

Press release: One million people lifted out of absolute poverty

Figures show that children are around 5 times more likely to live in poverty if they live in a workless household, compared to a household where all adults work. The number of children living in a workless household is down by almost 600,000 since 2010.

There's also good news for household incomes as these have risen to another record high, with income growth continuing to outstrip inflation in 2016/17. Income inequality – the gap between the richest and poorest – has fallen and remains lower than in 2010. Material deprivation rates for children and pensioners are at their lowest ever.

The average household now takes home a record £494 a week, and compared to 2007/08 the poorest fifth of households are seeing an extra £1,000 after inflation added to their annual income.

Minister for Family Support, Housing and Child Maintenance, Kit Malthouse, said:

It's fantastic news that one million fewer people are living in absolute poverty than in 2010, including 300,000 children. It makes sense that poverty rates are falling while the employment rate is increasing, and today's figures confirm that work remains the best route out of poverty.

We know there is more to do to ensure that every child gets the very best chances in life. Our welfare reforms offer parents tailored support to move into work, ensuring that even more families can enjoy the opportunities and benefits that work can bring.

The news follows statistics released yesterday which show that the employment rate remains at a joint-record high of 75.3%, with 32.25 million people now in work. On average, we have seen 1,000 more people in a job every day since 2010.

We spend more on family benefits than any other country in the OECD, at 3.8% of GDP. Working families are benefitting from the introduction of the National Living Wage, and the rise in the personal tax threshold is taking the lowest paid out of tax. Through welfare reforms including Universal Credit, the government is making sure it always pays to be in work.

The government is continuing to protect all vulnerable groups in society, with disability benefits being exempt from the benefit freeze and the basic State Pension being protected through the 'triple lock'.

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[Press release: 100 Day Countdown to UK Armed Forces Day 2018](#)

To mark the milestone, uniformed personnel from the Royal Navy, Army, and Royal Air Force, as well as a number of staff at attractions from across the County of Conwy have shown their support to the event by displaying the Armed Forces Day flag.

Excitement is brewing throughout the region for the event on the 30 June, with so many people wanting to show their support and say thank you to our serving personnel, veterans, cadets and their families for all the work they do to keep us safe at home and abroad.

On the 30 June, a parade of around 1,000 serving personnel, veterans, cadets and marching bands will step off from the Llandudno War Memorial at 11am to signal the start of the Armed Forces Day celebrations. The parade, which promises to be an impressive display of both sound and colour, will then march down the road adjacent to the promenade, culminating in a salute to a number of special guests and dignitaries outside Venue Cymru.

Serving personnel, veterans, families, friends and visitors will then have the chance to interact with exhibitions and activities along Llandudno Promenade and Bodafon Fields including static aircraft, armoured vehicles and a diving tank (all assets are subject to operational requirement). A fantastic opportunity for the public to get up close to military assets.

A full programme including an event site map will be released nearer the time.

A special thanks goes to the support of Welsh Government, our charity partners SSAFA, and the Royal British Legion for working with Conwy County Borough Council to make this event possible.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

Armed Forces Day is a chance for communities across Wales to say thank you to our service personnel, veterans and their families for their service, commitment and courage.

And in 100 days' time, all eyes will fall on Llandudno as host to the main nationwide celebration. I will be proud and privileged to

be a part of these celebrations, joining thousands of people in expressing our gratitude to the men and women who do so much to preserve our freedom.

First Minister Carwyn Jones said:

I am delighted Wales has been chosen to host National Armed Forces Day this year, and look forward to joining friends at events in Llandudno in 100 days to formally thank our service men and women. We have a proud military history in Wales, and I also wish to pay tribute to the families of our Armed Forces personnel this year for the sacrifices they have made to support those who so selflessly chose to serve their country.

Cllr Liz Roberts, Armed Forces Champion, Conwy County Borough Council said:

Hosting Armed Forces Day is a huge coup for Llandudno, and despite still being 100 days away, an incredible amount of work has already been undertaken behind the scenes to highlight how our seaside town is the right environment for this event and make the forces community proud.

On Saturday 30 June, Llandudno will become the focal point for the UK as together we acknowledge the hard work and dedication of serving personnel and veterans.

It's important to mark the 100-day milestone and showcase the support we have within the County of Conwy, across North Wales, and from the Armed Forces towards this fantastic event.

Colonel Lance Patterson, Deputy Commander 160th Infantry Brigade and Headquarters Wales, said:

Armed Forces Day 2018 promises to be an important and fine occasion, not just for Llandudno but for the whole of Wales and the rest of the UK.

ENDS.

Press release: Change of Her Majesty's High Commissioner to Mozambique – July 2018

Ms NneNne Iwuji-Eme has been appointed British High Commissioner to the Republic of Mozambique in succession to Ms Joanna Kuenssberg.

