

Press release: Relatives of Argentine soldiers killed during the Falklands War visit the Argentine cemetery at Darwin

More than 200 relatives of 90 recently identified Argentine soldiers who lost their lives in the 1982 Falkland war visited the Falkland Islands today (Monday 26 March) to visit their newly marked graves.

As part of a joint project between the UK, Falkland Islands and Argentine Governments and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), a forensic team exhumed, analysed and documented the remains in each of the unidentified graves in the Argentine cemetery at Darwin in the Falkland Islands.

Argentina's Secretary for Human Rights, Claudio Avruj, will accompany the families. Retired British Army Colonel Geoffrey Cardozo, who was responsible for burying the Argentine dead with sensitivity and respect immediately after the conflict, will also accompany the group.

Minister of State for Europe and the Americas, Sir Alan Duncan MP said:

I welcome this visit to the Argentine cemetery at Darwin by family members of the recently identified Argentine soldiers. This important humanitarian project, facilitated by the International Committee of the Red Cross, will provide some comfort to the families of the deceased. When visiting the cemetery the families will find their loved ones properly identified and in a place of great dignity.

I am grateful to the Falkland Islands Government who coordinated the visit, in cooperation with the Argentine Families Commission, and with support by the UK and Argentine Governments. It marks an important development in the UK-Argentina relationship and demonstrates what can be achieved with a positive and constructive relationship.

Notes for Editors:

- The visit will include a religious ceremony jointly conducted by Auxiliary Bishop of Buenos Aires, Bishop Eguia Segui, and the Right Reverend Abbott Hugh Allan from the United Kingdom.
- Brigadier Baz Bennett, Commander of the British Forces South Atlantic Islands, will deliver military honours for the ceremony. A Scottish Piper and a British military guard will be present.

- The DNA identification project was funded by the UK and Argentine Governments. This is a humanitarian initiative that we support in line with our wider obligations under international law.
- In the UK-Argentina Joint Communique of 13 September 2016, both countries expressed their full support for a DNA identification process in respect of unknown Argentine soldiers buried in the Falkland Islands.
- Over a seven week period (7 June – 20 August 2017), an ICRC forensic team exhumed, analysed and documented the remains of each of the unidentified soldiers. 90 Argentine soldiers were positively identified.

Further information

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[News story: Yemen needs inclusive peace talks, UK says as conflict enters its fourth year](#)

The Foreign Secretary, Boris Johnson, and International Development Secretary, Penny Mordaunt, have issued a statement on Yemen:

Today, as the Saudi-led Coalition's intervention in Yemen enters its fourth year, we call on all parties to return to the negotiating table to find an inclusive political solution that delivers the peaceful future the people of Yemen deserve.

The humanitarian crisis triggered by the conflict has left over 22 million people in need of assistance. In the last eight months alone, an additional one million people found themselves without the necessities such as food and medicines that they need to survive.

With the rainy season fast approaching, the crisis could be made even worse if there is another surge in the cholera outbreak – the number of suspected cases reported over the last year is already well over one million.

The UK has been at the forefront of the international response and is the third largest humanitarian donor to Yemen. We are delivering life-saving interventions including food for 3.4 million people, nutrition support to 1.7 million people, and clean water and sanitation for an expected 1.2 million people. UK aid is also funding a new cholera response programme that aims to vaccinate 1.1 million people against the preventable disease.

But without de-escalation and a political settlement millions of civilians risk starvation. Saudi Arabia has the right to defend itself against security threats including missiles launched from Yemen, and we support the Saudi-led Coalition's efforts to restore legitimacy in Yemen, as accepted by the UN Security Council. We have worked hard with Saudi Arabia and other international partners to strengthen the UN shipping inspection mechanism to ensure that all ports can remain open to all commercial and humanitarian supplies. All sides must redouble their support for the UN's efforts to reach an inclusive political settlement which addresses the root causes of the conflict. We welcome the appointment of the new UN Special Envoy, Martin Griffiths, who brings with him extensive experience in conflict resolution.

