

UKAEA tribute to fusion energy 'inspiration' Dr Bigot

News story

CEO Ian Chapman has paid tribute to ITER Director-General Dr Bernard Bigot, who died on 14 May.



Dr Bernard Bigot

Dr Bernard Bigot, Director-General of the ITER Organization, one of the most ambitious energy projects in the world today, passed away on 14 May 2022 due to illness.

Prof. Ian Chapman, UK Atomic Energy Authority Chief Executive, said: “Dr Bernard Bigot was an inspiration to all of us working in the field of fusion energy, so I was deeply saddened to hear of his passing at the weekend.

“He transformed the ITER project through his leadership, strength of character and incredible personal commitment. Leading one of the most aspirational but complex endeavours ever undertaken by humanity requires courage, resilience and humility, all of which Bernard displayed unfailingly.

“He knew every detail of the project and his personal capacity and dedication to fusion was unrivalled. On behalf of all of us at the UK Atomic Energy Authority, I would like to thank Dr Bigot for all he has contributed to the global fusion community. He will be deeply missed.”

The experimental campaigns that will be carried out at ITER, based in Southern France, are crucial to advancing fusion science and preparing the way for the fusion power plants of tomorrow.

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Home Secretary backs police to increase stop and search

Police will have greater powers to prevent knife crime and tackle serious violence as the Home Secretary permanently lifts restrictions on their use of stop and search in areas where they anticipate serious violence to happen.

In a letter sent to police forces today (Monday 16 May), the Home Secretary will remove restrictions on section 60 that have been in place since 2014. These restrictions have limited when officers could use the vital power and decreased their confidence in deploying it.

Removing these restrictions means that more officers can authorise section 60, the powers can be in place for longer and can be used when police anticipate that serious violence 'may' occur rather than 'will' occur.

This will give officers full operational flexibility and the confidence they need to use the tool, helping rid the streets of dangerous weapons and save lives.

The move coincides with the launch of Operation Sceptre – a week of intensive action from every police force in England and Wales to combat knife crime up and down the country.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

The devastating impact of knife crime on families who have lost their loved one is unbearable. No one should have to endure the pain and suffering of the victims of these appalling crimes and we have a responsibility to them to do everything in our power to prevent future tragedies.

Since 2019, the police have removed over 50,000 knives and offensive weapons from our streets and in the 2 years to March 2021, over 150,000 arrests were made following stop and search, preventing thousands of possible fatal injuries.

I stand wholeheartedly behind the police so that they can build on their work to drive down knife crime by making it easier for officers to use these powers to seize more weapons, arrest more suspects and save more lives.

Since 2019, stop and search use has increased by around 85% and has contributed to over 50,000 deadly knives and offensive weapons being taken off our streets.

The government has further signalled its commitment to support police forces to use stop and search powers today by launching a consultation to make it easier for officers to search known knife carriers.

This follows the introduction of Serious Violence Reduction Orders under the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act passed last month which will give the police the power to stop and search adults who have previously been convicted for knife or other offensive weapon crimes.

These measures are intended to help further drive down knife crime after recent statistics have indicated there has been a 4% decrease in stabbings in the year to December 2021. From March 2019 until now, under this government, stabbings have fallen around 10%.

Permanently relaxing the conditions maintains forces' use of section 60 in line with the original legislative position laid out in the 1994 Act and means:

1. Reducing the threshold that must be met before a Section 60 authorisation can be given from reasonably believing serious violence "will" occur to "may" occur.
2. Lowering the rank of officer able to give an initial Section 60 authorisation from senior officer to an officer of or above the rank of an inspector.
3. Increasing the maximum period in which a Section 60 authorisation can remain in place (without extension) from 15 hours to 24 hours.
4. Lowering the rank of officer required to extend a Section 60 authorisation from senior officer to superintendent or above and increasing the maximum period to which an authorisation can be extended (beyond an initial 24 hours) from 39 hours to 48 hours.
5. Section 60 authorisations no longer needed to be publicly communicated to communities in advance.

The government will be working with policing partners to provide strong guidance to forces on ensuring transparent communication with communities when section 60 will be used to help build community trust and confidence, noting that in some instances this might not be possible due to operational tactics.

