

Speech: PM's International Women's Day

Speech: 8 March 2018

For more than 100 years, International Women's Day has called on us to stand together and celebrate the tremendous achievements of women in every country around the world.

This year, it is particularly significant for us here in the UK because it coincides with a very significant centenary, the moment when some women were given the right to vote here in the UK.

Today, it may seem extraordinary to us that women in this country were not only denied the right to vote until that time, but had to fight so hard for it.

And yet despite the huge political, social and economic strides that we've taken forward since, we know there are areas where things are simply not right.

Over the past year we have seen something of a watershed moment.

I am of course referring to the women who have broken the silence on pervasive sexual harassment with the powerful "Me Too" movement;

Spoken out about instances where – incredibly – a pay difference still exists between themselves and men carrying out the same work.

And called out the bullying and harassment some – particularly those in public life – face online.

Much work remains to be done in all those areas, but today I want to turn to another issue.

Because today everybody gathered in this room is here because we are all united in one single aim: bringing an end to abhorrent and life-shattering domestic abuse.

Across the country thousands of women endure unimaginable abuse in their homes, there are women who know what that means on a daily basis, often at the hands of those they are closest to, every single day.

I believe we need nothing short of a complete change across the whole of society in the way we think about and tackle domestic abuse. That's why today we are launching a consultation on our proposals for new laws, stronger powers and new prevention measures.

And the trouble is too often women and men – although mainly women – suffer in silence and endure the most terrifying behaviour.

We've tended to always think of it in terms of violence, but sometimes it

means other forms of abuse that may not involve physical harm but certainly should be criminal. And so for the first time the Bill will provide a statutory definition of domestic abuse that includes non-physical abuse such as economic abuse. And we won't let anyone trivialise these forms of abuse.

The Bill will recognise the devastating impact domestic abuse has on families, by creating a statutory aggravating factor which will allow for tougher sentences in cases involving children. For too long, the approach was taken that children are not affected. It is time we recognise that they are.

It will create new Domestic Abuse Protection Orders, drawing on the strongest powers from existing orders to allow police and courts to intervene earlier.

It will establish a Domestic Abuse Commissioner, to hold public bodies to account, and act as a national champion for victims.

And we will build upon the work I started at the Home Office – putting Clare's Law – the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme which allows anyone to ask if their partner has a violent history – onto a statutory basis; giving victims of domestic abuse the same range of protections in courts as those who have suffered from modern slavery or sexual offences; and further strengthening the ground-breaking offence of controlling and coercive behaviour in a family relationship, which we introduced in 2015.

I am grateful for the work that so many of you do with the police, and those in the criminal justice system and other public services, to ensure that victims are given the support that they need, when they need it. I know that, for too many years, too many people in power did not take this issue seriously. That is why, as Home Secretary, I commissioned Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary to inspect every police force on their response to domestic abuse, ensuring that each force took action wherever the law enforcement response fell short of what it needed to be.

I also understand just how important it is for those fleeing violent partners to have a safe place to go, and our recent injection of £20 million for accommodation-based services is already providing 2,200 additional beds in refuges and safe accommodation benefiting 19,000 victims.

But I know there are concerns about our proposals on how supported housing will be funded in the future. So I want to make clear that I am committed to delivering a sustainable funding model for refuges and to ensuring that there is no postcode lottery when it comes to provision across the country. That is why I want to work with all the charities and organisations working on the front line to get your ideas on how we can get this right.

And we want your input. Those working with those affected and those who have gone through it. You know what will work and what will not.

This morning I visited Safe Lives and heard first-hand the harrowing accounts of women who have suffered at the hands of abusers.

And I would like to pay tribute to all those survivors here today and beyond who show such bravery in speaking out, and to all of you working so hard to

support victims and raise awareness. Thank you. You do an incredible job, often in very difficult circumstances.

This is an issue that unites us all – whatever your background or political party. I am grateful to MPs and Peers of all parties for their tireless campaigning on behalf of survivors, and hope that we can work together to build a real consensus around these proposals.

We need to get this legislation right. We need to hear from the widest range of voices possible: experts, charities, frontline professionals, and as many people affected by abuse, from as many walks of life, as possible. So I urge all of you here today to encourage others to contribute with this consultation.

Every year many lives are ruined. Children witness appalling scenes and suffer lasting trauma and emotional damage.

