

Press release: New opportunities for London businesses to deliver UK aid

The Department for International Development encouraged businesses from across London and the South East to make the most of new opportunities to deliver UK aid, at the latest of its supplier engagement events yesterday (Thursday 22 March).

Addressing 100 representatives from over 85 organisations, the Minister of State for International Development Lord Bates demystified the application process and urged businesses to use their local expertise and skills to help the worlds' poorest people.

By working with DFID, local companies across London can play their part in supporting Global Britain and in turn, grow their own business, create jobs and help to boost the local economy.

Yesterday was the third and largest of DFID's regional events, which have been set up as a direct result of a review undertaken into DFID's work with suppliers. Delivering on recommendations made, the department is proactively cutting red tape to boost competition and open up DFID's market to new businesses, including small enterprises in the UK and the world's poorest countries.

Minister of State for International Development, Lord Bates said:

Today, I have met with business representatives from across London and the South East who want to help deliver UK aid and achieve the best results that UK taxpayers and the world's poorest deserve.

If we are to successfully tackle the unprecedented humanitarian and development challenges of today, we need to use the very best of British expertise. By making it easier for new and smaller businesses to work with us, and by ensuring the bidding process is more competitive, we can increase our positive impact on the world's poorest, while boosting the local and UK economy at the same time.

Aleeza Mitha, Strategic Partnerships Manager at London-based the Aga Khan Foundation, said:

The Aga Khan Foundation has been working with communities to improve the quality of life for the most vulnerable populations across Africa, Asia and the Middle East for decades.

I came to DFID's supplier event because I wanted to understand more about the procurement process. The event certainly delivered; it

was a great opportunity to meet the procurement team face-to-face and to have many key questions answered.

The Aga Khan Foundation and DFID share core values. We are both working to empower the world's most disadvantaged, especially women, and working together, we can achieve this goal.

Catherine Stevens, Head of International, Quality, Excellence and Development at London-based company Schole, said:

We run local curriculum schools in east Africa, and we develop these schools so that they reach a good or outstanding level. We are keen to expand what we do so that having access to a quality education is made available to all.

I was particular interested in coming to the event to find out how we could draw on support from DFID so that we can develop our aspirations to serve more lower income people. It has been welcoming to hear that SME's like ours are a priority area and that DFID is actively encouraging us to consider ourselves a priority. I am looking forward to connecting with the procurement team and taking this forward.

[News story: Education Secretary visits Nottingham](#)

Education Secretary Damian Hinds heard first hand from pupils, teachers, apprentices and parents about the high quality education they were receiving during a visit to Nottingham (23 March).

The Secretary of State spent the morning meeting apprentices at Uniper Engineering Academy based at Ratcliffe Power Station, before CEO David Hughes provided a tour of the academy to observe lessons. Students explained why they chose an apprenticeship and what their ambitions for the future were. This was followed by a discussion with local Apprenticeship Ambassadors and businesses about how the Government can encourage more people to take up apprenticeships.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

The high quality training I witnessed at Uniper today showed what quality apprenticeships can deliver. I want more people to choose the apprenticeship route and am determined that every apprentice,

whatever their age, background or aspiration, has access to great training that will set them up for a successful career.

The next stop on the visit was Rosehill School, an outstanding LA-maintained special school in the East Midlands. Damian Hinds met members of the student council to hear about some of their creative projects and then listened to parents' views on their children's school experience.

The Secretary of State added:

I've really been inspired by my visit to Rosehill School and the way the teachers work with the children to provide an excellent education with the deepest understanding of their additional needs. The happiness of the parents I met was a real testament to the quality of the education the hard-working teachers and staff provide.

It's a mark of a strong society how we treat children who are most in need of our support. Every child, no matter what challenges they face, should have access to a world-class education that prepares them for life in the modern world.

[News story: New measures to avoid valproate exposure in pregnancy](#)

Dr June Raine, Director of MHRA's Vigilance and Risk Management of Medicines Division said:

We welcome the [CMDH endorsement](#) of the strengthened regulatory position on valproate medicines which we have been championing through the Europe-wide review.

Valproate (Epilim, Depakote and other generic brands) is associated with a significant risk of birth defects and developmental disorders in children born to women who take valproate during pregnancy. If valproate is taken during pregnancy, up to 4 in 10 babies are at risk of developmental disorders, and approximately 1 in 10 are at risk of birth defects.

