

## **Speech: British High Commissioner comments on media shutdown and opposition 'swearing in' in Kenya**

I have made clear, as have many international friends of Kenya for some time, that what we would like to see is a full, transparent, open dialogue between politicians and between others – business leaders, religious leaders, civil society – designed to heal some of the very deep divisions that were clearly exposed during the election campaign.

I do not believe that any parallel inauguration helps to create such a dialogue, I think that the UK has been very clear that our support is for the constitution and for the law, and that those acting outside those things should not be doing so, but should be acting in the spirit of promoting dialogue.

I will continue to call on both sides, and indeed on Kenyans of good will from all parts of the country, to find ways of talking to each other about how the institutions of the country can be strengthened and about how everybody can feel included in the future of the country. That is an exercise for Kenyans to lead, but I stand ready to support that as I know do my international friends.

On the question of the media, I would just say that one of the strongest things about this country, one of the reasons that so many investors are headquartered here, that so many people come here, that this country's capital is seen as the hub of the region and one of the hubs of the continent, is because of the open, democratic, free media; that sense that means people from country's like mine feel at home, that sense that people can have open debates in public.

I would urge the government, as I have done, to allow the media to operate freely, not simply because it's the right thing to do, but because it contributes very strongly to the positive image that Kenya has in the world.

[Watch the British High Commissioner speak to the Kenyan press](#)

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## **Press release: Welsh Secretary calls on Welsh Government to take further**

## steps to drive up animal welfare standards

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns is calling on Welsh Ministers in Cardiff Bay to follow Westminster's lead and explore the potential of implementing a ban on third party puppy sales in Wales.

It comes as the UK Government today (8 Feb) launches a call for evidence in England, seeking views on a possible ban on third party sales, which would mean anyone looking to buy or adopt a dog will either deal directly with the breeder or with one of the nation's many animal rehousing centres.

It forms part of a package of reforms implemented by the UK Government designed to drive up welfare standards.

### **Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns said:**

Wales is a nation of animal lovers and it is vital that we maintain the highest standards of animal welfare. The UK Government is serious about improving welfare in breeding establishments and at the point of sale to ensure our much loved pets get the right start in life.

The call for evidence launched today marks a further step in the UK Government's aim to raise the bar standards in England. I would encourage the Welsh Government to carefully consider the evidence that is submitted and to explore the potential of implementing the same measures in Wales.

Launching the call for evidence on a ban in England, UK Government Environment Secretary Michael Gove invited all interested parties to share their views by 2 May 2018 on how this could best be introduced.

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## News story: Enforcement Undertakings accepted from United Utilities

United Utilities have paid £155,000 to environmental charities as part of two Enforcement Undertakings (EUs). The EUs were offered to the Environment Agency after the company admitted causing sewage to pollute two watercourses in the summer of 2016.

EUs are a new kind of restorative enforcement sanction. Polluters can make an offer to the Environment Agency to pay for or carry out environmental improvements as an alternative to any other enforcement action and the Environment Agency decides whether this is acceptable.

In July 2016, a blockage in a sewage detention tank in Whaley Bridge, Derbyshire, caused sewage to overflow to the River Goyt, resulting in discoloration to the river downstream to New Mills, and sewage fungus being deposited on the river bed for at least a kilometre. Although no fish were found to have been killed, there was a short-term but significant impact on invertebrate life and the river habitat, in which fish such as trout and bullhead normally thrive.

In August 2016, a blockage in a sewer in Millbrook, Tameside, caused an overflow through a dislodged hatch cover, resulting in a similar impact on a shorter stretch of Swineshaw Brook which runs to the River Tame.

The EU offers were accepted by the Environment Agency in October 2017 and were completed in January 2018. United Utilities made a total of £155,000 in donations to the Wild Trout Trust, the Ramblers Association and the Healthy Rivers Trust. This money will be used to fund environmental improvements and research in the affected catchments and to restore endangered footpaths.

The company also spent a further £10,000 removing rubbish from Swineshaw Brook and also paid the Environment Agency's incident response and investigation costs in full. In response to both incidents United Utilities had acted quickly to stop the pollution and resolve the cause. As part of the EUs the company also committed to improving their infrastructure and asset maintenance schedules in order to reduce the likelihood of this happening again.