No woman and no child should ever spend their days living in fear, suffering domestic abuse and fearful of speaking out.

A century ago, women fought for their independence, for their right to be heard. Today, we have come a long way but the fact we are gathered here today to talk about the continued issue of domestic abuse shows we still have a long way to go.

We also have a great challenge. So, a hundred years on, let's fight with the same vigour, the same determination. And let's be the ones to consign domestic abuse to the past.

Press release: UK Government to table devolution amendments to EU Withdrawal Bill

The decision to proceed with the amendments to the Bill in the UK Parliament came after today's meeting of the Joint Ministerial Committee on EU negotiations where Mr Lidington said it was now imperative for the UK Government to fulfil the commitment given to Parliament to table changes to Clause 11 of the Withdrawal Bill.

The Minister said that discussions with the devolved governments would continue in the hope of reaching an agreement but the need for Parliament to have a detailed debate on the issues that have been discussed for some time now between the various governments had to be respected. The House of Lords are due to debate Clause 11 of the Bill in just over a week.

The proposed amendment will mean that all EU powers that intersect with devolved competencies will go directly to the devolved parliaments and assemblies at the time of Brexit. In addition, there would be a provision for the UK Government to maintain a temporary status quo arrangement over a small number of returning policy areas where an agreement for a UK framework had not been reached in time for EU Exit. This is to protect the UK common market and ensure no new barriers are created for consumers and businesses.

Speaking after the JMC (EN) meeting in London, The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, David Lidington, said:

The UK government has put forward a significant proposal on Clause 11 and it is now imperative that Parliament is given the chance to have a proper, open and informed discussion on it.

While I remain hopeful that a deal can still be done, we have a longstanding commitment to Parliament to bring forward an amendment and will now table it – as discussed with the devolved administrations.

I strongly believe our proposal would respect and strengthen the devolution settlements across the UK and do so in a way that still allows the UK Government to protect the vitally important UK common market, providing much-needed certainty and no new barriers for families and businesses.

The UK government has a proven track record on devolution, our amendment is reasonable and we have moved a considerable way on it. We will continue to have close and regular discussions with the devolved administrations in the hope of reaching agreement around how this relatively small number of EU powers are managed in the early days of Brexit.

Present at today's meeting were ministers from the devolved administrations, including Welsh Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Mark Drakeford AM and the Scottish Government's Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe, Michael Russell MSP.

The aim of the JMC (EN) was to find an agreed way forward for returning EU powers to the UK, that both respected and strengthened the devolution settlements, while also providing certainty on how laws will work and minimising change for businesses and families as UK departs the EU.

The UK government will now shortly publish the frameworks analysis. JMC(EN) noted and agreed the UK Government's intention to publish its frameworks analysis and committed itself to continuing work towards agreements on common frameworks.

08 March 2018

The eighth Joint Ministerial Committee (EU Negotiations) met today in 70

Whitehall. The meeting was chaired by the Rt Hon David Lidington MP, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office.

The attending Ministers were:

From the UK Government: the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, Rt Hon David Lidington MP; the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP; the Secretary of State for Wales, Rt Hon Alun Cairns MP; the Secretary of State for Scotland, Rt Hon David Mundell MP; the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Exiting the EU, Robin Walker MP; and the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Shailesh Vara MP.

From the Welsh Government: the Cabinet Secretary for Finance, Mark Drakeford AM.

From the Scottish Government: the Minister for UK Negotiations on Scotland's Place in Europe, Michael Russell MSP.

Dr Andrew McCormick, Director General International Relations from the Northern Ireland Civil Service attended the meeting in the continued absence of a Northern Ireland Executive.

The Chair opened the meeting by summarising official level engagement since the Committee last met, including discussions on the proposed amendment to the EU (Withdrawal) Bill. The Committee discussed the UK Government's proposed amendment to clause 11 and progress made towards reaching agreement. The Committee noted the timings for the Committee Stage debate in the House of Lords. All administrations remained committed to reaching agreement on the EU (Withdrawal) Bill. Discussions on further detail on the proposal would continue between the UK Government and Scottish and Welsh Governments in the coming weeks.

JMC (EN) noted and agreed the UK Government's intention to publish its frameworks analysis and committed itself to continuing work towards agreements on common frameworks.

