

# Press release: Plans to boost protections for pregnant women and new parents returning to work

- Pregnant women and new parents returning to work are set to receive greater protection from redundancy, under new government plans
- The legal protections currently enjoyed by parents including women on maternity leave could be extended to other parents, such as those returning from adoption or shared parental leave
- This boost in protection builds on the biggest package of workplace reforms in 20 years to create an economy that works for all as part of the modern Industrial Strategy

The consultation, launching tomorrow (25 January 2019), proposes that the legal protection against redundancy for pregnant women and new mothers on maternity leave is extended so that it continues for up to 6 months after they return to work. It will also seek views on affording the same protection to parents returning from adoption leave or shared parental leave.

Research commissioned by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), found 1 in 9 women said they had been fired or made redundant when they returned to work after having a child, or were treated so badly they felt forced out of their job. The same research estimates 54,000 women a year may lose their jobs due to pregnancy or maternity.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

People in this country already benefit from some of the most rigorous workplace standards in the world, including parental leave and pay entitlements, but we are determined to do even more as we leave the EU.

It's unacceptable that too many parents still encounter difficulties when returning to work. Today's proposals are set to provide greater protection for new parents in the workplace, and put their minds at ease at this important time.

This move goes further than current EU requirements on maternity entitlements and parental leave, showing that the UK is going even further in its commitment to workers' rights and meeting the challenges of the changing world of work. This follows the biggest package of workplace reforms for over 20 years that was set out by the Business Secretary in December 2018.

On parental leave and pay alone:

- we already offer maternity entitlements of up to 52 weeks of maternity

leave – 39 weeks of which are paid

- we have given fathers and partners a statutory right to paternity leave and pay, and we have allowed eligible parents to share leave and pay where the mother does not intend to use all of her maternity entitlements
- and we have given all employees with 26 weeks' qualifying service a right to request flexible working, not only those returning from parental leave

Business Minister Kelly Tolhurst said:

Pregnancy and maternity discrimination is illegal. But some new mothers still find unacceptable attitudes on their return to work which effectively forces them out of their jobs.

Through the modern Industrial Strategy and the largest upgrade in workers' rights in a generation, the government is building an economy that ensures everyone can progress at work. That's why we are looking at ways to further protect new parents by giving them time to re-establish themselves in the workplace and show the value they bring to their employers.

Justine Roberts, Mumsnet founder, said:

Mumsnet users talk a lot about pregnancy and maternity discrimination, and in a 2018 survey 96% of women we surveyed said having children affected mothers' careers for the worse.

It's a multifaceted problem requiring a change in attitude and culture as well as legislation, but stronger legal protection is a very welcome first step.

Jane van Zyl, CEO of work-life balance charity Working Families, said:

We hear from women struggling with pregnancy and maternity discrimination every single day on our helpline. But pregnancy and maternity discrimination isn't just bad news for families; it's also bad news for the economy.

Whilst many of the companies we work with already understand the business benefits of family-friendly workplaces, some employers still don't. Proposals to extend protection from redundancy to new mothers and parents returning to work should go a long way toward protecting their jobs – and to reducing the shocking number of women who lose their jobs due to pregnancy and maternity discrimination.

Because more and more parents are sharing care equally, we welcome

plans to ensure equal treatment for parents returning from Shared Parental Leave or adoption – bringing their rights in line with those enjoyed by women on maternity leave.

The consultation will be available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk), and will run for 10 weeks ending on 5 April 2019.

[Research](#) commissioned in collaboration with the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in 2016 found that 11% of women reported they were either dismissed; made compulsorily redundant, where others in their workplace were not; or treated so poorly they felt they had to leave their job. 20% of mothers reported other financial loss which included failing to gain a promotion, salary reduction, a lower pay rise or bonus, not receiving non-salary benefits and/or demotion.

The consultation on pregnancy and maternity discrimination will:

- set out the current legal protections for pregnant women and new mothers under the Equality Act 2010 and the Employment Rights Act 1996
- ask how an extension of redundancy protection currently afforded under the Employment Rights Act for those on maternity leave and other types of family related leave and pay might work best, and how long this protection should last
- ask whether a similar protection should be afforded to other groups (such as those returning from other forms of long term childcare leave – principally adoption leave and shared parental leave)
- set out the steps that the government is taking to increase employees awareness of their rights and employers' awareness of their obligations, and invites comments on how they might be improved, to tackle pregnancy and maternity discrimination more effectively
- consider the existing approach to the enforcement of employment and equalities legislation in the context of recommendations from the Women and Equalities Select Committee and the Taylor Review
- discuss the 3-month time limit within which a claim of discrimination can ordinarily be brought to an Employment Tribunal

These measures form part of the government's modern [Industrial Strategy](#), published last year, which sets out how the whole of the UK can build on its strengths, extend them into the future, and capitalise on new opportunities.

