

## Speech: PM's speech at Downing Street reception to celebrate the legacy of Jo Cox: 17 January 2018

Thank you, thank you very much for those excellent words, Seema, and good afternoon, everyone. It's an honour to have you all here today as we remember the life of a remarkable woman and thank those who are continuing the work that meant so much to her. And I'd like to give a very special welcome to Jo's immediate family. Her husband, Brendan, who has been an inspiration to so many over the past year and a half. Her wonderful children, Cuillin and Lejla; her proud parents, Jean and Gordon; Brendan's parents, Sheila and Gordon; and Jo's beloved little sister, Kim. Kim once said of her older sister that she wasn't a complainer but a doer. It's all too easy to stand on the side lines and say that something must be done. Actually getting out there and doing it, as Jo did throughout her life, takes an extra level of effort and commitment. And that determination to make things happen, to bring about change, was something that defined Jo's work, both before and after she entered Parliament. And in the 19 months since her death, it's a legacy that has been carried forward both by her family and by the Foundation and Commission that bears her name, and at the heart of that work is the fight against loneliness.

In a country of more than 60 million people, and in an age where we can instantly connect with friends, relatives and even strangers around the world, it may seem counterintuitive that any of us could find ourselves feeling lonely. Yet, more than 9 million of us say that we always, or often, feel lonely. 200,000 older people have not had a conversation with a friend or a relative in more than a month. Up to 85% of young adults with disabilities say they feel lonely most days.

As Jo herself used to say, loneliness doesn't discriminate. But just as loneliness can affect any of us, so any of us can help to tackle it. And that could mean simply popping round to see an elderly neighbour or picking up the phone to a relative. Or you could follow the example of Phil Burton, a former Royal Artillery Lance Bombardier who is here with us today. After leaving the Army, Phil realised that many of his ex-servicemen were suffering from social isolation; they had lost the close-knit family that the Armed Forces provided. So, last year, he founded the Veterans Café in Lancashire. Its fortnightly get-togethers create a place where former members of the Armed Forces can come together, talk, share experiences and access support from charities and the NHS, and the projects proved a huge success, attracting hundreds of veterans of all ages. And just talking to Phil earlier on, he was saying that for many veterans they won't open up to somebody in authority or somebody who's there to help them, but they will open up to another veteran. And that is so important to them, and so many lives have been changed as a result of what Phil has done. So, I was delighted to meet him and present him with a Points of Light award earlier, which recognises outstanding volunteers

in our country for their service to others. And the Veterans Café is exactly the kind of local project Jo supported, celebrated and encouraged.

And over the past year and a half, the Jo Cox Foundation has continued that work, most notably with The Great Get Together, and last summer's events were the biggest set of neighbourhood celebrations since the Jubilee street parties. I had the pleasure of attending one in my own constituency, and I am very pleased to confirm that The Great Get Together will return this summer, on 22nd June. It will bring together millions of people on what would have been Jo's 44th birthday. I am certainly looking forward to it.

But Jo's legacy doesn't end there. There is also the Jo Cox Commission on Loneliness, created just over a year ago. And in the spirit of having more in common, it is, as you've just heard from Seema, jointly shared by two MPs: one Conservative, my good friend, Seema Kennedy, who you've just heard from; and one Labour, Rachel Reeves. And both worked closely with Jo during her all too brief time in Parliament. And both have spent the past 12 months looking at what the Government and others can do, to continue her legacy. And the Commission's report, which was published just before Christmas, highlights a range of areas where action is needed. And in response, we've started work on an England-wide strategy to tackle loneliness, which will be published later this year.