A UN Panel of Experts has concluded that Iran is in non-compliance with UN Security Council Resolutions for failing to take measures to prevent the supply of Iranian-made ballistic missiles to the Houthis. If Iran is genuinely committed to supporting a political solution in Yemen – as it has publicly stated – then it should stop sending in weapons which prolong the conflict, fuel regional tensions, and pose threats to international peace and security. We question why Iran is spending significant revenue in a country with which it has no real historical ties or interests, rather than using its influence to end the conflict for the good of the Yemeni people.

We call upon countries of the region and the international community to redouble their efforts in support of this goal, and for parties to the conflict to allow unhindered commercial and humanitarian access throughout Yemen, including for fuel, and for the Government of Yemen to pay public sector salaries across the country. We will continue to play our part in restoring the peace and security needed for Yemenis to resume normal lives.

Penny Mordaunt, International Development Secretary

Boris Johnson, Foreign Secretary

Press release: Government action on councils failing to plan new homes

Housing Secretary Sajid Javid has today (23 March 2018) [written to 15 local authorities](#) in England to inform them of decisions on intervention following their continued failure to produce a local plan, which are key to setting out how and where they expect to meet residents' needs for new homes, for more than a decade.

In [November 2017](#), the government confirmed it would commence the consideration of intervention in 15 local authorities where there has been a failure to produce a local plan.

Local Plans are a key part of the government's comprehensive programme of planning reform and targeted investment to ensure the homes local communities need are built.

The councils had until 31 January 2018 to explain why they hadn't yet published a plan, providing any exceptional circumstances for why the government shouldn't intervene.

Following their submission, the government is now setting out next steps.

Of the 15 local authorities:

- in Castle Point, Thanet, and Wirral, the government's Chief Planner and a team of experts will be sent in to assess if the government needs to take over the process of producing the local plan
- in Northumberland the government has instructed the council to produce their plan earlier and to make the timetable clearer
- in Basildon, Bolsover, Brentwood, Calderdale, Eastleigh, Mansfield, St Albans, which have all committed to publishing draft plans before the end of September 2018, the government has made clear it will monitor their progress and that any further significant delay to meet this timescale will lead to the case for intervention being reconsidered
- 4 local authorities – Liverpool, North East Derbyshire, Runnymede, York – have since published their plans

Housing Secretary Sajid Javid has written to them to welcome this progress, but has made clear that should there be any further significant delays to

their timetable to submit the plan, the government will not hesitate to act.

The government has abolished top-down regional planning. But a locally-led planning system requires elected local representatives to take the lead, listen to local residents and business, and set out a clear framework to build new homes, provide key infrastructure, support the local economy and protect the environment.

Most councils have seized the opportunity that localism presents – however a small minority have not and do not have a local plan in place. This can mean uncertainty for local people, have a negative impact on neighbourhood planning groups, result in piecemeal speculative housing development and communities having no plans in place for crucial local infrastructure and services.

Housing Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Whilst most councils rightly recognise their responsibilities and most have worked hard to meet the housing challenge, some have failed.

I expect those authorities we identified in November to continue to make progress. I'm also stepping it up with 3 councils in particular, sending in a team of experts to make a direct assessment, ensuring they plan properly for the future or we'll have to do it for them.

The department has also commenced preparations to take over plan production so that work can begin as soon as possible, subject to decisions taken after the Chief Planner and his experts report back.

A procurement process is currently underway to secure planning consultants and specialists who will swiftly undertake the work on plan production should these councils not comply in the time required.

The department will also make contact with county councils and combined authorities in the areas concerned about the possibility of inviting those authorities to write plans.

Further information

See the [letters sent to the relevant local authorities](#).

The [housing white paper](#) set out how the government would prioritise intervention – where:

- the least progress in plan-making has been made
- policies in plans had not been kept up to date
- there was higher housing pressure
- intervention would have the greatest impact in accelerating local plan production

The strategy also made clear that decisions on intervention will also be informed by the wider planning context in each area (specifically, the extent to which authorities are working cooperatively to put strategic plans in place, and the potential impact that not having a plan has on neighbourhood planning activity).

