St Basils, where I have spent most of this morning, has also become a covenant signatory, and offers crisis support for care leavers who find themselves sleeping rough or at risk of homelessness.

I know that Spectra is also in discussions with Amazon who are also keen to be involved and sign the covenant. Discussions are taking place to confirm what Amazon's offer will be.

Thank you all for everything you have done and all these wonderful initiatives. Please don't stop will you?

I'd like now to briefly set out a few areas where I hope the covenant can develop in the months and years ahead:

- The Civil Service internship scheme provides a model that I think could be replicated across a range of public bodies and major employers. As well as growing the Civil Service scheme, I have agreed with Spectra a target for them to secure 1,000 internships for care leavers over the next 3 years in a range of organisations. And going forward I want to think big – why not 10,000 over the next 10 years. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we had an army of people leaving care in work and making a difference to help other care leavers have opportunities and support?
- Many universities already do a huge amount to support care leavers and some like Manchester and Leeds have already signed the covenant. One of my ambitions is to see more care leavers participating in higher education and I want all universities to set out how they will support care leavers to get into and succeed at university – for example by offering 52-week-a-year accommodation to care leavers during their first year.
- I would like to see an increase in the number of care leavers taking up apprenticeships. There is already extra funding for employers and training providers who recruit care leaver apprentices; and in August this year we introduced a new £1,000 bursary for care leavers that goes direct to the young person to help with the transition into work. But there is more we can do to ring-fence apprenticeships for care leavers. Many local authorities do this already, but all of them should. And businesses can – as part of their covenant offer – do the same.
- One of the things that care leavers need most is people who can advise them and offer them practical and emotional support. It would be great if organisations encouraged their staff to volunteer to become mentors to care leavers, offering advice on how to find work or play a more active role in their communities.
- And I would like Spectra to explore how businesses might be able offer care leavers free or discounted goods and services. Wouldn't it be great if we could encourage bus and rail companies to provide discounted travel, or internet providers to provide free wi-fi for the first year of their contract?

Since I took up this post, I have spoken to lots of people about the covenant and I have been really excited about people's willingness to engage with it. People recognise the challenges that care leavers face and want to do

something to about it. Of course the challenge is to turn that good-will into a something tangible and the covenant provides a way to do that.

The care leaver covenant has a crucial role to play in improving care leavers' outcomes, but it is just one part of the broader programme of work that I am leading. I would like to finish by explaining how the covenant fits within a broader spectrum of work:

- Not all care leavers will be ready to take up employment opportunities right away. That is why we have provided funding of £5m over four years to pilot three care leaver social impact bonds that will be launching shortly – in Lewisham, Sheffield and Bristol. These are payment-by-results contracts where care leavers are given intensive support to engage in education, employment or training.
- We are piloting Staying Close, which seeks to replicate the benefits of Staying Put, by providing an enhanced support package for those leaving residential care. We are providing £6m over two years to test out Staying Close in eight locations across the country.
- We have contributed to the Prime Minister's rough sleeping strategy by allocating extra funding to local authorities so that they can provide intensive support to small groups of five to ten care leavers at highest risk of sleeping rough or homelessness. Forty seven local authorities will receive funds topping £3m next year.
- And we are looking at ways in which we can improve joint working between local authorities and Jobcentre Plus to ensure that care leavers who are NEET get the best support possible to get into work.

I would like to finish by thanking you all for showing your support for the covenant today – please tell your friends and encourage them to sign up too. If your organisation has already signed up, keep at it! If you are thinking about it, I hope what you have seen here today will inspire you to get on board.

We're not talking about making commitments that necessarily cost lots of money. In fact for businesses, it makes business sense, to have diversity in your workforce which will lead to good outcomes. It's more about making sure we have the right environment to give care leavers a decent start; it's about making sure that every one of them gets a better chance of having a successful and happy adulthood.

As I said earlier, I am delighted to be here, but I'm even more delighted that you are too.

I would like to finish with this thought – we are the parents for these children and young people and the way to think about that is what would I want for my child.

Speech: Judges annual pay review 2018/19: David Gauke blog

Our judiciary is recognised and respected both at home and around the world for its integrity and independence.

Every day, in courts and tribunals across the country, judges deliver justice without fear or favour and, in doing so, uphold the rule of law on which our society is founded.