Press release: Foreign Secretary visits school for International Women's Day

Providing every girl with at least 12 years of quality education will solve many of the world's problems, Boris Johnson told pupils during a surprise school visit today (Thursday 8 March). The Foreign Secretary made the remarks during an impromptu trip to St Leonard's Church of England Primary Academy in

Hastings to mark International Women's Day.

Mr Johnson spoke to more than one hundred pupils about his international campaign to persuade every government to deliver a minimum of 12 years of quality schooling for every girl by 2030. He said he hopes that the pupils would use their voices to become powerful activists for less fortunate children in other parts of the world – and in turn solve many of the biggest problems we face today.

Foreign Secretary, Boris Johnson said:

Globally 130 million girls are not in school and in conflict zones, girls are two and a half times more likely to be out of school than boys. Archaic groups like Boko Haram act with impunity kidnapping girls just because they want to learn.

When we empower girls to read and write and have the skills not only to survive but thrive, countries are healthier, more prosperous and crucially more stable.

Young people make up 60 per cent of the Commonwealth, that's why during the Commonwealth Summit I will call on leaders to prioritise girls' education to ensure that no girl is left behind, because educating girls is the single most powerful spur to development.

Appallingly 90 per cent of world's poorest children leave school unable to read and write. That is why the Foreign Secretary will push for a firm commitment from each of the 53 Foreign Ministers attending the Commonwealth Summit to make girls' education a priority. He will argue that illiteracy and poor schooling are the root causes of poverty, instability and extremism.

Mr Johnson also took part in a Connecting Classrooms session about the links between St Leonard's and its sister school in Sierra Leone. UK support means that over 8,000 marginalised girls, and 2000 children with disabilities in Sierra Leone now attend secondary school.

Connecting Classrooms is a UK aid backed programme that connects 31,000 schools in more than 50 countries to help children experience other cultures, learn from one another and become good global citizens.

Further information

[**Press release: Food and drink**](#)

companies fuel passion for innovation with share of £50,000 prize

Tackling food waste with natural composters beneath Glasgow city centre, using grains from breweries to boost milk production and improving packaging for pickled eggs are among the latest ideas to be awarded grant funding at industry event celebrating innovation.

[The Food Innovation Network](#) (FIN), which is sponsored by Defra and the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, connects food producers across the country with world-class facilities such as test-kitchens and laboratories to help them create new products and production methods.

Yesterday (Wednesday 7 March) food entrepreneurs from across the country showcased their ground breaking solutions to day-to-day problems at a special [Food Innovation Network](#) (FIN) Awards event, which was run by Innovate UK and the Knowledge Transfer Network to encourage companies to examine ways in which they can revolutionise the food and drink sector.

Micro, small and medium sized businesses pitched their projects to a panel of industry experts and ten companies secured £5,000 grants to turn their pioneering ideas into reality. The winning entries all demonstrated unique ways in which they could increase productivity, enhance the environment, improve sustainability or aid our health and wellbeing.

Congratulating the winners, Food and Farming Minister George Eustice said:

Innovation is key to ensuring Britain's successful food and drink industry continues to grow, which is why it was great to see such an exciting display of ingenuity from smaller businesses – who often do not have the same research resources available to them as larger companies.

The FIN Awards voucher fund is designed to support small businesses with bright ideas to develop their concepts in partnership with these research organisations. The ten winners of the Food Innovation Network grant are:

- Scratch Meals Ltd -Healthy Pies, Grimsby: The winning proposal from Scratch Meals Ltd will transform one of the nation's favourite meals: pies. Hoping to access new markets, the innovations will help the company redesign pies to improve their nutritional content, sustainability and reduce packaging.
- Crafty Tech Ltd, Active Transfers, Aylesbury: Crafty Tech Ltd wish to transform the effectiveness of conveyor belts to enhance the production

line. They will be testing the automation with the view to patent their concept and access the global market.

