

[News story: Justice Secretary visits frontline staff in Bristol delivering key prison and court reform work](#)

Justice Secretary Elizabeth Truss today (3 February 2017) paid tribute to the vital work of staff across our justice system as she met with teams at HMP Bristol and the Bristol Civil and Family Justice Centre to hear about their experiences.

The visit comes after the Justice Secretary announced a major package of reforms to improve safety in prisons – including an additional £100 million to bolster frontline staff by 2,500 with almost £460,000 allocated to HMP Bristol. This is in addition to our £1 billion investment to improve access to justice and the experience for all court users, in particular vulnerable victims, witnesses and children.

HMP Bristol is already making improvements to safety and security thanks to over £400,000 funding for the prison. This includes extra money to roll out CCTV across the prison in order to deter violence, as well as introducing a number of interventions for emotional support such as anger management.

Today the Secretary of State sat down with the Governor and prison officers at HMP Bristol to hear first-hand the challenges they face and how the reforms and increased investment is helping.

Speaking after the visit, Elizabeth Truss said:

Our prisons need to be places of safety and reform and our dedicated frontline staff are vital to achieving this ambition.

The impressive work being done day in day out by the HMP Bristol officers I met today is too often unnoticed, but it is crucial to reducing reoffending and improving public safety. I will continue to listen to them and all prison staff as we deliver on our important reforms.

Later at Bristol Civil and Family Justice Centre Ms Truss met with senior judges and frontline staff to see some of the impressive work being delivered to digitise our courts and speed up the delivery of justice. This includes increasing the use of video links – cutting the need for time-pressed people to travel back and forth to court buildings – and developing plans for simple, online systems so civil disputes can be resolved more quickly.

The visit also follows urgent steps taken by Ministers to ban perpetrators of domestic abuse from cross-examining their victims within the family court system.

Elizabeth Truss said:

We have a world leading legal system but I am committed to modernising our courts to make the experience more straightforward for all users.

It is vital that justice is efficient and simple, and the impressive work being done by the dedicated court staff I met today shows how we can make the best use of technology and simplify processes to improve access to justice and the experience for all court users.

Press release: Planned roadworks in West Midlands: weekly summary for Monday 6 February to Sunday 12 February 2017

The following summary of planned new and ongoing road improvements over the coming week is correct as of 3 February 2017 but could be subject to change due to weather conditions or unforeseen circumstances. All our improvement work is carried out with the aim of causing as little disruption as possible.

A38 – Alrewas to Cappers Lane and associated slip roads: carriageway repairs

Southbound carriageway and associated slip road closed overnight between 8pm and 6am from 6 February until 8 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A38M – M6 links from out of city A38M: carriageway repairs

Links from out of city A38M will be closed overnight between 9pm and 6am from 9 February until 12 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A38M – M6 links to intercity A38M: maintenance scheme

Links to intercity A38M will be closed overnight between 8pm and 6am from 6 February until 11 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A449 – Gailey roundabout to Brewood Road: carriageway repairs

Southbound carriageway will be closed for 24 hours from 8pm 10 February until 6am 13 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A449 – Gailey roundabout to Brewood Road: carriageway repairs

Northbound carriageway will be closed overnight between 8pm and 6am from 6 February until 12 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A456 – M5 junction 3 gyratory: carriageway repairs

The Gyratory will be closed overnight between 8pm and 6am from 6 February until 12 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A46 –A46/A452 slip road: carriageway works

Eastbound entry slip road will be closed overnight between 9.30pm and 6am from 7 February until 9 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A46 Sedgeberrow to Evesham: drainage works

Carriageway will be closed in both directions overnight between 9pm and 6am from 6 February until 12 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A46 – Oversley to Shottery: carriageway repairs

Carriageway will be closed in both directions overnight between 8pm and 6am from 6 February until 12 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A5 – Gledrid roundabout and all approaches: widening scheme

Roundabout and associated approaches will be closed overnight between 9pm and 6am from 6 February until 12 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A5 – Wall Island to Muckley Corner: carriageway resurfacing