Planning experts – Castle Point, Thanet, and Wirral

The government's Chief Planner, Steve Quartermain CBE and a team of experts will report back to the Secretary of State who will then take a final decision on formal intervention later this year.

In addition, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will conduct formal discussions with relevant county councils and city regions to see if they could take over plan production on the Secretary of State's behalf.

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[News story: PHE publishes consultation on Nutrient Profiling Model](#)

Public Health England (PHE) has today (23 March 2018) published a [consultation on an updated Nutrient Profiling Model \(NPM\)](#), the model that differentiates which food and drink products can be advertised during programming where children make up more than a quarter of the audience.

The NPM is a tool used by the Office of Communications (Ofcom) and Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP) to give food and drink products a score. This score determines whether products can be advertised during children's television programming and non-broadcast media including print, cinema, online, and in social media. The score is based on the balance between 'negative' and 'beneficial' nutrients that make up a product. The more beneficial nutrients, such as fruit and vegetables, protein and fibre, and the fewer negative nutrients, such as sugars, saturated fat and salt, the more likely a product will be given approval to be advertised during children's programming.

As part of the government's childhood obesity plan, PHE was tasked with updating the current model to bring it in line with current UK dietary recommendations, especially around sugar and fibre.

Dr Alison Tedstone, Chief Nutritionist at PHE said:

It is important the Nutrient Profiling Model reflects the most up to date dietary recommendations in order to help support healthier food choices. We welcome comments on the modifications to the model.

Given current UK dietary recommendations advise the population to consume less sugar and more fibre, we can expect some products which currently pass the model to fail the revised version.

In this consultation, PHE is asking for views on the technical basis of bringing the draft revised version in line with current UK dietary recommendations. It does not cover the application of the NPM or further restrictions to advertising during children's programming.

The consultation opens today and closes on 15 June 2018.

Speech: Amanda Spielman speech to Annual Apprenticeships Conference

Thank you for inviting me to speak to you today.

Introduction

This is a very important conference, at a critical time for the development of apprenticeship provision. It is gratifying to see apprenticeships on the news agenda regularly: whether as mentions in Prime Minister's speeches or the subject of thoughtful newspaper columns from journalists you wouldn't normally expect to care. Apprenticeships are, quite rightly, recognised as a vital component of our education and skills sector. Less gratifying, perhaps, is that too much of this recognition is about the system, not yet, working as it should.

That's why I am so pleased to be here today. I see it as essential that providers, policy makers and employers can have open and frank discussions about what works and what needs to be improved.

It is almost a year now since the introduction of the apprenticeship levy—one of the most significant changes to apprenticeship funding that we have ever seen. Alongside the slow but inexorable move from apprenticeship frameworks to apprenticeship standards, providers and employers are working to secure the training and support that businesses need to develop a well-trained and productive workforce.

And at Ofsted, we carry on supporting the reform programme. Indeed we're putting our money where our mouth is, with our own award-winning band of 29 business administration apprentices.

Challenges

We know that it has been a challenging year for providers. The levy has required a different relationship with employers. There have been challenges in applying for, and receiving, non-levy allocations. There have also been problems getting on the Register of apprenticeship training providers. And, in too many instances, in finding a replacement standard for a framework—particularly at levels two and three.

I suspect that the fall in apprenticeship starts is due to a combination of these factors. Nevertheless, any barriers that prevent employers taking on an apprentice, or standing in the way of good providers delivering high quality training, must concern us all.

The first quarter of 2017 to 2018 saw almost 50,000 fewer starts than the same quarter in 2016 to 2017. There is no denying, that the low number of starts continues to be a concern, which is why I was heartened to see Anne

Milton's recent confidence that numbers will pick up in the new academic year. We all have to hope that this is true.