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**[News story: Investment Minister](#)**

# champions the UK education sector at BETT

- Investment Minister celebrates the UK's pioneering education sector at Bett
- Memorandum of Understanding signed to develop innovation in education in Lebanon and facilitate digital transformation development
- New figures show education exports generate almost £20bn for the UK economy

Investment Minister Graham Stuart celebrates the UK's pioneering education sector as the British Education Suppliers Association (BESA) partners with its Lebanese counterpart to help improve the educational outcomes of Syrian refugees living in Lebanon.

Signed at Bett, the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) shared with the Professional Computer Association of Lebanon (PCA) will develop innovation in education in Lebanon and facilitate digital transformation development.

Taking place at London's ExCel, Bett is the world's biggest education trade show, bringing together over 850 companies and over 34,700 attendees.

The Department for International Trade (DIT) will lead its biggest-ever presence, hosting 20 UK companies on its stand to showcase the best of British innovation in the education sector.

Bett coincides with news that Britain's education sector remains one of its most lucrative international assets, with new figures released today showing that international education exports generates almost £20bn annually for the UK economy.

The figures, which include income from international students and English language training overseas, are growing year-on-year to an estimated £19.9bn in 2016 – an increase of 26% since 2010 – generating significant revenue for the UK.

## **Graham Stuart, Minister for Investment, said:**

I'm delighted to see so many UK companies represented at Bett, showcasing our pioneering EdTech and educational supplies sector. The agreement signed today between BESA and PCA is a fantastic example of how UK expertise can benefit educational outcomes in countries across the world.

Bett will undoubtedly provide many more excellent opportunities for UK companies to take forward existing relationships and find new global partners, and the Department for International Trade is here

to help any business looking to deepen its international links.

**Caroline Wright, Director General, BESA, said:**

We are honoured to be entering into an MoU with our counterparts, the Professional Computer Association of Lebanon. It is clear from our recent trade mission to Beirut, and subsequent follow-up visits, that there are exciting opportunities for the PCA and BESA to combine forces and develop educational initiatives that can both benefit Lebanese pupils, alongside pupils across the region.

This partnership would not have been possible were it not for the combined efforts of the UK's Department for International Trade and Department for International Development. It is a paradigm example of how joined-up government can help benefit British commercial interests, as well as helping to drive up the quality of education of pupils, which in this instance includes large numbers of refugees in the region that Lebanon has so generously taken in.

Sincere thanks must also go to the Lebanese Ministry of Education for being so welcoming to our member companies and being so open to engagement with British educational suppliers.

UK companies exhibiting at Bett include Pobble, a London-based EdTech company that helps improve children's writing by allowing teachers to plan exciting lessons, allowing pupils to connect with classes around the world, and makes moderation of writing easier.

The company has secured significant international investment from across the globe and is seeing considerable success in markets ranging from the UAE to Singapore.

DIT will also bring delegations of buyers from key markets including China, Indonesia and Brazil, to meet with UK businesses. There will also be an Export Theatre, where market experts from DIT will provide guidance on global markets and international expansion.

- BESA is the trade association for the UK education suppliers' sector that operate on a not-for-profit basis and are accountable to an executive Council elected by member companies.
- PCA is the Professional Computer Association of Lebanon, is the trade association for Lebanon ICT suppliers' sector that operate on none-for-profit basis and are accountable to elected board members represent the professional ICT companies in Lebanon.

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## **Press release: Bath machete attacker has sentence increased by Court of Appeal**

A youth who hospitalised 2 men was yesterday given a custodial sentence after the Solicitor General, Robert Buckland QC MP, referred his sentence under the unduly lenient sentence scheme.

The unnamed youth, now 17, and Tyrone White, 22, launched unprovoked machete knife attacks on 2 victims in May 2018. Both victims suffered deep wounds and required surgery following the attacks.

The first victim ran from the 2 offenders, as he had previously been bullied by the unnamed youth, but the offenders chased him down and attacked him. The second victim was attacked in his own home.

The unnamed youth was originally sentenced to a 2 year Youth Rehabilitation Order at Bristol Crown Court in November 2018. Following a referral to the Court of Appeal, he has now been sentenced to 7 years in prison.

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General said:

“The offender knew the risks when he headed out that day armed with a knife – youth is no excuse. The original sentence failed to take proper account of the potential risk this offender poses to others, and I am pleased to see the Court of Appeal impose a custodial sentence.”