Ms NneNne Iwuji-Eme has been appointed British High Commissioner to the Republic of Mozambique in succession to Ms Joanna Kuenssberg. Ms Iwuji-Eme becomes the first British black female career diplomat to be appointed High Commissioner. She will take up her new role in July 2018.

Ms Iwuji-Eme has spent 16 years in the Foreign Office, with roles ranging from Economic Adviser for Africa to Chief Press Officer to the Africa Minister, she has also worked as an Economist in Defra and for Royal Dutch Shell. Her most recent posting was to Brazil as First Secretary Prosperity and Acting Prosperity Consul.

NneNne Iwuji-Eme said:

“It is an honour and a privilege to be appointed High Commissioner to Mozambique.

“I hope my appointment as the first British black female career diplomat to this position will inspire young talent, regardless of race or background, to pursue their ambitions in the Foreign Office. I look forward to forging even stronger connections between Britain and Mozambique two close members of the Commonwealth family.”

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

“As the country heads in a new and exciting direction, it’s important that we have the brightest and the best batting for Britain.

“Our great diversity is an invaluable asset on the global stage, and it’s only right that at all levels the FC0 reflects this.

“As a continent with some of the world’s fastest growing economies, Africa is an important partner post Brexit. NneNne has the vision, experience and energy to take our relationship with Mozambique to the next level, and I congratulate her on her appointment.”

The Foreign Office has made huge strides in improving diversity. Just under a third of Missions (32per cent) are headed up by women up 200 per cent since 2008, and half the FC0 board is female. Black and Minority Ethnic currently make up 13.4 per cent of Foreign Office staff, with the FC0 board and BAME networks improving diversity with tailored training and mentoring programmes and a schools outreach programme.

The FCO is working to improve diversity in the Diplomatic Service and has been awarded a Gold banding for race, in the Business in the Community Diversity Benchmark, the UK's most comprehensive benchmark for workplace diversity

CURRICULUM VITAE

Full name: Chigozirije NneNne Iwuji-Eme

2014 – present Sao Paulo, Deputy Prosperity Consul /Head of Prosperity

2013 – 2014 Brasilia, First Secretary (Political)

2012 FCO, Chief Press Officer covering Africa Minister, South Asia, North America, UN

2011 – 2012 FCO, Head of Section, Strategy and Resources, Global Economy Group

2009 – 2011 FCO, Head, Great Lakes Section, Africa Directorate

2008 FCO, Policy Analyst, Directorate for Strategy, Policy Planning, and Innovation

2006 – 2008 Royal Dutch Shell (Netherlands), Scenarios Planner/Senior Africa specialist

2002 – 2006 FCO, Head, Africa, Middle East and Transition Economies, Economic Policy Department

1999 – 2001 Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Economic Adviser

Further information

[News story: PHE publishes water fluoridation health monitoring report](#)

Public Health England (PHE) has today published its [Water fluoridation: health monitoring in England 2018 report](#) on behalf of the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care.

Public Health England (PHE) has a duty under the Water Industry Act 1991 to monitor the effects of fluoride on people living in areas covered by water fluoridation schemes on behalf of the Secretary of State. PHE will report on this at least every 4 years.

Today's is the second such report; the first was published in March 2014. The findings of both the 2014 and 2018 reports are consistent with the view that water fluoridation is an effective and safe public health measure.

Professor John Newton, Director of Health Improvement at PHE, said:

The evidence in this report shows water fluoridation is a safe and effective method to reduce tooth decay, especially among deprived communities. We would encourage local authorities to consider this evidence carefully when deciding on their plans to improve dental health in their areas.

The report found:

- 5-year-olds in areas with water fluoridation schemes were much less likely to experience tooth decay, and less likely to experience more severe decay than in areas without schemes
- the chances of having a tooth/teeth removed in hospital because of decay were also much lower in areas with water fluoridation schemes
- children from all areas benefited from fluoridation, but children from relatively deprived areas benefited the most
- dental fluorosis, at a level that may affect the appearance of teeth, was observed in 10% of children/young people examined in 2 fluoridated cities; however, there was no difference between children and young people surveyed in fluoridated and non-fluoridated cities when asked about their opinion on the appearance of their teeth, taking into account concerns which have resulted from any cause (for example, poor alignment, decay, trauma or fluorosis)
- taken alongside the existing wider research, our results do not provide convincing evidence of higher rates of hip fracture, Down's syndrome, kidney stones, bladder cancer, or osteosarcoma (a cancer of the bone) due to fluoridation schemes

The [Water fluoridation: health monitoring report for England 2018](#) report is available online. The next report will be due by March 2022 at the latest.

News story: Wales' reputation as FinTech hub of excellence showcased at showpiece tech event

Welsh businesses blazing a trail in the financial technology sector will seek to take their company aspirations to the next level today when they join a global audience at a showcase of their innovations and global investment plans at the International FinTech Conference (22 March).