It is not just about overall volumes though. We are also experiencing some unintended consequences from the emerging trend towards higher-level apprenticeships. Of course, I understand, indeed applaud, more apprenticeships at higher levels, especially when there is clear progression in an occupation, from level 2 through to degree level. However, around 40% of the standards approved or in-development are at higher and degree levels, while only 7% of apprentices work at these levels.

This shift may be good for the economy in the long run, but the reduced number of apprenticeships at levels two and three is another destabilising factor in the system. To put it more brutally, there is a risk that young people, fresh from school, get squeezed out of apprenticeship routes because employers prioritise higher level programmes. This makes it more difficult for young people looking for entry-level employment straight from GCSEs.

In this context, I am pleased to see that the Institute for Apprenticeships is upping the rate at which it develops and approves apprenticeship standards. Up till now, this process really has been too slow. I am also pleased that there is now more flexibility to include qualifications within apprenticeship standards. I see these positive developments as a sign that the institute is listening to the concerns expressed by employers and training providers. However, I would still like to see a greater focus on achieving a set of standards that really reflect the balance of training and development needs of the economy.

Ofsted's role

With all the change, and uncertainty in the system, I am sure you want reassurance about Ofsted's agility and ability to adapt inspection to fit the new reality.

We know the challenges you face. We are working hard with you to make sure that inspection takes account of the changing landscape. But, let me be absolutely clear, we will not be excusing poor performance. Regardless of the changes that we are all dealing with: apprentices deserve high quality training at, and away from, work.

Pilot inspection findings

We have already carried out a number of pilot inspections to make sure that we are looking at the right things in this new environment. And we found a need for inspectors to focus on the bottom line, not the money, but what knowledge, skills and behaviours apprentices actually develop and acquire.

Now I hope many of you will know that one of my big interests as Chief Inspector is looking at the substance of education. By this, I mean the entirety of what is actually learnt, whether at school, college or on an apprenticeship.

As I said at the launch of my first [Annual Report](#), our early research has shown that, all too often, the knowledge that we want young people to acquire is lost in the dash for grades and stickers.

These pilot inspections of apprenticeship providers have revealed that many of the concerns we have uncovered at a school level are also evident in apprenticeships.

We are seeing an over-emphasis on simply ticking the box to show that the next part of the qualification has been achieved. There is not enough focus on the actual skills, knowledge and behaviours learned.

Indeed, most providers in our pilots found it difficult to demonstrate what actual progress their apprentices were really making. As providers, you need to consider how you make sure that apprentices are making progress. This isn't for inspectors, not for Ofsted, but for apprentices' and employers' benefit. It is also to inform the training and development programme that apprentices need to be following to pass end-point assessments.

The findings from our pilot inspections are informing changes to the inspection handbook. We will carry on iterating and adapting these as the systems develop.

Inspections of apprenticeships

More broadly, we are now developing our new education inspection framework for September 2019. How we inspect and report on apprenticeships are important considerations in our thinking and planning for this new framework. What we learn on inspections now, and what we learn from our work with organisations like AELP, the British Chambers of Commerce and the CBI, will inform our development. And of course, we will consult on our proposals.

But the changes in the system aren't just about new frameworks and new ways of inspecting. I know that many of you have concerns about the number of untested providers entering the market and the effect this could have on quality. Well, rest assured, we are not standing idly by and waiting for new providers to fail. We are doing all that we can to make sure that no apprentice's future opportunity is ruined by poor provision. It is essential that poor quality provision is spotted and tackled quickly, so that it doesn't damage an individual's prospects or the overall apprenticeship brand.

We have already begun a series of early monitoring visits to assess the quality of these new providers. Some of you will have heard about our first monitoring visits, which hit the headlines, at least in the trade press, last week. There is no hiding the fact that what we found at Key6 Group was worrying. And I'm very pleased that there has been a prompt reaction by ESFA [Education and Skills Funding Agency].

But, it is important that we don't over-interpret this one result as a judgement on all new providers coming on stream with the levy. We are doing more monitoring visits of this type. And I very much hope that positive results will significantly outnumber the disappointments.