The Home Office has already asked the College of Policing to update its stop and search guidance to ensure its fair and proportionate use. The updated guidance was published in July 2020 and provides best practice examples for forces to use on community engagement and scrutiny.

[Computing education essential in](#)

technologically diverse world

Press release

Ofsted has published the latest in a series of reviews into different subjects across the curriculum. Today's review looks at computing.



This review explores the literature relating to the field of computing education to identify factors that can contribute to high-quality computing curriculums, assessment, pedagogy and systems. We will use this understanding of subject quality to examine how computing is taught in England's schools before publishing a subject report to share what we have learned.

The national curriculum for computing sets out that 'a high-quality computing education equips pupils to use computational thinking and creativity to understand and change the world'.

Today's review highlights approaches to constructing, sequencing and teaching a coherent computing curriculum that achieves the aims set out in the national curriculum. Central to this is the importance of identifying and ordering the underlying knowledge that pupils require to make sense of complex ideas and engage in tasks or activities within the subject.

Teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge are important factors in high-quality computing education. The review notes that there remains a shortage of suitably qualified computing teachers, which will have significant consequences for the quality of education that pupils receive if nothing is done to remedy the situation. School leaders need to provide teachers with sufficient professional development to enable them to design and teach a high-quality computing curriculum.

Ofsted recognises that there is no singular way of achieving high-quality computing education and there are a variety of ways that schools can construct and teach a computing curriculum. The review identifies some common features of successful curriculum approaches:

- the planned curriculum includes a breadth of knowledge in computer science, information technology and digital literacy

- declarative knowledge ('knowing that') and procedural knowledge ('knowing how') are identified, sequenced and connected in the curriculum
- pupils learn important programming knowledge to enable them to become skilful programmers.
- programming languages are chosen to meet curriculum goals
- development of computational thinking and problem-solving is underpinned by domain-specific knowledge that is identified and sequenced in the curriculum
- the curriculum to teach pupils how to create digital artefacts is underpinned by specified declarative and procedural knowledge
- teachers should not make assumptions about pupils' prior knowledge of digital literacy
- knowledge related to e-safety is carefully sequenced to ensure that content is appropriate for pupils at each stage of their education
- component declarative and procedural knowledge are identified and sequenced to enable pupils to be successful in learning complex ideas or processes
- teachers have access to continued professional development in high-quality computing to develop and maintain their subject knowledge

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman said:

Digital technology is driving extraordinary global changes, so it's crucial that children and young people are educated to make use of their opportunities.

Computing is rich in complex knowledge, which can make it interesting for pupils to learn. Yet it is also hard to teach well.

I hope this review is useful for teachers and school leaders and helps to raise the quality of computing education for all young people.

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[Northern Ireland: The way ahead](#)

I am visiting Northern Ireland today at a time of considerable political change. The Assembly elections brought forth a new generation of voters and representatives who are confident and optimistic about the future.

The Northern Ireland of today does not see itself as a post-conflict society but one that is maturing into a story of sustained success. One in ten of the

population were not born here. Local people have thrown open their doors to those fleeing Ukraine. A sizeable portion of the electorate were not even born in 1998. They are at ease with change, and at ease with each other.

The Northern Ireland of today is a place that has rediscovered the manufacturing verve that once made it the biggest shipyard in the world. Harland & Wolff is cutting steel again. Belfast is host to some of the world's most innovative companies in biotechnology and the creative industries, and the No1 international investment location for US cyber security firms.

This means Northern Ireland contributes a huge amount to the rest of the UK. When the pandemic hit, it was a County Antrim diagnostic company, Randox, that was at the forefront of the UK's Covid testing regime. Today, I will visit Thales, the high tech company which has played a vital role in the defence of Ukraine.

But there is more to be done to level up this place with the rest of the UK. If NI's productivity grew to match the UK average by 2030, its goods exports could be around double the level recorded in 2020. The Government will do its part with record investment, funding and the new City Deals. But I know from my time as Mayor of London that there is no substitute for strong local leadership. I will tell party leaders today that this progress will be stalled without a functioning Assembly and Executive.

Restating our commitments

In a time of change, against the backdrop of European war and a cost of living crisis, I also want to use my visit today to affirm some core principles about the UK Government's approach to Northern Ireland.

