

# Press release: Funding boost for cross Commonwealth scholarship fund

More young people will have the chance to benefit from life-changing scholarships allowing them to study at universities across the Commonwealth, thanks to a £5 million boost from the Department for Education.

The Education Secretary has announced the additional investment ahead of an event aimed at helping improve the quality of girls' education across the Commonwealth.

Commonwealth Foreign Secretaries will attend the launch of the Girls' Education Campaign to encourage a step-change in the quality of girls' education globally, as part of this week's Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in London and Windsor. It is the largest summit of its kind in UK history and a truly global event with young people at its centre.

This investment follows the Education Secretary's appearance at the Youth Forum earlier this week where HRH Prince Harry, in his first speech as Commonwealth Youth Ambassador, announced the £13.4 million fund was being renamed the "Queen Elizabeth Commonwealth Scholarships" in honour of HM The Queen.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

For young people across the Commonwealth, sharing in this partnership presents a unique opportunity to learn about other cultures. It also gives us the chance to share learning from our respective education systems and to draw inspiration from across the globe, so that every child gets the education they deserve.

This investment builds on this celebrated relationship by offering even more young people around the world the opportunity to further their education at a Commonwealth university abroad.

Queen Elizabeth Commonwealth Scholarships will provide life-changing experiences for young leaders with the energy and talent to make a difference in their home countries and beyond. The scheme will offer study opportunities not previously available and widen collaboration across the Commonwealth.

The UK's £5 million contribution to the fund, which will increase the total to £13.4 million, will mean that an additional 150 students can benefit from a Queen Elizabeth Commonwealth Scholarship by 2025. While the fund is open to recipients from all Commonwealth countries, the new £5 million contribution announced today will be targeted at students from countries that are eligible for overseas development assistance (ODA) and who are looking to further their studies at leading universities in low and middle income countries.

The first Queen Elizabeth Commonwealth Scholars will begin their studies in 2019, coinciding with the 70th anniversary of the Commonwealth and the 60th anniversary of the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan.

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## [News story: Appointment of 3 Commissioners to the Judicial Appointments Commission](#)

Brie Stevens-Hoare (Barrister) and Sarah Lee (Solicitor) have been appointed as Professional Commissioners from 9 April 2018 to 8 April 2021, and HHJ Anuja Dhir has been appointed as a Circuit Judge Commissioner from 9 June 2018 to 8 June 2021.

JAC is an independent body that selects candidates for judicial office in courts and tribunals in England and Wales, and for some tribunals with UK-wide jurisdiction. Candidates are selected on merit, through fair and open competition.

JAC Commissioners are appointed by Her Majesty the Queen on the recommendation of the Lord Chancellor.

Appointments and re-appointments to JAC are regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. These appointments have been made in line with the Commissioner's Code of Practice for Ministerial Appointments to Public Bodies.

### **Biographies**

#### **Sarah Lee**

Sarah Lee was appointed to JAC as a professional (solicitor) member on 9 April 2018.

Sarah qualified as a solicitor in 1990. She was appointed as a partner of Slaughter and May in 1999 and sits on the firm's Partnership Board.

She is currently Head of the Dispute Resolution Group. Her practice covers all aspects of major commercial disputes, often involving multiple jurisdictions.

Sarah is an accredited Centre for Effective Dispute Accreditation mediator and trustee, and member of the Management Committee of the Royal Courts of Justice Legal Advice Bureau.

## **Brie Stevens-Hoare QC**

Brie Stevens-Hoare was appointed to JAC as a professional (barrister) member on 9 April 2018.

She has been in practice as a self-employed barrister since 1986 and became a Queen's Counsel in 2013.

Brie is a property specialist whose practice extends to probate and professional negligence. She leads the property team at Hardwicke.

She was appointed as a Deputy Adjudicator to HM Land Registry in 2005 and sits as a fee-paid judge of the First-tier Tribunal, Property Chamber (Land Registration Division). She is also a regular mediator through the tribunal and otherwise.

Brie was chair of the London Common Law and Commercial Bar Association (LCLCBA) and is currently Vice Chair of the Property Bar Association. She has also previously served on Bar Council and Bar Standards Board committees. Brie was a founder member of FreeBar the Bar Community LGBT+ group and a Bencher at Lincoln's Inn where she is actively involved in advocacy training and equality and diversity issues.

## **Her Honour Judge Anuja Dhir QC**

Anuja Dhir QC will be appointed to JAC as a judicial member from 9 June 2018.

Anuja was appointed as a judge at the Old Bailey in 2017, a Circuit Judge in 2012 and a Recorder in 2010. In 2018 Anuja was authorised to sit in the Court of Appeal Criminal Division.

Anuja was called to the Bar in 1989. She practised as a barrister for 23 years, mainly in crime and from 2007 as a special advocate in national security cases.

Anuja was a member of a number of Bar Council committees, including the equality committee, the professional conduct committee and the law reform committee.

Anuja has been involved in advocacy training in the UK and abroad for over 20 years. In 2015 she was appointed as a Tutor Judge for the Judicial College.

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## **[News story: Perceptions of qualifications in England: wave 16](#)**

Commenting on today's release, Dr Michelle Meadows, Deputy Chief Regulator, said:

We are pleased that many of the improvements observed last year in respect of GCSEs, AS and A levels, in particular in relation to levels of trust, perceived marking accuracy, and fairness of the review and appeals system, have been maintained in this wave.

Levels of understanding with respect to the new 9 to 1 GCSE grading scale, new review and appeal arrangements, and around identifying and reporting malpractice are positive and reflect the extensive communication and engagement programmes we have undertaken over the past few years.

We recognise the need to continue to engage with stakeholders as reforms bed in. To that end, we have launched [new films and other resources related to GCSE science](#) ahead of this summer's exam series and will be doing more to explain other aspects of the reform programme in the months ahead.