Westbound carriageway will be closed overnight between 7pm and 6.30am from 8 February until 12 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A5 – Chase Road to Rising Sun island: carriageway resurfacing

Westbound Carriageway including a partial closure of the Rising Sun island will be closed overnight for one night from 9pm 7 February until 6am the following morning (8 February). A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A5 – Holy Lane to Spon Lane Including the turning to Whittington: carriageway repairs

Carriageway will be closed in both directions overnight for one night from 9pm 6 February until 6am the following morning (7 February). A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A483 – Welsh border to A5 Mile End: electrical works

Carriageway will be closed in both directions overnight between 8pm and 6am from 6 February until 11 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A50 – Meir Tunnel to Stanley Matthews Way: carriageway repairs

Westbound carriageway will be closed overnight between 8pm and 6am from 6 February until 12 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A50 – Heron Cross to Meir Tunnel: carriageway repairs

Eastbound carriageway including associated slip roads will be closed overnight between 8pm and 6am from 6 February until 12 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A50 – Meir Tunnel to Alhambra Interchange: carriageway repairs

Westbound carriageway including associated slip roads will be closed overnight between 8pm and 6am from 6 February until 12 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A50 – Meir Interchange exit slip road to Catchems Corner: carriageway repairs

Eastbound Carriageway including associated slip roads will be closed overnight between 8pm and 6am from 6 February until 12 February. A diversion

route will be clearly signposted.

A50 – Heron Cross exit slip road to Foley Road: carriageway repairs

Eastbound carriageway including associated slip roads will be closed overnight between 8pm and 6am from 6 February until 12 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A50 – Foley Road exit slip road to Trentham Road exit slip road to Foley Road: carriageway repairs

Eastbound carriageway including associated slip roads will be closed overnight between 8pm and 6am from 6th February until 12th February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A50 – Blythe Bridge entry slip road to Meir Tunnel: carriageway repairs

Westbound carriageway including associated slip roads will be closed overnight between 8pm and 6am from 6 February until 12 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A50 – Heron Cross to Stanley Matthews including Blurton entry slip road: carriageway repairs

The Westbound carriageway including the associated slip Roads will be closed for 24 hours from 6am 6th February until 8pm 12th February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A50 – Blurton Road entry slip road: carriageway repairs

Westbound entry slip road will be closed for 24 hours from 6 February until 12 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A500 – Talke junction gyratory: carriageway repairs

Eastside of the gyratory will be closed for 24 hours from 6 February until 12 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A5127 – Gravelly Hill merge onto A38M: carriageway repairs

Carriageway will be closed overnight from 9pm 6 February until 6am 12 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M40 – junction 16 link to M42 junction 3a: carriageway repairs

Northbound link road will be closed overnight between 9pm and 6am from 6 February until 8 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M40 – M42 junction 3a Link to M40 Junction 16: carriageway works

Southbound link road will be closed overnight for one night from 9pm 7 February until 6am the following morning (8 February) A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M42 – junction 4 entry slip road: carriageway works

Northbound slip road will be closed overnight between 10pm and 6am from 7 February until 12 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M42 – junction 5 exit slip road: carriageway works

Northbound slip road will be closed overnight between 10pm and 6am from 7 February until 12 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M42 – junction 3 exit slip road: carriageway works

Southbound slip road will be closed for one night from 9pm 7 February until 6am the following morning (8 February). A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M42 – junction 4 exit slip road: carriageway works

Northbound slip road closed overnight between 10pm and 6am from 6 February until 9 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M5 – junctions 4a to 5: major scheme works

Southbound carriageway will be closed between 8pm and 6am from 6 February until 10 February and again on 12 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M5 – junctions 5 to 6: major scheme works

Southbound carriageway including southbound entry slip at junction 5 closed between 8pm and 6am from 6 February until 10 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M5 – junctions 5 to 4a: major scheme works

Northbound carriageway including northbound entry slip at junction 5 closed between 8pm and 6am from 7 February until 10 February and again on 12 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A46 – Coventry Eastern Bypass

Northbound carriageway closed between 8pm and 6am on 7 February and southbound carriageway closed at the same time on 8 and 9 and 11 and 12 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

A45 – Stonebridge Highway

Eastbound carriageway closed between 8pm and 6am from 10 to 12 February.