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## **Speech: Davos 2019: Chancellor's speech at the CBI's British business Leaders lunch**

Let me start by passing on the PM's apologies – I know she wanted to be here to address you this afternoon, but events have dictated otherwise.

But I am delighted to be back here in Davos...

...and to have the opportunity to address you once again.

Professor Schwab first invited political leaders to what would become the

World Economic Forum in January of 1974.

It was a more leisurely affair in those days...

In between skiing, the group of leaders who gathered here in 1974 were grappling with profound economic and political uncertainties:

...the energy crisis...

...sky-high inflation...

...the collapse of the Bretton-Woods consensus.

And here we are, 45 years later...

...grappling with profound economic and political uncertainties!

Plus Ça change!

Closest to home, the terms of Britain's withdrawal from the European Union remain unresolved, as the deadline looms ever larger.

More broadly, the global economy is slowing...

...and the threat of rising protectionism is increasingly affecting patterns of trade.

And the impact of the coming wave of technological change on our societies and our economies is becoming ever more apparent...

...bringing with it both challenges and opportunities.

But I want to argue today that even against this rather inauspicious backdrop, Britain can – and will – prosper in the years ahead.

The fundamentals of our economy are strong.

Its resilience through the turbulence of the Brexit process has been particularly noteworthy...

...and its growth prospects, according to the latest IMF forecast – providing we approve a deal with the EU – look perfectly respectable alongside our G7 peers.

Our commitment to free and open markets is deep and enduring.

And we are at the front of the pack in preparing our economy for the technology change.

So my message today is this: Britain is a great place to do business.

And we are determined, as we leave the European Union, to make sure that it remains that way.

Let me begin with the subject that is uppermost in everybody's mind – Brexit.

It's clear from our soundings last week that while Parliament has voted against the PM's deal...

...it has not yet formed a clear view of what it is in favour of.

Next week, we will see various interventions by backbenchers.

Some of which will attempt to create a mechanism for Parliament to express its view of the way forward.

And in the meantime the government will continue to pursue a negotiated settlement that is likely to be acceptable to Parliament.

And believe me, I understand the perplexity with which many of you, as business leaders, view the politics of Brexit.

And I feel your frustration at the process and I have to say I share much of it!

But politics doesn't work like business.

And while I am pretty clear what all my business interlocutors are seeking is an economic fix...

...I want to explain to you this afternoon why we need to get the politics, as well as the economics, of this process right.

Because even from the narrowest interpretation of business interest, it would be a Pyrrhic victory indeed to deliver a Brexit that appeared to meet the needs of the economy...

...but which shattered the broad consensus behind our country's political and economic system.

In the 2016 referendum a promise was made to the majority who voted for Brexit – that they were voting for a more prosperous future.

Not leaving would be seen as a betrayal of that referendum decision.

But leaving without a deal would undermine our future prosperity, and would equally represent a betrayal of the promises that were made.

And that is why I, having campaigned vigorously to remain, in the referendum have come to believe that the only credible and sustainable solution is for us to leave the European Union.

To honour the referendum decision but to do so in a way that protects our economy in order to allow us to deliver that future prosperity that those voters were promised when they voted to leave the EU.

The only sustainable solution is a negotiated settlement with the EU:

A deal that supports the economy, protects jobs and allows us to continue a close trading partnership with our European neighbours.

Now to do that right now, we need to find a way around the impasse over the backstop.

And if we are to do so, it will take ingenuity and flexibility on the part of the EU.

As well as a spirit of compromise on the part of some of my colleagues.

It is surely in our national interest, all of us, to preserve faith in the political system and the democratic process...

...as well as protecting our economy as we leave this process...

...Surely in our interest to move forward to agree a negotiated Brexit that is a compromise that can begin to heal the nation and heal both political parties.

Failure to do so could lead to instability, populism (political content removed).

I know that for many business leaders...

...right up there alongside the question of access to European markets...

...is the question of access to labour.

Openness to global talent is a fundamental feature of the UK economy.

Migrants have made a huge contribution to our country over our history – and they will continue to do so in the future.

But at the same time, one of the messages that almost all politicians divine from the Referendum result...

...is a concern about our ability to control European Union migration: less, I personally think, about absolute numbers and more about a sense we have lost control of our own borders.

And so we have to be clear that as we leave the European Union, free movement will end...

...although I can assure you that short-term mobility for both business and leisure will continue.

And the immigration white paper, published in December, offers a pragmatic way forward.

First, while it constructs a universal framework for future migration control, it does not rule out the possibility that future trade deals – including with the EU – might make provision in this area.