The 2nd UK Government International FinTech Conference will bring together international investors and UK Fintech firms alongside leading industry figures, regulators and policymakers for a day-long programme of talks and pitches promoting the opportunities for global investment in the UK Fintech sector.

In Wales the digital economy is worth an estimated £8.2bn and employs over 44,000 people.

Cardiff's burgeoning reputation as an incubator for some of the UK's leading FinTech companies will be highlighted at the conference by start-ups Wealthify, MYPINPAD and Delio.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns is currently exploring the growing potential for Wales-Asia trade links at the Great Festival of Innovation in Hong Kong.

Speaking of Wales' growing stature in the FinTech sector, he said:

Whether you're tapping your bank card to pay for your morning coffee, or using your smartphone to check your bank account in the evening, chances are you're a regular consumer of Britain's ambitious and exciting FinTech industries.

This conference will be a showcase and a celebration of an industry that has done so much to contribute to this country's knowledge, skills and expertise, enhancing the UK's status as a global financial centre.

And I'm delighted to see Welsh FinTech companies taking part today – each eager to showcase this impressive wave of innovation that Wales is producing, and each benefiting from a blueprint for the best FinTech ecosystem in the world, cultivated right here in the UK.

One of the Welsh companies invited to exhibit their technology at the

conference is Wealthify. Launched in Cardiff in 2016, it is a low cost 'robo' investment service that makes the process of becoming an investor easier, quicker and more affordable.

Richard Theo, Chief Executive Officer of Wealthify said:

The International Fintech Conference is an exciting opportunity for some of the UK's best and brightest fintech companies to come together through quality and relevant discussion, leading to meaningful collaboration with other businesses, policy makers and potential investors from around the globe. We are particularly impressed with the calibre of the other organisations on the attendee list of IFC2018, which reads like a 'who's who' of the UK fintech sector.

We launched Wealthify in 2016 with a mission to use technology to revolutionise and democratise investing by making it simple, affordable and accessible to everyone. Events such as IFC act as an important forum for like-minded Fintech businesses to meet, exchange experiences and ideas and take part in organic debate that helps drive progress in our emerging sectors. What really sets IFC aside from other events we've attended is the unique and invaluable opportunity to hold these vital discussions in the presence of Westminster policy and decision makers with whose support we can drive real and positive change for the UK sector and beyond.

Wealthify will be joined at the conference by MYPINPAD – a Cardiff based payment authentication software company established in 2012 which now has offices in London, Hong Kong and Jakarta.

Allan Syms, Chief Operating Officer at MyPinPad said:

We are delighted to have been hand selected to exhibit at this year's International FinTech Conference as 'one of the UK's most exciting FinTech's. MYPINPAD is a global leader in payments software authentication solutions.

Our patented technologies make it easier and more secure than ever before for merchants and PSP's to accept card payments both online and in-store to meet the ever-growing demand for innovative mobile payment solutions.

Our aspiration of growing the number of global card acceptance points from 46m to 460m in the next 5 years drives us towards our goal of turning every ubiquitous smart device into a payment acceptance terminal. We are looking forward to showcasing our revolutionary software-based payments authentication technologies to international investors, industry experts and domestic policymakers at this year's event.

The conference coincides with the launch of the UK Government's FinTech Sector Strategy – a plan developed to underline the Government's ongoing support for the industry, responding directly to one of the key aims of the Industrial Strategy of making the UK one of the best places to start and grow a business.

The Fintech Sector Strategy will include:

- a Cryptoassets Task Force consisting of HM Treasury, the Bank of England, and the Financial Conduct Authority. This will help the UK to be at the forefront of harnessing the potential benefits of the underlying technology, while guarding against potential risks
- 'Robo-regulation' pilot schemes to help new fintech firms, and the financial services industry more widely, comply with regulations by building software which would automatically ensure they follow the rules, saving them time and money
- appointing three new Fintech Regional Envoys to ensure the benefits of fintech are felt across the UK
- creating a set of industry standards which will enable fintech firms to more easily partner with existing banks
- helping new, small fintech firms to provide complex financial services and thereby grow their businesses and reach new customers. Industry and government will work together to create 'shared platforms' which will help remove the barriers that these firms face in setting up new systems
- a Connect with Work programme developed by the government's Fintech Delivery Panel to help fintech firms to take advantage of the UK's diverse workforce

At the conference the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Matt Hancock, will also announce that Tech City UK is building a world-leading Fintech Programme across the country. This will support new companies in the sector across the UK to become tomorrow's global fintech firms.

Digital and Culture Secretary Matt Hancock said:

We are determined to make Britain the best place to start and grow a digital business while giving consumers more choice when it comes to managing their money. This new nationwide fintech programme will help startups right across the country flourish in the future and spread the benefits of this pioneering technology.

The Conference is a highlight event as part of UK Fintech Week 2018, which takes place from 19-23 March. ENDS