M54 – junction 5 to junction 6: carriageway repairs

Westbound carriageway will be closed overnight between 8pm and 6am from 6 February until 12 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M54 – junction 3 to junction 4 including junction 3 entry slip road: drainage works

Westbound carriageway including the entry slip road will be closed overnight between 10pm and 6am from 9 February until 11 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M54 – junction 4 to junction 3 including junction 4 entry slip road: drainage works

Eastbound carriageway including the entry slip road will be closed overnight between 10pm and 6am from 6 February until 9 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M6 – junction 6 Salford Circus to M6: carriageway works

Carriageway will be closed overnight in both directions between 9pm and 6am from 6 February until 12 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M6 – junction 2 entry slip road: carriageway works

Southbound entry slip road will be closed overnight for one night from 9pm 5 February until 6am the following morning (6 February). A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M6 – Hilton Park services exit slip road: carriageway works

Northbound exit slip road will be closed overnight between 9pm and 6am from 6 February until 11 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M6 – Hilton Park Services exit and entry slip road: carriageway works

Southbound exit and entry slip roads will be closed overnight between 9pm and 6am from 6 February until 12 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M6 – junction 15 to junction 16 including junction 15 entry slip road: carriageway works

Northbound carriageway and entry slip road will be closed overnight between 10pm and 6am from 8 February until 10 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M6 – junction 6 exit slip road: carriageway works

Southbound exit slip road will be closed overnight between 9pm and 6am from 6 February until 12 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M6 – junction 14 to junction 15 including junction 14 entry slip road: carriageway works

Northbound carriageway and entry slip road will be closed overnight for one night from 10pm 10 February until 6am the following morning. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M6 – junction 13 to junction 12: carriageway works

The Southbound carriageway will be closed overnight between 10pm and 6am from 7th February until 9th February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M6 – junction 16 to junction 15 including junction 16 entry slip road: carriageway works

Southbound carriageway and entry slip road will be closed overnight between 10pm and 6am from 6th February until 8th February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M6 – junction 6 exit slip road: carriageway works

Northbound exit slip road will be closed overnight between 9pm and 6am from 6 February until 12 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M6 – junction 6 slip road: carriageway works

North and southbound entry and exit slip road will be closed for 24 hours from 9pm 6 February until 6am 12 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M6 – junction 15 to junction 16 including junction 15 entry slip road: carriageway works

Northbound carriageway and entry slip road will be closed overnight between 8pm and 6am from 6 February until 11 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M6 – junction 8 to M5 junction 1 link road (Western Arm): carriageway works

Southbound link road will be closed overnight between 8pm and 6am from 6 February until 12 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

M69 – junction 1 to M6 junction 2 link road: carriageway works

Northbound link road will be closed overnight between 9pm and 6am from 6 February until 8 February. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

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[News story: Chris Skidmore meets with](#)

students to encourage democratic participation in the West Midlands

Minister for the Constitution Chris Skidmore met with students from Q3 Academy Great Barr today to discuss ways of increasing voter registration in the lead up to the election for the first mayor of the West Midlands.

In addition to raising awareness about registering to vote, the visit explored the particular experiences of students living in the West Midlands and the challenges they may encounter.

Chris Skidmore, Minister for the Constitution, said:

Today's visit will help this government better understand the experiences of young people, so that we can deliver a democracy that truly works for everyone. The students at Great Barr showed real enthusiasm for ensuring that their voices are heard, and debated a number of ideas about how to promote the importance of democratic participation among their peers.

This is particularly meaningful in the lead up to the election for the first mayor of the West Midlands. Regardless of who you are, every voice matters and we encourage you to register to vote in what will be a significant moment for your area.

Mr Mark Arnull, Head of School at Q3 Academy Great Barr, said:

We are delighted to welcome Mr Chris Skidmore MP to Q3 Academy Great Barr today to promote greater voter registration, especially in the preparation of the election of the first Mayor of West Midlands.

The more we engage in the democratic process the better we can strengthen British Values and democracy. At Q3 Academy young people's voices are heard and they need to be fully represented at the political level too.