Mike Higgins, an Environment Officer with the Environment Agency, said:

Enforcement Undertakings allow polluters to positively address and restore the harm caused to the environment and prevent repeat incidents.

They offer quicker and more directly beneficial resolution than a court prosecution and help offenders who are prepared to take responsibility for their actions to voluntarily make things right. We will continue to seek prosecutions against those who cause severe pollution or who act deliberately or recklessly.

Please report any environmental issues to the Environment Agency's 24 hour Incident Hotline on 0800 80 70 60.

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# News story: London school helps to shape Relationships and Sex education

The City of London Academy in Southwark has been participating in the Department for Education's call for evidence, asking parents, teachers and young people to help shape the new Relationships and Sex education curriculum. Staff and pupils at the school have engaged with age-appropriate content such as mental wellbeing and staying safe online.

School Standards Minister Nick Gibb met with teachers and pupils to discuss why the lessons are important and to hear their views on these issues. These steps will help to set guidance for all schools on how to teach these subjects so that it helps young people face the challenges of the modern world.

Academic standards are rising in England, with around 390,000 more London pupils in schools rated good or outstanding than in 2010 and 93 per cent of London schools given this rating at their last inspection.

Making sure young people have the knowledge they need to stay safe and develop healthy relationships is part of the government's drive to raise education standards even further.

Schools Standards Minister Nick Gibb said:

It has been a pleasure to meet the teachers at the City of London Academy and to talk to the pupils benefitting from an education that teaches them the importance of healthy and stable relationships.

There are 1.9 million more children in good or outstanding schools than in 2010 and across the country, schools like the City of London Academy, with 64 per cent of pupils being entered for the EBacc, are raising standards for pupils.

We want to continue to raise the bar and that's why we have committed to update relationships and sex education to meet the needs of young people today. Our call for evidence closes next week and we want as many people as possible to have their say on what the new curriculum should include.

The current statutory guidance for teaching Relationships and Sex education was introduced in 2000. It fails to address risks to children which have grown in prevalence in recent years, including online pornography, sexting and staying safe online. The guidance is being updated after legislation was passed by Parliament earlier this year to make relationships education compulsory in all primary schools and Relationships and Sex education compulsory in all secondary schools.

The eight-week 'call for evidence' has been gathering views from people across England from all backgrounds on the content of this subject. It will establish:

- how parents expect their children to be taught this topic in a safe and age-appropriate way; and
- what teachers think they should be teaching their pupils to help them navigate the modern world they are growing up in;
- what children themselves think they would benefit from understanding the most, and the online risks they are concerned with.

Head of the School Dr Jeffery Quaye said:

I welcome the Department of Education's decision to make Relationship and Sex Education as statutory requirement for schools from 2019/2020. Here at City of London Academy Southwark, we observed that by placing more emphasis on relationship instead of the mechanics of reproduction, we have raised students' awareness of sexting and sexual harassment. Also, our students have developed better understanding of the benefits of healthy relationships, staying safe online and managing emotions. Through balanced curriculum changes and a new framework of teaching students, we have seen noticeable evidence of mutual respect, empathy, self-confidence and wellbeing enhanced amongst our students.

Year 11 pupil, Keana Nicholas Pipe said:

I think learning PSHE is important to help students know what to do if they find themselves in any difficult situations. I think it's important to learn about consent because and through the classes I now feel more confident. I know who to ask for advice and how to make an informed choice.

The move to make Relationships and Sex education compulsory was welcomed by the teaching profession and organisations such as Barnardo's, Stonewall, the Catholic Education Service, NSPCC, Terrence Higgins Trust and the End Violence Against Women coalition.

Teachers, parents and young people are invited to have their say on relationship education in schools [here](#)

The call for evidence closes on Monday 12 February.

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# **Press release: Committee welcomes report of the Cross-Party Working Group on an Independent Complaints and Grievance Policy**

This is a strong, cross-party set of proposals from the working group, which offer a standard of protection and independent support in line with those that the best employers offer their staff.

We welcome the strengthening of the roles of the independent Parliamentary Commissioners for Standards and House Committees, and, for the first time, a shared and binding behaviour code.

For these proposals to fully address unacceptable behaviour, they must be rooted in the leadership, culture and practice of the House. This report is an important and welcome first step.