Besides these monitoring visits to new providers, we have increased our inspection focus on subcontractors, many of whom are providing apprenticeship training. We are doing this in two ways. Firstly, as part of our standard inspections, where providers have a significant proportion of subcontracted provision, we are increasing our focus on this part. This will mean that teams can evaluate and report, in more detail, on the quality of education and training in individual subcontractors.

In addition, we are making monitoring visits to a number of directly-funded providers to look specifically at subcontracted provision. This way, we can make sure that apprentices are getting the best possible training. We expect the first of these to be published in the next couple of weeks.

Our message here is simple. As the direct contract holder, you are responsible for your learners. If you subcontract, for whatever reason, you are still responsible for making sure your apprentice gets high quality training. If you are sitting back and collecting the money, without taking proper responsibility for quality, you are failing your apprentices. We are determined to expose this in the system.

And, just in case, any of you were being kind enough to worry about us, and whether Ofsted has the resources to deliver this increased volume of inspection, please don't worry: we are being equally robust in our approach to government for funding. Indeed the DfE has already acknowledged that it needs to fund us properly for this work.

Standards

With the experience of Learndirect still prominent in all of our minds, I have no doubt that you are all acutely aware of the risks when large sums of money flow into a system.

It is sobering, in that respect, to look at recent inspection outcomes. Between September 2017 and February 2018, we made a judgement on the apprenticeship provision at 55 providers. We found three-fifths of them to be good or outstanding, with 16 requiring improvement. Six were inadequate. This means that 4 in 10 providers did not offer high quality training for apprentices. There is no way of dressing this up – it is not good enough.

But looking at it another way, the good and outstanding providers were generally the larger ones, so 33,000 apprentices were in good or outstanding provision – almost 80% of the overall places. And this is a lot higher than the provision looked at in the previous year. Then, only 60% of apprentices were being trained in providers of the same quality, we have excluded Learndirect from those figures. To be clear, it is not a perfect year-on-year comparison because inspection priorities and scheduling decisions affect which providers are selected for inspection. However, I do believe the figures are cause for optimism about quality in the sector.

So, while we rightly shine a light on concerns in the system, and I do have to talk about where things are going wrong. I also believe it is important to celebrate where things are going well. We see outstanding apprenticeship

providers like National Grid and Craven College and Fareham College. There we see leaders and managers who work very closely with local employers to make sure that apprenticeships meet the needs of the local economy. They expect the best of their apprentices who show exemplary skills, getting the qualifications and competencies they need.

And whether it's TTE Training with 160 engineering apprentices on various pathways, Busy Bees Nurseries and its range of early years apprenticeships or CITB supporting 10,000 apprentices in the construction industry—these very different types of outstanding provider are similar in one thing: the determination to give their apprentices top-notch training and to set them on a path to a successful and fulfilling career.

Conclusion

So, to conclude, we cannot escape the fact that this is a testing time for apprenticeships, a period of significant change that has inevitably brought a level of uncertainty alongside great opportunity.

There is still a way to go before we can confidently declare the new approach a success, but it is possible to see it beginning to take shape.

My inspectors are seeing some excellent provision around the country, but not enough of it and we need to see more. The sector is adapting confidently to change, but we need to make sure that the pace doesn't slacken.

Ofsted's overarching goal, as set out in our corporate strategy, is to be a force for improvement in all the sectors we inspect and regulate. This is as relevant for apprenticeship provision as it is for schools or child protection. Through our work, we will provide the evidence of what is working and the early warning of where things are going wrong. For a system in the midst of change, this could not be more vital.

After all, success of this ambitious apprenticeship programme is essential, not only to the needs of our wider economy, but for the young people and adult learners so desperate for the right opportunity to prosper.

I know all of you in this room are working hard to ensure this success. I am delighted to be joining all the winners of the inaugural AAC apprenticeship awards at tonight's ceremony in recognition of that commitment.

Thank you.