The minister is visiting the West Midlands as part of his Every Voice Matters Tour. The tour will see him visit every part of the country to understand how to tackle barriers to voter registration.

As part of his trip to the West Midlands, the minister also visited Aston University, where he presented the royal warrant for the Regius Professorship for research in Pharmacy.

[Press release: Planned roadworks in Central Southern England: weekly summary for Monday 6 February to Sunday 12 February 2017](#)

The following summary of planned new and ongoing road improvements over the coming week is correct as of 3 February but could be subject to change due to weather conditions or unforeseen circumstances. All our improvement work is carried out with the aim of causing as little disruption as possible.

M3 junctions 2 (M25) to 4a Farnborough, Hampshire: Smart motorway improvement

Work to reduce congestion and improve journey times continues this week with narrow lanes a 50mph speed limit in place on both carriageways between junctions 2 and 4a, with a free recovery service operating 24 hours a day.

For further details, [visit the scheme website](#).

M3 junction 8 Popham, Hampshire: bridge strengthening

Work to maintain journeys by undertaking bridge bearing and support replacement continues this week. Narrow lanes and a 50mph speed restriction are in place on the link from the M3 southbound to the A303 westbound 24 hours a day until May.

M3 junctions 9 to 11 Winchester, Hampshire: signs

Work to keep road users informed by maintaining the signage along the M3 starts this week. Lane closures will be in place on both the north and southbound carriageways overnight, between 9pm and 6am, from Monday 6 February for 5 nights.

M3 junction 11 Winchester, Hampshire: safety barrier

Work to improve safety by carrying out repairs to the barrier along the southbound slip road continues this week. Lane closures will be in place on the southbound carriageway overnight, between 10pm and 6am, until Friday 24 February (Monday to Friday only).

M4 junction 5 Slough, Berkshire: drainage

Work to ensure road user safety by maintaining the drainage asset at the junction takes place this week. The westbound exit and entry slip roads at the junction will be closed overnight, between 9pm and 6am, on Friday 10 February. Clearly signed diversions will be in place via the adjacent junctions.

M4 junction 7 Maidenhead, Berkshire: drainage

Work to maintain road user safety by carrying out drainage maintenance along the Huntercombe Spur takes place this week. A lane closure will be in place on the southbound carriageway from Huntercombe roundabout towards junction 7 overnight, between 9pm and 6am, on Tuesday 7 February.

M4 junction 8/9 Maidenhead, Berkshire: drainage

Work to ensure road user safety by maintaining the drainage asset at the junction takes place this week. The westbound exit and entry slip roads at the junction will be closed overnight, between 9pm and 6am, from Monday 6 February for 4 nights. Clearly signed diversions will be in place via the adjacent junctions.

M4 junction 10 Wokingham, Berkshire: bridge reconstruction

Work to refurbish the bridge which carries the link roads over the M4 continues this week. Narrow lanes and a 40mph speed limit are in place on the slip roads and a 50mph speed limit is in place on the M4 carriageway until November 2017.

The slip road from the M4 westbound carriageway to the A329(M) Reading bound carriageway will be closed overnight, between 9pm and 5am, on Monday 6 and Tuesday 7 February. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via junction 11 and return.

M4 junctions 11 to 12 Reading, Berkshire: resurfacing and bridge joint

Work to improve journeys by replacing a bridge joint and resurfacing a section of the M4 westbound carriageway between Moto services and junction 12 starts this week. The westbound carriageway will be fully closed overnight, between 10pm and 6am, from Monday 6 February for 9 nights (Monday to Friday only). A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A33 and A4.

M4 junctions 13 Chieveley to 12 Reading, Berkshire:

resurfacing

Work to improve journeys by resurfacing sections of the M4 continues this week. The eastbound carriageway will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 6am, until Tuesday 7 February. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A4.

In addition, lane closures will be in place on both carriageways overnight, between 10pm and 6am, from Wednesday 8 February for 8 nights (Monday to Friday only).