Beyond their fundamental role, the quality and dependability of our judiciary is also critical to maintaining the UK's thriving legal services sector, worth around £24 billion to our economy and attracting international business to the UK.

I believe that in order to continue to have a world-class judiciary, we need to be able to retain and recruit high-calibre and highly experienced judges.

With that in mind, and following recommendations made by the Senior Salaries Review Body (SSRB) in their annual report, I am pleased today to announce a 2% pay increase for members of the judiciary for 2018/19 – the biggest pay rise for judges in nearly 10 years.

This is in line with the pay awards announced recently for other vital public servants – such as the police and doctors – and strikes the right balance between reward and affordability.

It has been reported that judges could be awarded significantly higher pay increases – some as high as 32%. This recommendation, along with many others, was made by the SSRB as part of a major review of judges pay, quite separate to the annual pay increase I am announcing today. No decisions have yet been made, but we are giving careful consideration to the recommendations put forward.

This major review, published in full today, has considered in depth the total reward package for judges – including the impact of recent pensions changes – and our ability to continue to recruit and retain the brilliant legal minds required to carry out this role.

This Government is acutely aware of the recruitment challenges we face at senior levels of the judiciary. That is precisely why my Department asked for this review to be carried out.

We are grateful for the work that has been undertaken and will give careful consideration to the issues that have been raised. I recognise the importance of ensuring the reward package for judges is sufficiently attractive to enable us to attract excellent candidates to judicial office.

I will make a further announcement when I am in position to set out in full the government's response to the major review.

Statement to Parliament: Crossrail delay

On 31 August 2018, Crossrail Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Transport for London (TfL), announced a delay to the planned opening of the Elizabeth Line.

Discussions between TfL and government are underway as to how any additional funding will be provided, with London – as the primary beneficiary of Crossrail – bearing any additional costs via a financing arrangement.

TfL and the Department for Transport have commissioned an independent review of Crossrail's governance and a separate review on Crossrail's finance and commercial position.

Today (26 October 2018), as an interim measure, we are announcing that £350 million of short term repayable financing will be made available to the Mayor for the year 2018/19. This will ensure that full momentum is maintained behind Crossrail.

This project is already delivering benefits for the whole of the UK through its cross-country supply chain and its UK built train fleet. When open, Crossrail will be transformative and carry up to 200 million passengers a year, delivering £42 billion of investment into the UK economy.

A further update will be provided once the discussions on the financing arrangements have concluded.

Speech: UK-Ghana: Why our future matters more than our past

British Prime Minister Theresa May visited Africa in August and set out a very clear and ambitious new strategy for the UK's engagement with the Continent. This included a target for the UK to become Africa's largest investor in the G7. It is my job to deliver that new ambition here in Ghana, and we are expanding and reorienting our effort to do so.

In so many ways, Ghana is the natural partner for the UK. We are old and close friends that share a heritage, deep family links and a set of values around peace, stability and the importance of the rules-based international system. We work closely together in the UN and in the Commonwealth, as well as bilaterally across a full range of policy areas. But in President Nana Akufo-Addo's 'Ghana Beyond Aid' strategy, I also believe we have a shared vision of the future. For a longstanding partner in Ghana's development, like the UK – we have invested over £2bn of development assistance in Ghana over the last two decades – this is not about withdrawing our support for Ghana, but reorienting our partnership to more directly support sustainable economic development, job creation and expanding opportunities for trade and investment.

We have already started to do this, with the recent launch of our Jobs and Economic Transformation programme, which will help create 15,000 new jobs in Ghana and support skills development and capacity building in key sectors of the economy. We are also increasing the amount of development finance available to Ghana and other African countries, and making it easier to use – support from our UK Export Finance, for example, can now be accessed in cedis, removing exchange rate risks.

Last night, the UK's Minister for Africa Harriett Baldwin and Vice President Dr Mahamudu Bawumia co-hosted the first meeting of the UK-Ghana Business Council – a high level forum which we will hold twice a year to drive forward this new, more strategic partnership. And today, I am delighted that Baroness Fairhead, our Minister for Trade and Export Promotion, is in Accra for the first day of the UK-Ghana Investment Summit. We are greatly honoured that the President will attend to give the keynote speech.