- Central Stems, Urban Greens by Sustainable Means, Glasgow: Hidden underground in the heart of the city under Central Station, Central Stems will use their award to trial food production that combines hydroponics and natural composting to address the issue of food waste and agricultural emissions.
- LA Brewery, Non-Alcoholic Kombucha Brewery, Kettering: Kombucha – a fermented tea – is experiencing a surge in popularity due to its potential health benefits. This business will be developing a technique to improve the shelf-life of kombucha. Working with Huddersfield University, the LA Brewery will experiment with bacteria and yeast resulting in a product with longer shelf-life which retains healthy bacteria and remains non-alcoholic.
- PyroGenesys Ltd, Converting Energy From Waste By-Products to Animal Feed Ingredients, Birmingham: Bread waste and used grains from breweries are being incorporated into cattle feed to identify whether this can boost milk production, whilst decreasing methane emissions from cows. If the trial is successful bakers and brewers would be able to transform their waste into animal feed.
- Purely Pickled Eggs Ltd, Bringing Pickled Egg to the People, Gloucestershire: This business is identifying novel ways of packaging pickled eggs to make sure they are in plentiful supply to go with our fish and chips. They will be exploring new methods of applying current application and preservation methods for in new ways.
- Drink Baotic Ltd, Validating New Health Markets, Glasgow: Working with the Glasgow Caledonian University, Drink Baotic Ltd are proposing a pilot to identify how their drink, impacts on health. It is hoped the product will relieve the symptoms of gut issues and constipation.
- Afrique FoodPro, Powdered Mix for Bean Fritters, London: This company has produced a bean mix to create bean fritters, saving time compared to the conventional preparation method which includes soaking black eye beans. In partnership with Greenwich University, they aim to develop their mix into a commercial product and design a manufacturing process. It is estimated the value of this market will be worth £200,000 within the first year.
- Booch & Brine, Scale up Kombucha!, Manchester: The Scale Up Kombucha! Project aims to research best practice, from Canada, with partner Manchester Metropolitan University and turn this into practical

resources, processes and guidance that will enable Booch & Brine to scale up production, grow their business and potentially benefit other UK SMEs via knowledge transfer to academia.

- The Cheshire Saffron Company, Multiple Saffron Harvests via Hydroponics Cheshire: Saffron has massive health benefits including treating depression and this project will explore improving the efficiency in how saffron is grown in the UK. In collaboration with Farm Urban, hydroponics will be used in a creative and innovative way to grow saffron, increasing the yields and changing the way saffron is grown.

[News story: Teaching Regulation Agency Chief Executive appointed](#)

Alan Meyrick has today [Thursday 8 March] been appointed as the Chief Executive of the new Teaching Regulation Agency responsible for the regulation of the teaching profession.

The Teaching Regulation Agency will support employers, schools and headteachers with safeguarding responsibilities. This will include taking action on allegations of serious teacher misconduct and helping employers to complete pre-recruitment checks to ensure that they are employing teachers who are appropriately qualified for their role.

The announcement is part of the continued drive to deliver high standards across the teaching profession and provide a world-class education to all pupils, helping to build a Britain that is fit for the future.

School Standards Minister Nick Gibb said:

I am very pleased to announce the appointment of Alan Meyrick as the Chief Executive of the new Teaching Regulation Agency. Raising the status of the teaching profession is hugely important as we continue the drive for higher academic standards in all our schools.

There are now 1.9 million more pupils in schools rated good or outstanding compared to 2010 and standards of reading in our primary schools have risen significantly since we introduced the Phonics Check in 2012. Proportionate and effective regulation of the teaching profession has been and remains a factor in ensuring those standards continue to rise.'

Alan is currently a deputy director in the teacher services division at the Department for Education and has experience of regulating the profession, having worked as a registrar at the General Teaching Council for England for 11 years before spending a further year as its Chief Executive.

He also has a wealth of experience elsewhere in the civil service, joining the Home Office in 1985 before going on to be the principal adviser to the Home Secretary on policing in London, sitting on the Metropolitan Police Committee and working at the General Medical Council.

Alan Meyrick said:

I am delighted to be appointed as the Chief Executive of the Teaching Regulation Agency. The agency has an important role to play in supporting the teaching profession to maintain the highest professional standards.

Through our work we will protect pupils, maintain public confidence in the teaching profession and uphold high standards of teacher conduct.

In addition, we will support those teachers who have qualified outside of England and are able to apply to have their professional standing recognised in this country. I will lead the agency according to the seven principles of public life, and I want to ensure that all decisions are made fairly and in the public interest.

The remaining core functions of the [National College for Teaching and Leadership](#) will combine with the Department for Education in April 2018. The move will mean even closer coordination between the work already underway to improve schools and strengthen the profession, and the delivery of support to teachers in classrooms.