M27 junction 1 Cadnam, Hampshire: drainage

Work to maintain road user safety by carrying out drainage maintenance at the junction takes place this week. Lane closures will be in place on all approaches to the roundabout overnight, between 9pm and 6am, until Friday 10 February.

M27 junctions 3 Southampton to 2 Ower, Hampshire: resurfacing

Work to improve journeys by resurfacing the M27 westbound carriageway starts this week. The westbound exit and entry slip roads at junction 3 will be closed with traffic running in lane 3 only overnight, between 9pm and 6am, from Wednesday 8 February for 8 nights (Monday to Friday only). Clearly signed diversions will be in place via the adjacent junctions.

M27 junction 3 Southampton, Hampshire: street lighting

Work to maintain road user safety by replacing damaged parts on selected lighting columns takes place this week. Lane closures will be in place on all approaches to the junction and on the roundabout overnight, between 10pm and 5am, on Monday 6 February.

M27 junctions 9 Whiteley to 8 Bursledon, Hampshire: resurfacing

Work to improve journeys by resurfacing the M27 between Bursledon and Whiteley continues this week. The M27 westbound carriageway will be closed from junction 9 to junction 8 overnight, between 10pm and 6am, until Wednesday 22 February (Monday to Friday only). A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A3051 Botley Road, Curdrige, A334 through Botley and Hedge End, re-joining the M27 at junction 7.

M27 junctions 11 to 12 Portsmouth, Hampshire:

resurfacing

Work to improve journeys by resurfacing a section of the M27 eastbound carriageway near Port Solent finishes week. The M27 eastbound carriageway from junction 11 to the A27 Eastern Road junction, and the M275 northbound link to the A27 eastbound carriageway will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 6am, until Friday 10 February (Monday to Friday only).

Clearly signed diversions will be in place via the A27 for M27 traffic and the A3 Northern Parade for M275 traffic.

A3 Petersfield, Hampshire: drainage

Work to maintain road user safety by carrying out drainage maintenance at the A272 Sheet Link/Midhurst junction takes place this week. The southbound entry slip road and the northbound exit slip road will be closed overnight, between 9pm and 6am, on Monday 6 February. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the Liss junction.

A27 Hilsea to Bedhampton, Hampshire: safety barrier

Work to improve safety by carrying out repairs to the barrier along the A27 central reserve finishes this week. Lane closures will be in place on the east and westbound carriageways overnight, between 9pm and 6am, until Friday 10 February.

A31 Ameysford, Dorset: resurfacing

Work to improve journeys by resurfacing the Ameysford Roundabout starts this week. The A31 east and westbound carriageways between the Canford Bottom junction and Palmersford Roundabout will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 6am, from Monday 6 February for three nights (Monday to Friday only). A clearly signed diversion will be in place via Wimborne Road East.

A31 Wimborne Minster, Dorset: surveys

Work to improve journeys by carrying out drainage surveys along the A31 takes place this week. Temporary traffic lights will be in place near Lake Gates overnight, between 9pm and 6am, on Friday 10 February.

A34 Bullington Cross to Sutton Scotney, Hampshire: resurfacing

Work to improve road user's journeys by resurfacing a section of the A34 southbound carriageway finishes this week. The A34 southbound carriageway will be closed from the A303 (Bullington Cross) to the A272 (Three Maids Hill) overnight, between 10pm and 6am, until Friday 10 February. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A303 eastbound carriageway, then south on the A33 Basingstoke Road.

A34 Speen, West Berkshire: resurfacing

Work to improve road user's journeys by resurfacing the northbound slip roads at the A4 Speen junction takes place this week. The northbound exit and entry slip roads will be closed overnight, between 9pm and 6am, from Monday 6 February for 5 nights. Clearly signed diversions will be in place via the adjacent junctions.

A34 Oxford, Oxfordshire: resurfacing and street lighting

Work to improve road user's journeys by resurfacing the A34 northbound carriageway around Oxford finishes this week. The A34 northbound carriageway will be closed from the Hinksey Hill Interchange to the Botley Interchange overnight, between 10pm and 6am, until Friday 10 February. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the Oxford ring-road (A4142 Eastern-by-Pass, A40 Northern-by-Pass and A44).