Thirty-two years ago, the then Secretary of State for Northern Ireland made a speech which many see as playing an important role in the initiation of the peace process.

Peter Brooke argued that Britain had "no selfish strategic or economic interest" in Northern Ireland. Not no strategic or economic interest – but no selfish strategic or economic interest.

It was a concept that became a pillar of the peace process – the basis of "rigorous impartiality" and "the principle of consent", from the Downing Street Declaration of 1993 to the Belfast Good Friday Agreement itself.

Times have changed, at home and overseas. But our commitment to these principles is as strong as ever.

Equally I want to be clear that this Government is not neutral on the Union.

Indeed I was heartened to hear that Sir Keir Starmer made clear in a recent interview here that the Labour Party under his leadership would campaign for the Union, should there ever be a border poll.

There should be nothing controversial or surprising about that.

The Government's commitment to the Union is above politics.

It was proved – with no politics attached – during the pandemic, with one of the fastest vaccine roll-outs in the world. It was proved – with no politics attached – by the remarkable furlough scheme that kept so many businesses and families afloat.

It is partly because of the Belfast Good Friday Agreement that the benefits that accrue from being part of the fifth largest economy in the world need not be a source of controversy, or eternal debate in political life.

They just exist, like Samson and Goliath on the Belfast skyline. They are the structural facts of economic life here, welded even more tightly by the rapid evolution of a high-skilled and high-tech economy.

Embracing change

But nor is there some perfect constitutional clockwork version of how the Union should be. Northern Ireland has always been a place in its own right, in which governance has been contested, broken, re-imagined and carefully nurtured.

Those arrangements continue to evolve. And far better, I think, is the Northern Ireland of today in which people look any way they want (north-south, east-west, or both) – depending on their identity, and their family, and their economic interests.

In today's debates about Brexit and the Protocol, let us embrace that hybridity. Let us make it work.

We stand above all else for the 1998 Agreement. Its three strands. Its commitment to harmonious relations across all these islands.

We do so, first and foremost, as co-signatories and as co-guarantors. And as partners of the Irish Government.

And we do so, next, with a commitment to work with the democratically elected parties in Northern Ireland, whom I see will today.

That means abiding by the rules that have previously been agreed, including those around the title of First Minister.

So I want to repeat my congratulations to Sinn Fein as the largest party. Respect for the rights and aspirations of all communities are an essential part of the Belfast Good Friday Agreement.

And I think it is testimony to the path that Sinn Fein have taken from 1998 that Michelle O'Neill is now awarded the position of First Minister. I have no doubt we will work together well.

But it is equally clear that the balance on which the Northern Ireland institutions have been built has not been fundamentally transformed by these elections.

The unionist and nationalist blocs are largely matched, as they have been at every election since 1998, with the unionist electorate remaining slightly larger. Unionist parties performed well in the recent election, affirming overwhelming support for power-sharing on the basis of consent.

The most significant development in recent years has been the growth of a third grouping in Northern Ireland, represented by the Alliance Party – to whom I also pay tribute. They are an important voice in the new Northern Ireland but also, let's be clear, a party which stuck to its principles in a darker and more difficult past.

Taken together, what the election results tell me is that the basis for successful power-sharing and stability is actually enhanced. Whichever way you cut it, there is a large majority for making Northern Ireland work.

And every single party and MLA has heard the same message from their constituents.

Focus on everyday issues. Schools. Hospitals. Cost of Living.

So it is time for all of the local parties to get back to Stormont. Elect a Speaker. Create an Executive. Get back to work.

Unique responsibilities on the British government

But the 1998 Agreement bestows other commitments on the British Government that go beyond its position as a co-guarantor.

One of those is to take difficult decisions: to assume a burden of responsibility, and indeed unpopularity, when consensus cannot be reached.

That is why we will deliver on three pre-existing commitments in the coming weeks.

We will take forward the Language and Culture Package agreed as part of the New Decade New Approach agreement, thereby addressing an issue that has prevented the formation of the Executive in the past.

We will intervene to ensure that women and girls have access to abortion services in Northern Ireland that are their legal right, following the failure of the Executive to deliver this.

And this week we will introduce into Parliament new measures to deal with the legacy of the past. These are different from those in our Command Paper last year. We have listened to many people in recent months and reflected on what we heard. Dealing with the past will still require difficult decisions but there will be no blanket amnesty. Immunity will only be available to those who co-operate and prosecutions could follow for those who do not.