These first results in relation to Applied Generals provide a benchmark against which we can seek improvements in the years ahead.

The planned programmes of work set out in [our Corporate Plan](#), published earlier this month, will help to support further improvements in stakeholders' perceptions of GCSEs, AS and A levels, and Applied Generals over time.

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## [News story: Foreign Secretary announces £9m to save our oceans](#)

Britain will use its position as a leading maritime nation to help Commonwealth Small Island Developing states (SIDS) drive economic development and make the most of their marine environments.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson, will announce £9 million over two years to help Commonwealth Small Island Developing states (SIDS) use their marine resources to sustainably grow their economies. The funding which will be delivered through the Commonwealth Marine Economies programme will also safeguard healthy seas and build resilience against environmental disasters.

### **Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:**

Britain is using its seafaring prowess to help reverse the decline of our oceans.

Our oceans are the largest living space on Earth with a delicate and complex biodiversity. They are not only integral to the economy, but crucial to supporting the cultures, food and security of the world.

We must as a Commonwealth protect our marine inheritance. That's why today's £9 million will help Commonwealth small island states sustainably develop their maritime environment to create jobs and drive growth.

The Foreign Office is on course to safeguard over four million square kilometres of ocean by 2020 through its Overseas Territories Blue Belt programme. The programme's scientific expeditions around St Helena have discovered a potential new species of octopus. Evidence is now being put to the international scientific community for formal validation.

Through projects in the SIDS such as seabed mapping, sustainable tourism and identifying marine pollution hotspots, the UK will share its world-renowned expertise to help SIDS tackle climate change, reduce poverty and boost the blue economy.

Many Commonwealth countries are at the coalface of climate change, even though their populations account for a tiny fraction of the world's greenhouse emissions. Mr Johnson wants to build global political momentum to ensure that this generation leaves the environment in a better state than we found it.

## **Notes to Editors**

- The Commonwealth Marine Economies Programme works in 17 Small Island Developing States (SIDS) in the Caribbean and Pacific, and is delivered by three world-leading UK agencies: the UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO), The Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS), and the National Oceanography Centre (NOC).
- The Blue Belt Programme works in the UK's Overseas Territories and is run by the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) and the Marine Management Organisation.
- The funding will come from the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund which provides funding for cross-government projects and programmes.

## **Further information**

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**[Press release: UK Government rallies Commonwealth to unite on marine waste with ambitious plan to end sale of plastic straws, stirrers and cotton](#)**

## buds

The Government has announced the end to the sale of plastic straws, drink stirrers and plastic-stemmed cotton buds at the start of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Summit.

The Prime Minister will also call on all other Commonwealth countries to join in the fight against plastic pollution.

Subject to the consultation, which the Environment Secretary will launch later this year, the Government is prepared to ban the sale of these items in England under plans to protect our rivers and seas and meet our 25 Year Environment Plan ambition to eliminate avoidable plastic waste. This forms part of the wider government waste strategy – including the government's current call for evidence on how we can use the tax system to address single use plastics waste.

In order to eliminate these items from use the Government will work with industry to develop alternatives and ensure there is sufficient time to adapt. It will also propose excluding plastic straws for medical reasons.

Single-use plastic items such as straws, stirrers and plastic-stemmed cotton buds have a significant impact on our environment, both on land and in our seas and rivers when they are either littered or discarded incorrectly after use – with a recent study showing 8.5 billion plastic straws are thrown away each year in the UK.

The announcement comes as the Prime Minister has urged all Commonwealth countries to sign-up to the newly-formed [Commonwealth Clean Oceans Alliance](#) and take action, be this by a ban on microbeads, a commitment to cutting down on single use plastic bags, or other steps to eliminate avoidable plastic waste.

To drive this forward the UK government has committed a £61.4 million package of funding to boost global research and help countries across the Commonwealth stop plastic waste from entering the oceans in the first place.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

Plastic waste is one of the greatest environmental challenges facing the world, which is why protecting the marine environment is central to our agenda at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

The UK government is a world leader on this issue, and the British public have shown passion and energy embracing our plastic bag charge and microbead ban, and today we have put forward ambitious plans to further reduce plastic waste from straws, stirrers and

cotton buds.

Alongside our domestic action, this week we are rallying Commonwealth countries to join us in the fight against marine plastics, with £61.4million funding for global research and to improve waste management in developing countries.

The Commonwealth is a unique organisation, with a huge diversity of wildlife, environments and coastlines. Together we can effect real change so that future generations can enjoy a natural environment that is healthier than we currently find it.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

Single-use plastics are a scourge on our seas and lethal to our precious environment and wildlife so it is vital we act now. We have already banned harmful microbeads and cut plastic bag use, and now we want to take action on straws, stirrers and cotton buds to help protect our marine life.

We've already seen a number of retailers, bars and restaurants stepping up to the plate and cutting plastic use, however it's only through government, businesses and the public working together that we will protect our environment for the next generation – we all have a role to play in turning the tide on plastic.

There are over 150 million tonnes of plastic in the world's oceans and every year one million birds and over 100,000 sea mammals die from eating and getting tangled in plastic waste.

Today's announcement is the latest move in the government crackdown on plastic, following the plastic [microbeads ban](#) hailed as one of the world's strongest bans, the 5p plastic bag charge – [which has led to 9 billion fewer bags distributed](#), and last month's pledge to introduce a [deposit return scheme](#), or DRS, for single use drinks containers, including bottles and cans.

It sits alongside the [25 Year Environment Plan](#) commitment to eliminate avoidable plastic waste. The Treasury has also launched a call for evidence on how charges and changes to the tax system could be used to reduce single use plastics.