

PM call with the leaders of the United States, France and Germany: 21 August 2022

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to US President Joe Biden, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz.



The Prime Minister spoke to the leaders of the United States, France and Germany this afternoon to discuss cooperation on matters of international security and diplomacy.

On a joint call, the Prime Minister, President Biden, President Macron and Chancellor Scholz underlined their steadfast commitment to supporting Ukraine in the face of Russia's invasion.

They stressed the importance of ensuring the safety and security of nuclear installations and welcomed recent discussions on enabling an IAEA mission to the Zaporizhzhia facility.

They also discussed other shared priorities, including Iran and joint efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation and deter Iran's destabilizing regional activities.

The Prime Minister welcomed the opportunity to speak, and the leaders agreed their teams would continue working closely together in the coming weeks.

Published 22 August 2022

Nigel Wilkinson MBE appointed VisitEngland Advisory Board Member

News story

The Secretary of State has appointed Nigel Wilkinson MBE as a VisitEngland Advisory Board Member for a term of five years.



The term of appointment will be for five years, commencing on 11 August 2022 until 10 August 2027.

A graduate Engineer and Chartered Accountant, Nigel has been Managing Director of Windermere Lake Cruises Limited, Cumbria's largest visitor attraction, since 2004. He is also Managing Director of Winander Leisure Limited, a director of Winander Group Holdings Limited, Lakeland Motor Museum Limited and Rushbond plc, a Yorkshire based property company. From 2007 to 2017 he was a director of Cumbria Tourism (CT), the county's Destination Management Organisation, and was chair of the committee responsible for managing CT's finances. Nigel joined the Board of Cumbria Local Enterprise Partnership (CLEP) in 2017 and chairs both CLEP's Visitor Economy Sector Panel and its Finance, Audit and Resources Committee. Nigel also represents CLEP on the Lake District National Park Partnership. In late 2020 Nigel was appointed to the Tourism Industry Council, a collaboration between Government and the tourism industry focusing on improving the tourism sector including jobs, transport and deregulation.

Nigel was appointed as a Trustee/Director of South Cumbria Rivers Trust in 2021, a charity/Trust with the principal objective to monitor, conserve and protect and, when necessary, rehabilitate and improve the biodiversity of lakes, rivers and streams South Cumbria and adjacent coastal waters for the public's benefit. In the Queen's Birthday 2022 Honours List Nigel was recognised with the honour of Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) for services to tourism and the economy in Cumbria. He was made an Honorary Fellow of the University of Cumbria in July 2022.

Remuneration and Governance Code

This appointment has been made in accordance with the [Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments](#). The process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Nigel will be offered remuneration of £3,300 per annum. The Government's Governance Code requires that any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years is declared. This is defined as holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation or candidature for election. Nigel has not declared any activity.

Published 22 August 2022

Funding for cadets boosted to £43 million pounds over next two years to help build the maritime sector

Eligible seafarers will now get half of their training paid – providing a real investment in the future of maritime and securing future growth.

Previously, the subsidy was 30% but increases to 50% for all new and existing tonnage tax groups and Support for Maritime Training (SMarT) funding. This now means that maritime companies can take advantage of an extra £13m of funding to take on and train up cadets.

The DfT and HMT have increased the subsidy on training costs for cadets and ratings – which companies can obtain as part of their tonnage tax – to 50% from the current level of 30% for all new and existing tonnage tax groups and SMarT funded seafarers.

The new measures complement UK Government's commitment to protecting and supporting seafarers as announced in the seafarer protections nine-point plan, which commits to improving the longer-term working conditions of seafarers as part of a wider vision to boost seafarer protections and welfare. This includes the Seafarers' Wages Bill which will ensure that seafarers working on vessels that regularly use UK ports are paid at least an equivalent rate to the National Minimum Wage while in the UK's territorial waters.

This increase in training subsidies for cadets and ratings does this and emphasises UK Government's drive to grow and support the UK's highly skilled seafarer population to meet UK and global needs.

The extra money means there will be up for £20 million available this year

increasing to £23 million next.

Funding for eligible seafarers is available this year and will be locked in until at least September 2024 providing an incentive and financial security for those looking to take up a career in maritime.

The increased subsidy rate will be available to any seafarer who meets the requirements and who is studying at a Maritime and Coastguard Agency approved college for an academic qualification that leads to the issue of an UK Unlimited Certificate of Competency.

Secretary of State Grant Shapps said:

Our incredible maritime sector is built by the thousands of workers who, every day, keep our shelves stacked and are responsible for 95% of all the UK's freight.

This funding will be critical to helping people upskill, take on a career in the sector, and help build a strong maritime sector for years to come.

Damien Oliver Commercial, Programmes & Maritime Business Development Director said:

This is an important milestone for investing in the future of maritime and our seafarers. These changes now mean that more funding is available to support seafarers with their training. We are also looking at additional support for those who have already attained a qualification so they can move onto the next one supported by further funding. We will do all we can to encourage and support people into this industry which does so much to support our every day life in the UK.

These changes will cover an interim period from April 2022 to September 2024. A new UK training system is then scheduled to be implemented, as recommended by the 2020 Maritime Skills Commission Report.

[New guidance to improve the](#)

accountability of the Electoral Commission published

- Electoral Commission to be made more accountable to Parliament
- Move comes in response to Pickles review into electoral fraud
- Consultation on the draft guidance opens today

Today (22 August 2022) the Department for Levelling Up has opened the [consultation on new guidance](#) to improve the accountability of the Electoral Commission to UK Parliament. This guidance addresses the concern raised in Lord Eric Pickles' independent review into electoral fraud, that the current system of oversight of the Electoral Commission is not fit for purpose.