Valproate must no longer be used in any woman or girl able to have children unless she has a pregnancy prevention programme in place. This is designed to make sure patients are fully aware of the risks and the need to avoid

becoming pregnant.

These new regulatory measures also include a ban on the use of valproate for migraine or bipolar disorder during pregnancy, and a ban on the use of valproate to treat epilepsy during pregnancy unless there is no other effective treatment available.

Patient safety is our highest priority. We are committed to making sure women and girls are aware of the very real risks of taking valproate during pregnancy. However, we also know it is important women don't stop taking valproate without first discussing it with their doctor.

This regulatory position has been developed through close collaboration with professional bodies, health system organisations, and patient and campaign groups.

I would like to particularly thank the families of the Valproate Stakeholder Network who have shared their experiences and expertise with us. Their support will help keep future generations of children safe.

Press release: Graham Stuart leads major infrastructure investment drive at Berlin conference

The Infrastructure Investor Global Summit in Berlin will include 1,400 delegates from more than 140 of the world's biggest global institutions and private investment firms, who collectively manage more than £500 billion in capital.

During his speech, Minister Stuart will explain why the UK is the top investment destination in Europe, thanks to its open, liberal economy, flexible labour market, and business-friendly regulation.

Inward FDI stock now stands at a record £1,199 billion, and is estimated to have created or safeguarded 107,000 jobs in 2016/17.

The UK also has an excellent record of infrastructure delivery, with over 4,500 projects completed since 2010 and 98% of 158 priority projects either on track for delivery or completed.

A further 720 infrastructure projects – with a value over £500 billion – are due to start before 2020/21, and Minister Stuart will hold roundtables with leading figures in the German financial community to show how the UK will continue to offer huge investment potential in years to come.

Minister for Investment Graham Stuart said:

Since DIT's foundation in July 2016, the British government now has a department of state solely focused on trade and investment and our network is dedicated to supporting businesses across the globe.

The UK is Europe's top destination for foreign investment, and as an international economic department, we are determined that investment in infrastructure is a major part of the [Industrial Strategy](#).

With more than £500 billion of infrastructure investment opportunities up to 2020/21, and an exemplary record of project completion, I will be telling the world's most influential investors why the UK should be their first choice for investment.

One recent investment – of £1.4 billion as part of a consortium including Meridiam and Allianz Capital Partners – will help NeuConnect build the first direct power link between Germany and the UK.

The project will create new export and import routes for electricity for each market, benefitting UK and German consumers with reduced wholesale and consumer electricity prices.

Chief Executive Officer of NeuConnect Britain, David Inglis, said:

The first direct connection between the UK and German power grids offers great economic benefits for both countries and furthers the integration of renewables by enabling both countries to balance their future energy needs from a new market.

The long-term investors are very committed to jointly work with the national governments and regulators of both countries to successfully deliver this innovative and independent energy infrastructure project to German and British consumers.

[News story: PHE publishes consultation on Nutrient Profiling Model](#)

Public Health England (PHE) has today (23 March 2018) published a [consultation on an updated Nutrient Profiling Model \(NPM\)](#), the model that differentiates which food and drink products can be advertised during programming where children make up more than a quarter of the audience.

The NPM is a tool used by the Office of Communications (Ofcom) and Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP) to give food and drink products a score. This score determines whether products can be advertised during children's television programming and non-broadcast media including print, cinema, online, and in social media. The score is based on the balance between 'negative' and 'beneficial' nutrients that make up a product. The more beneficial nutrients, such as fruit and vegetables, protein and fibre, and the fewer negative nutrients, such as sugars, saturated fat and salt, the more likely a product will be given approval to be advertised during children's programming.

As part of the government's childhood obesity plan, PHE was tasked with updating the current model to bring it in line with current UK dietary recommendations, especially around sugar and fibre.

Dr Alison Tedstone, Chief Nutritionist at PHE said:

It is important the Nutrient Profiling Model reflects the most up to date dietary recommendations in order to help support healthier food choices. We welcome comments on the modifications to the model.

Given current UK dietary recommendations advise the population to consume less sugar and more fibre, we can expect some products which currently pass the model to fail the revised version.

In this consultation, PHE is asking for views on the technical basis of bringing the draft revised version in line with current UK dietary recommendations. It does not cover the application of the NPM or further restrictions to advertising during children's programming.

The consultation opens today and closes on 15 June 2018.