Work to maintain road user safety by replacing damaged parts on selected lighting continues this week. The southbound exit slip road at the A44 Peartree Interchange will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 5am, until Friday 10 February. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the Botley Interchange. In addition, lane closures are in place at the A44 Peartree Interchange overnight, between 10pm and 5am, until Friday 17 February (Monday to Friday only).

A404 / M40 junction 4 High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire: street lighting

Work to maintain road user safety by replacing damaged parts on selected lighting columns takes place this week. Lane closures will be in place on all approaches to the junction and on the roundabout overnight, between 10pm and 5am, on Friday 10 February.

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Speech: “Russian words are not the same as Russian deeds.”

Thank you Mr President – and let me take this opportunity to welcome you in open session to your role as President of the Security Council for the month of February. I commend you for the start that you have made and I support your proposal for a Presidential statement on this important issue.

As our briefers have made clear, we begin your Presidency, sadly, in troubling times for Eastern Ukraine.

The worrying upsurge in fighting in that part of your country should concern us all. It is claiming yet more lives, both civilian and military. It is aggravating the suffering of those living there, forcing more to flee their homes. There is no end in sight.

In cities like Avdiivka, people talk of an endless salvo of artillery and rockets. They talk of failing electricity and falling temperatures, of burying loved ones in the snow.

These events have not come out of the blue, they are not new. This Council knows all too well the root causes of this violence and instability.

This is what happens when Russia disregards Ukraine’s sovereign right to choose its own destiny. This is what happens when Russia undermines Ukraine’s territorial integrity by illegally annexing Crimea. This is what happens when Russian military personnel stand side by side with separatists that they have equipped, armed and trained.

And this is a reality that the Security Council cannot, must not accept. We need urgent action to bring an end to this upsurge in violence before it spirals out of control.

I want to pay tribute to the efforts of the OSCE and the Joint Centre for Control and Coordination to bring about a truce to allow crucial repairs. These will help restore vital utilities and allow for the evacuation of civilians. I urge all parties to support these efforts and facilitate access to the area for humanitarian actors.

But such actions are just a band-aid on a bullet wound. For any fragile, short-term truce to become a comprehensive and sustained ceasefire, all parties must show restraint. This means, in particular, ending the extensive use of high calibre, indiscriminate weapons such as GRAD rocket systems. The use of these weapons from, and against, civilian areas is not only in disregard of the Minsk agreement, it is also an abhorrent rejection of the norms of conflict. They must be withdrawn from the line of contact as stipulated in the Minsk agreement.

We also need to tackle the underlying causes of the fighting. It is clear that any solution to the Ukraine crisis must be political not military, as we

all recognised in Security Council Resolution 2202. The Minsk agreements are the only meaningful path to long-term peace in Ukraine.

So let us urge all sides to recommit to meeting their full obligations under Minsk. We support the continued efforts of France and Germany within the Normandy format towards securing full implementation and we are extremely grateful for the enormous investment that they have made in the process to date.

Mr President, let me close with this final thought.

We frequently hear from the Russian Government, as we did today, that all the problems in eastern Ukraine are the consequence of actions by the Ukrainian Government. This is simply not the case. It is an inversion of reality. The responsibility of the inception and continuation of the conflict in eastern Ukraine lies squarely with Russia and the separatists it supports.

As the British Prime Minister made clear in Washington last week, the United Kingdom will continue to stand by Ukraine in full support of its sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The international community, most recently through the UN General Assembly's resolution on Crimea in December, sent the same clear message to Russia. And earlier this week, this whole Security Council, including Russia, expressed the very same thing in an agreed statement – that we support Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

But, Mr President, Russian words are not the same as Russian deeds.

We need to see Russia comply with its Minsk commitments. We need to see Russia stop equipping and arming the separatists, and instead use its influence to make sure the separatists meet their Minsk obligations.

And we need to see Russia withdrawing its forces from all of Ukraine. This includes Crimea – the illegal annexation of which we do not and will not recognise. Sanctions against Russia cannot be lifted until this happens.

It's for the people of Ukraine to decide their country's future. Ukraine must be allowed to make its own sovereign decisions.

Thank you.