The report also highlighted cases such as Tower Hamlets – in which the 2014 Mayoral election was declared void by corrupt and illegal practices – as evidence of vulnerabilities in our system which must be addressed.

The Elections Act 2022 delivers the government's manifesto commitment to protect the integrity of our democracy. As part of the Act, new guidance for the regulator will be introduced subject to the approval of the UK Parliament.

The draft guidance in the Statement states that the Electoral Commission should support Returning Officers in ensuring the secrecy of the ballot inside polling stations. This addresses cross-party concerns about the practice of so-called "family voting" or "community voting" in some areas of the country, where it is alleged that some voters are being pressured by their spouses or partners over who to vote for inside polling booths.

In May 2022, the independent organisation, Democracy Volunteers, asserted they had identified 5% of all voters they observed in Tower Hamlets elections were either causing, or were affected by, "family voting" and over 85% of those being affected by "family voting" were women, predominantly from Asian backgrounds.

Levelling Up Secretary, Greg Clark, said:

The public rightly expects efficient and independent regulation of the electoral system. The Pickles Report was clear that the Electoral Commission needed to change.

This is why we are improving the accountability of the Electoral Commission by giving Parliament greater visibility and scrutiny of the Commission's work.

This guidance is a necessary step to increase the accountability of the Electoral Commission to UK Parliament whilst respecting its operational independence.

It is completely unacceptable for anyone's vote to be influenced or pressured inside a polling station. Protecting the secrecy of the ballot is of the utmost importance to the health of our democracy.

The government in its 2019 manifesto committed to protecting the integrity of our democracy. The new draft guidance therefore requires the Commission to have regard to matters such as tackling voter fraud, supporting Returning Officers in ensuring the secrecy of the ballot inside polling stations, and supporting participation by informing the public about the franchise and electoral registration, when carrying out its relevant regulatory functions.

The draft guidance also reflects the Pickles Report's finding that the Commission needed to refocus on its core functions.

The consultation – closing on 5 December 2022 – will provide the statutory consultees with the opportunity to share their views on the draft guidance. Under the Elections Act, those consultees are the Commission itself, the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission and the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Committee.

What happens next?

The government will consider all responses to the consultation and make any necessary changes before submitting the draft guidance to Parliament for scrutiny. Parliamentarians will have an opportunity to share their views on the draft before deciding whether to approve or reject the draft guidance in full.

Further information

The Elections Act 2022 makes provisions for a Strategy and Policy Statement that will contain guidance and principles for the Electoral Commission to have regard to in the discharge of its functions

See the [draft guidance](#).

The government will also engage the Parliamentary Parties Panel and other relevant stakeholders on the draft guidance.

Scale-up visa will propel high-growth businesses

The UK's top high-growth businesses will have greater flexibility and power to entice the world's top talent through the new [Scale-up visa](#), the government announced today (22 August).

UK businesses experiencing impressive success will be eligible to sponsor talented individuals, from scientists and engineers to architects and programmers, to support their growth and contribute to boosting the UK's economy.

Unlike other sponsored visas, the Scale-up visa allows businesses to employ high-skilled individuals who will receive 2 years' leave to remain in the UK without requiring further sponsorship or permission beyond the first 6 months.

This will further enhance the government's overall offer to businesses through the points-based immigration system to hire eligible employees from anywhere in the world. The Scale-up visa will give them greater flexibility to hire, often in-demand, talent they need so they can go to the next level, while boosting the UK's high-skilled pool.

Minister for Safe and Legal Migration Kevin Foster said:

Rapidly growing businesses, like small enterprises, tech and financial services, need the right level of support to go to the next level. Through our Scale-up visa, we're enabling businesses to focus on their growth and innovation by giving them more freedom to bring in the diverse skills and experience they need, making them more attractive on an international stage.

By supporting our high-growth tech, financial services and small businesses, we are ensuring the UK remains a global hub for emerging technologies and innovation while enhancing productivity across the economy – creating jobs, growth and prosperity across Britain.

Irene Graham OBE, CEO of the ScaleUp Institute said:

The ScaleUp Institute welcomes the launch of the Scale-up visa. This is something we have recommended since our inception and should provide a much-needed fast track service to enable local growth companies to access the talent they need more quickly.

Scaleups add over £1 trillion a year and more than 3 million jobs to the UK economy, and are present in every community, hiring people from at home and abroad, as they drive growth into their local areas and beyond.

The visa should help with the skills demands. We look forward to continuing to work with the government as this service evolves to ensure it fully addresses scaling business needs and works effectively.

Scaling up is an important phase for high-growth businesses to continue

growing and drive their international competitiveness. By bringing in sought-after expertise and skills, enterprises can boost their innovation and productivity and in turn keep contributing to the UK's economy.

Companies, including small businesses and those in the tech and financial services sectors, that have achieved growth of 20% or more in either employment or turnover year-on-year for at least 3 years and employed a minimum of 10 people at the start of the 3 years will be eligible to sponsor talented individuals through the Scale-up visa.

Eligible businesses will be able to attract highly skilled talent including:

- scientists
- engineers
- programmers
- software developers
- research and development professionals
- economists
- architects
- technicians
- financial and investment advisers