Second, it proposes a skills-based immigration system – where it is workers' skills that matter, not which country they come from.

And third, we have announced an extensive consultation into where the threshold for the highly skilled tier should be set...

...and how we should deal with the challenge presented by the economies need for intermediate-skilled workers:

The technicians; the carers; the chefs, the construction workers and the myriad others whose skills we badly need – but who often earn less than £30,000.

Business should be hugely reassured by this commitment to engagement.

And particularly to a twelve-month consultation period.

So, while free movement is ending, the detail of what will replace it remains to be decided.

And business has a real opportunity to help shape the policy.

But if I may say so, it will only do so if it engages effectively and presents a clear consensus from the business community.

So I urge you, collectively, to seize the opportunity to engage with this consultation...

...and to bring forward constructive, consistent and evidence-based proposals.

Let's work together to design a system that responds to public concerns about immigration...

...but also protects our economy and our businesses...

...and becomes a part of the UK's competitive advantage for the future.

While negotiating Brexit it must of course be the immediate priority, we must also deliver a message to the British people and to our trading and investment partners, about Britain's future, beyond Brexit.

And it is a future based on a fundamentally strong economy.

One that has grown continuously for the past eight years...

...with employment breaking records again just this week...

...and wages now thankfully rising significantly faster than inflation.

The world's fifth largest economy, ranked the 8th most competitive by the WEF...

...which between 2015 and 2018, attracted more Foreign Direct Investment than any other EU nation, and more than France and Germany combined.

These achievements are not an accident.

They are the result of a deliberate economic strategy by this government:

...to deal with the deficit so that debt is now falling...

...to cut taxes on the wages people earn...

...and on the businesses that employ them...

...and deliver an Industrial Strategy, that is tackling the productivity challenge head on to sustainably improve our competitiveness, and hence the living standards of our people.

We are driving investment through initiatives like the National Productivity Investment Fund...

...the biggest sustained programme of public sector investment since the 1970s...

...and our commitment to 2.4% of GDP as R&D spending.

I am not, for one moment, complacent about our economic performance...

...especially as we see increased risks in the global economy, and lower forecasts for global growth...

...and I certainly recognise that continued Brexit uncertainty is taking a toll.

But that should not obscure the strong foundations we have built for the future...

...foundations that will ensure our economy grows and prospers, whatever the future has in store for us.

That prosperity will be sustained by a deep and enduring commitment to free and open markets, to intelligent and appropriate regulation, and to a globally competitive tax system.

We know that the free market is the only way to deliver the high-wage, high-skill economy of the future.

And that Free Trade is the way to spread prosperity globally.

(And by the way, the quickest way to boost global growth right now would be to liberalise trade in services).

But we also know that to maintain public trust in the free market, we must make sure that the rules of the game evolve to keep pace with the changing nature of the economy...

...especially when there are populists waiting in the wings to propose radical – and dangerous – so called “solutions” in response to every perceived failure.

For example, it is clearly not sustainable or fair that global digital platform companies can generate substantial value in the UK, without paying UK tax on their earnings.

That's why the UK has been leading attempts to deliver international corporate tax reform for the digital age.

But pending that global agreement, we have introduced a UK Digital Services Tax...

...to make sure that global tech giants, with profitable businesses in the UK, pay their fair share towards supporting our public services.

And now the French have followed us – with a tax broader in scope and with higher rates.

We are also conducting an external Review of competition policy in the digital economy...

...to examine the impacts of the emergence of a small number of dominant players in digital markets...

...and how we can ensure that competition plays its proper role in driving business innovation and expanding consumer choice...

...so that the economy as a whole benefits from new technologies.

These initiatives show our determination to remain at the cutting-edge of these policy debates – and of regulatory solutions.

Demonstrating in deeds, not just words, our commitment to build a digital economy that works for everyone.

I spoke to you last year about the opportunities of the fourth industrial revolution:

About how technological advances will lead to a revolution in the way we live and work...

...with Artificial Intelligence transforming everything from factories to hospitals...

...and in turn boosting our productivity and our living standards.

But I also spoke about the challenges that this revolution represents...

...and how they link to some of the concerns that drove the Brexit vote.

About the need to address fears that automation and new technology may bring, not higher wages, but mass unemployment...

...and that as new technology drives greater productivity improvements, the returns may flow to capital, rather than labour.

In Britain, we are taking these concerns seriously.

We are providing investment of course to build on the UK's position as a world-leader in innovation and new technology:

We have announced £1.6 billion funding in science and innovation and £950 million in our Artificial Intelligence sector deal...