The Summit will bring over 50 UK companies to Ghana to discuss trade and investment opportunities with Ministers and government officials, and to build links with local private sector partners. Leveraging private sector involvement and building these international partnerships is a critical element in making 'Beyond Aid' a success. The UK wants to be Ghana's partner of choice, and we are working hard to bring the UK's world class quality, standards and expertise to help catalyse Ghana's economic transformation.

These are just the first steps in what we see as an enduring and long-term strategic partnership designed to maximise mutual prosperity – building on the past, but very much looking to the future.

[Press release: British public urged to be aware of poppy merchandise scams](#)

- the Intellectual Property Office and The Royal British Legion urge consumers to beware of fake poppy merchandise ahead of Remembrance 2018

- no-one benefits – both charity and public lose out with fake poppy merchandise
- advice to buyers to ‘buy responsibly’ through official channels, and how to report fake poppy merchandise

The Intellectual Property Office (IPO) and The Royal British Legion (RBL) are urging members of the British public to be extra vigilant when buying poppy merchandise for Remembrance this year. Their donations are intended to support Armed Forces community men, women, veterans and their families. Instead they could end up benefitting fraudsters if their poppy merchandise turns out to be fake.

The RBL has registered its rights for the poppy goods to prevent such counterfeiting.

The IPO and The RBL have teamed up with the Police Intellectual Property Crime Unit (PIPCU) to crack down on the rogue traders making money from the fake Remembrance goods. The warning applies to poppy merchandise – scarves, jewellery, poppy pins and larger poppy brooches. This does NOT apply to the traditional paper poppies.

The PIPCU team has been targeting suspected sellers by visiting addresses and speaking with people in connection with this crime. In Autumn 2017, Border Force officers at Tilbury intercepted a shipment of poppy merchandise intended for the UK worth in the region of £150,000.

Intellectual Property Minister Sam Gyimah said:

It is truly shocking that anyone would target and exploit one of the UK's most cherished charities and take advantage of public support for our Armed Forces community

Together we can ensure donations go to the people they are intended for, by only supporting approved merchandise. Be vigilant when you are buying your poppies this year, and look out for the Royal British Legion logo to ensure the merchandise is approved and genuine.

Claire Rowcliffe, Director of Fundraising, from The Royal British Legion said:

It is a sad fact that there are people who actively defraud the public in order to take funds intended for the support of our Armed Forces community. We would urge everyone wishing to purchase a Remembrance poppy brooch, to do so through official channels. For example, you can buy from one of our trusted volunteers, from The Royal British Legion's online Poppy Shop, or from one of our corporate partners.

Join with us, the IPO and PIPCU to help make sure your donation

doesn't line the pockets of criminals. We want to make sure that it goes to supporting those who have made such a unique contribution to our society.

Fake poppy merchandise – what to look for

The public are being asked to look out for counterfeit goods in the shape, or bearing the image of, the RBL's familiar two-petal red poppy, or Poppy Scotland's four-petal poppy in Scotland. The RBL have registered their rights for the poppy goods to prevent such counterfeiting.

To help consumers beat the fraudsters, here are the top tips to avoid buying fake poppy merchandise online:

- be a 'responsible buyer' – buy from official channels and The Royal British Legion's corporate partners
- avoid cheaper priced products. If the price is too good to be true, it usually is
- the Royal British Legion works with a number of corporate partners. Only [corporate partners](#) are authorised by the Royal British Legion to sell poppy merchandise
- if in doubt, buy through [The Royal British Legion](#) or [The Royal British Legion official eBay](#) or Amazon pages – you will be sure of the authenticity

What to do if you think you've spotted fake poppy merchandise

Call Crimestoppers on 0800 555111 or [report it online](#) if you spot anyone selling what you believe to be fake poppy products.

Notes to editor:

- the IPO is part of the Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial strategy and is responsible for the national framework of intellectual property rights, comprising patents, designs, trade marks and copyright
- the IPO's intelligence hub is recognised within the Home Office Serious & Organised Crime Strategy as the UK lead on counterfeiting and piracy
- the RBL is one of the most trusted charity brands, with the Poppy Appeal standing out as the best known national charity campaign. Their work supports not only the families of the fallen but also a new generation of veterans and service personnel
- PIPCU is a specialist national police unit dedicated to protecting the UK industries that produce legitimate, high quality, physical goods and online and digital content from intellectual property crime

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