Work has also begun on developing the evidence base around the impact of different initiatives, across all ages and within all communities. And the Office of National Statistics is committed to establishing a framework for measuring loneliness, so consistent figures can be used in major research studies. And we will create a new, dedicated fund that will see government working with charities, foundations, and others, to stimulate innovative solutions, provide seed funding for community initiatives, and scale-up existing projects. And all this work will be overseen by a new ministerial lead on loneliness, Tracey Crouch. She will be keeping the challenge of tackling loneliness firmly on the agenda of colleagues across Whitehall. And any of you have met Tracey today at the reception, I think will agree that she is hugely enthusiastic about the role that she has taken on. Because this issue isn't just an issue for our Health Service, or for local councils, every department has a role to play and Tracey will be responsible for bringing them all together to get things done, and she'll be continuing to work closely with the Jo Cox Commission. And of course, she'll also be collaborating with people like you here in this room today. People who, like Jo, believe in causes and ideals, in working together in making a difference. And when I look around the room today, those are the kind of people that I see. You are all contributing in your own way, but in so many different ways. And Tracey and I are looking forward to working with you to make this project a fitting tribute to everything that Jo stood for.

In Brendan's memoir of life with Jo, he recounts the awful first night after Cuillin and Lejla learnt that their mother had died, and he describes how Cuillin, then aged just five, wrote and sang a song in tribute to her; a song with a simple yet devastating refrain, 'I love my mummy, I will not leave her behind'. Cuillin, don't worry, none of us will leave your mummy behind. None of us will forget her life, her ideals, or what she stood for. And all of us

will do all that we can to see that, in her memory, we bring an end to the acceptance of loneliness in our society. Thank you.

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## News story: Aviation Minister meets apprentices on visit to Luton airport

Aviation Minister Baroness Sugg visited Luton Airport today (19 January 2018) to meet apprentices and trainees working at the heart of the aviation industry.

The minister was provided with an overview of Luton's £150 million redevelopment and met some of the apprentices who are helping to transform the airport's vision into reality.

Baroness Sugg's visit to Luton Airport took place at the end of a week in which the government, working alongside industry, launched the [Year of Engineering](#), a campaign which aims to increase the number of young people pursuing a career in engineering.

Touring the newly-extended terminal which is due to open later this year, the minister met one of the successful trainees from the civil engineering company behind the work. Following the completion of a two-year apprenticeship, the former apprentice joiner has a permanent role as a trainee site manager overseeing the transformation of the terminal building.

Baroness Sugg also visited Luton Airport's control tower for a bird's eye view of the redevelopment and met a graduate of EasyJet's engineering apprenticeship programme. Having completed 26 months of classroom and on the job training, the qualified engineer works in the airline's operations control centre, as part of the team managing aircraft technical issues for more than 280 aircraft.

Aviation Minister Baroness Sugg said:

It is clear to see that the investment being put in to Luton Airport goes far beyond passengers, creating jobs, developing skills and boosting the local economy.

The work being done by the airport to upgrade the terminal and passenger facilities has created a wealth of opportunities for young people with apprenticeships and trainee schemes in a variety of areas.

This major investment not only shows how our aviation industry continues to go from strength to strength but also underlines the

importance of talented young people in this British success story.

Highlighting the variety of opportunities available within engineering, the Year of Engineering campaign seeks to increase diversity, challenge misconceptions and attract more women and girls into the industry.

The current transformation of Luton Airport represents the biggest single investment in the airport's history.

Alongside the improvement of the terminal, the security search area has been expanded, a new multi-storey car park has been built as well as new shops and restaurants.

The airport is also working with Luton Borough Council to develop a £200 million mass passenger system which will connect Luton Airport Parkway station with the airport terminal.

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## **Press release: Driver who killed best friend now jailed**

A driver who killed his best friend will now serve time in prison after Solicitor General Robert Buckland QC MP referred his original sentence to the Court of Appeal as unduly lenient.

Stephen Whilde, 24, was driving his modified car 20 mph over the speed limit when he failed to negotiate a right hand bend, causing the vehicle to crash into a hedgerow. A piece of wooden fence struck the passenger, William Bye, 24, killing him.

The passenger was filming the drive leading up to the crash in November 2016. The footage was used by police and prosecutors.