...and £50 million for the new Turing Artificial Intelligence Fellowships, which will attract and retain the best researchers from around the world.

But we can and must go further.

Artificial intelligence could add \$15.7 trillion to the global economy by 2030.

But only countries with the most advanced digital skills will fully realise these benefits. And we intend that Britain will be at the front of that cohort.

So I can announce today that in addition to the Turing AI fellowships...

...we will commit £100 million to establish 1,000 new PhD places in centres across the UK...

...to create the next generation of AI innovators and build on the established research excellence of Britain's universities.

The potential prizes of the 4th industrial revolution are great, but we can only seize them if we can take our public with us.

So we are also taking action to manage the impact of technological change on Britain's society and economy...

...by investing in programmes like the National Retraining Scheme – which we are delivering in partnership with the CBI and the TUC – to provide employers with the skills they need as the economy evolves...

...and to reassure workers that they won't be abandoned when the technological revolution reaches their job.

And the new 'T Levels', which will also – admittedly decades too late – import into the UK's technical education system important lessons from Germany, Scandinavia and the US.

And Britain is also leading the debate on the ethical challenges of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

With the establishment of the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation...

...and through the Regulators' Pioneer Fund, we are leveraging Britain's track record of regulatory innovation to deliver a competitive advantage for our future economy.

So in conclusion the future of Britain's economy clearly depends on making a success of Brexit.

But that is a necessary, not a sufficient condition for a prosperous future.

If we look up for a moment from the immediate challenge of Brexit, we can see profound change ahead – and enormous opportunity.

And Britain is leading the way into this future.

Investing in new technologies...

...promoting, not abandoning our commitment to free and open markets...

...taking action to manage the impact of profound technological change...

... building on our strong economic foundations.

And, when the economic history of the first half of the 21st century comes to be written, it will not be about Brexit.

It will be about a technological revolution of a speed and impact the like of which the world had never seen before...

...a revolution that touched every aspect of our society, our economy, and our politics...

...and if we get it right, it will be the story of how we in the UK leveraged our historic strengths to manage this change...

...and to place Britain at the forefront of it...

...as a nation ready for the future...

... a great place to do business.

Thank you.

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## [Press release: Top marks for Highways England visit to Birdlip Primary School](#)

Traffic officers Lynne Watkins and Dave Hayett, who normally spend their days patrolling the M5 in Gloucestershire, took time out to visit the primary school as part of a Highways England awareness day.

During the visit this week, five and six-year-old pupils got the chance to chat to the traffic officers about their jobs and see their patrol vehicle and the equipment used every day as they patrol England's major A roads and motorways.

Birdlip Primary School teacher, Sue Harding, said:

Children's learning is always enhanced by real life, hands-on experiences and the children really enjoyed meeting the traffic officers and hearing about the important role they play keeping people safe on the M5.

Around 30 pupils took part in the session and had a chance to sit in the traffic officers' vehicle and try out the controls.

Highways England traffic officer, Lynne Watkins, said:

This visit offered a great opportunity to explain our work and raise the issue of road safety with a young and very enthusiastic audience.

Children in a Traffic Officer vehicle during the visit

On the same day the team behind the A417 Missing Link also attended the school to host a bridge-building exercise with nine and ten-year-olds. The team helped the pupils design and build their own bridge as part of a longer-term STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths) Highways England initiative.

Mike Goddard, A417 Senior Project Manager said:

The bridge building was designed to be a fun activity for the students while allowing us to start a conversation about the importance of engineering in our everyday lives.

The A417 team is currently putting its expertise to use refining proposals for the upgrade to the A417. Known locally as the 'missing link' at Air Balloon roundabout, this stretch of single carriageway road between the Brockworth bypass and Cowley roundabout restricts the flow of traffic on a key route which is otherwise a continuous dual carriageway between the M5 at Gloucester and the M4 at Swindon.

Upgrading this section to dual carriageway will help facilitate 54,000 new homes and 370 hectares of employment land due to be created before 2031, helping people live and work, and businesses to invest in the south west.

Mike Goddard added:

The A417 is a vital route that helps people get to work, school, visit friends and family. We are working to upgrade this section of road to improve safety, support the economy and ease congestion and pollution, making it more convenient for its regular users and improving the well-being of those who live nearby.

This scheme presents some particular challenges given the route passes through the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, alongside the very challenging topography.

More information about proposals for the A417 can be found on the [scheme website](#) where Highways England hold a live monthly web chat. Members of the public can join in and ask questions about the scheme.

For more information on the roles and responsibilities of a Highways England traffic officer go to the [Traffic Officer web pages](#).

### **General enquiries**

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

### **Media enquiries**

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.