Whilde was originally sentenced to 2 years in custody, suspended for 2 years last November at Shrewsbury Crown Court. The Court of Appeal quashed his suspended sentence and replaced it with an immediate 3 year prison sentence. Whilde has also been disqualified from driving for 4 and a half years.

Whilde has been ordered to surrender to Shrewsbury Police Station by 4pm today .

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General said:

This was a sad example of deliberate, very dangerous driving that has caused the death of a young man and devastated a family.

I feel the increased sentence better reflects the seriousness of the offence and I hope this will provide some comfort to the family at this very difficult time.

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## **News story: UK and France sign new agreements to tackle corruption and match fixing in sport**

The British and French Governments have agreed to share expertise and best practice to help tackle sports corruption and match-fixing through illegal and irregular sports betting.

The Declaration of Intention was signed by Matt Hancock and the French Sports Minister Laura Flessel as part of the UK-France Summit taking place this week.

Matt Hancock said:

The UK and France are steadfast allies in the battle against corruption. Doping and match-fixing scandals have rocked international sport in recent years and it is crucial that we take a global approach, working together to ensure the integrity of sport is upheld. Fans have to be able to believe in fair play in sport and be inspired by the best athletes in the world.

Through the work of UK Anti-Doping, the Gambling Commission's Sports Betting Intelligence Unit and our Code for Sports Governance we are ensuring that our sports bodies are more transparent and uphold the highest standards on integrity and governance. We want to share best practice with other nations and this agreement with France underlines how important it is to work in partnership on the threat of corruption.

### **Working together**

At the [2016 Anti-Corruption Summit](#) in London, the UK joined the International Partnership against Corruption in Sport that has brought together the International Olympic Committee, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the Council of Europe and United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

At a meeting of the partnership in Paris in December 2017, it was agreed that

three task forces would be created to reduce corruption risks in procurement relating to sporting events and infrastructure, ensuring integrity in the selection of host cities for major sporting events and mitigating the risk of corruption by improving compliance with good governance.

The [UK Code for Sports Governance](#), was announced in the [government's sport strategy](#). The code came into force in April 2017 and to date, 55 out of 58 national sports bodies have complied with the code, ensuring more diverse board membership and increasing transparency to help fans and those taking part better understand the decision-making of those leading their sports.

## Major events

Under the Declaration of Intention, the UK has also agreed to share with France best practice and expertise gained from hosting the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and England hosting the Rugby World Cup in 2015.

France will host the Rugby World Cup in 2023 and Paris will stage the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2024.

London 2012 generated over £14 billion worth of trade and investment for the UK while the 2015 Rugby World Cup, held in 11 host cities across England, set new attendance, viewership and competition records, generating an additional £1.1 billion to the UK economy.

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## [Press release: New multi-million pound flood scheme in Birmingham opened](#)

The scheme, which cost £2.7million to construct, has been delivered as part of the Environment Agency's programme of £2.5bn investment into flood defences across the country. The scheme was made possible through a partnership with Birmingham City Council and St Andrew's Healthcare.

The flood defences include a 500m long embankment on the public open space next to Dogpool Lane bridge. By doing this, the Environment Agency has created a flood storage area which will store water from the River Rea during times of heavy rainfall and then slowly release it back into the river when river water levels go down. The Environment Agency have also built a new flood wall and a higher river bank at the rear of 15 homes which back onto the river.

Mike Adams from the Environment Agency said:

We're pleased to deliver these flood protection measures for the people of Selly Park South. This community has experienced the

terrible effects of flooding and the measures we've built here reduces future risk of flooding. We would like to thank local people for their patience and support throughout the building of this scheme.

Councillor Lisa Trickett, Cabinet Member for the Environment from Birmingham City Council said:

We've seen the devastating impact that flooding can have on communities, so I am delighted that these new measures are now in place. These will make a real difference by reducing the risk of flooding to hundreds of homes and businesses in Selly Park South.

Along with flood defences, knowing your flood risk is also important when protecting your family and property from flooding. People can [check their risk](#) and [register to receive free flood warnings](#) online or call Floodline on 0345 988 1188.