Addressing the issues with the Protocol

In the international agreement that sits alongside the Belfast Agreement, as the sovereign government of Northern Ireland the UK also assumes specific

responsibilities that go beyond its role as co-guarantor.

To protect the “economic rights” of the people of Northern Ireland. And to ensure “just and equal treatment for the identity, ethos and aspirations of both communities”.

We must admit that those commitments have sometimes been difficult to navigate through Brexit.

We insisted throughout that there would be no scenario in which a hard border would be allowed to emerge. And we have delivered that 100%, as we said we would, protecting in full the rights that were enshrined in 1998.

We told the Irish Government that we would take special measures within the UK’s internal economy to protect their place in the EU single market. And we have done that.

We committed to maintain the Common Travel Area and associated rights. It is another commitment that British Government has kept, even throughout the pandemic when so many restrictions were enforced.

Seeking changes to the Protocol

It is because of these complexities that the Protocol exists. It is why the Protocol was agreed in good faith. And it is why those who want to scrap the Protocol, rather than seeking changes, are focusing on the wrong thing.

But there is no disguising the fact that the delicate balance created in 1998 has been upset. One part of the political community in Northern Ireland feels like its aspirations and identity are threatened by the working of the Protocol.

And the Protocol involves other responsibilities which also need to be lived up to by all sides, including the commitment to protect the Belfast Good Friday Agreement in all its dimensions.

We cannot allow the impression that one strand is deemed more important than others; or that EU custom codes – designed for vast container ships coming from Shanghai to Rotterdam, not supermarket lorries from Liverpool to Belfast – somehow trump everything else.

We must remember that all parties to the Protocol made a commitment to be willing to revisit, adapt and change these arrangements over time – and to protect the internal market of the UK.

In the absence of change, the prior commitments made by the British Government – to protect all three strands of the Belfast Good Friday Agreement, to protect economic rights and parity of esteem – are coming into sharper focus.

Every unionist representative campaigned against the Protocol, as currently constituted. More importantly, every party, across the divide, seeks mitigations and change. None support a zealous zero risk approach to its

implementation. None wants to see grace periods terminated, as the EU insist they must be in return for limited mitigations elsewhere. Some feel that their economic rights as members of the United Kingdom are threatened, which the 1998 Agreement is supposed to protect.

The simple reason for this is that the East-West dimension – by far and away the principal artery in Northern Ireland's economic life – is taking too much of the strain.

Strand 3 of the Agreement, which promised the "harmonious and mutually beneficial development of the totality of the relationship among the people of these islands", is not functioning as it must. And Strands 1 and 2 – of equal importance and mutually dependent – are now being negatively impacted too.

Many things have changed since the Protocol was agreed. It was designed in the absence of a Trade and Cooperation Agreement and when it was unclear one would be agreed. It has not been adapted to reflect the realities of the TCA.

It was designed before a global pandemic and a European war which has created a cost of living crisis on a scale not seen for half a century.

For there even to be a question about the fast availability of medicines or medical testing in Northern Ireland (between two constituent parts of the same National Health Service) is incompatible with the post-Covid era.

For the Chancellor of the Exchequer to say in his Spring Statement that people in Northern Ireland could not be granted the same benefits in terms of tax and VAT as those in the rest of the same country is a serious issue. It means that our ability to assist with post-Covid recovery and – moreover, the long-term economic development of Northern Ireland – is restricted.

We have been told by the EU that it is impossible to make the changes to the Protocol text to actually solve these problems in negotiations – because there is no mandate to do so.

We will always keep the door wide open to genuine dialogue. And we will continue to protect the single market – as it has been protected throughout the existence of the Protocol so far – and the open border with the Republic of Ireland which will always be of paramount importance.

There is without question a sensible landing spot in which everyone's interests are protected. Our shared objective must be to create the broadest possible cross-community support for a reformed Protocol in 2024.

I hope the EU's position changes. If it does not, there will be a necessity to act. The Government has a responsibility to provide assurance that the consumers, citizens and businesses of Northern Ireland are protected in the long-term. We will set out a more detailed assessment and next steps to Parliament in the coming days, once I return from discussions with the local parties.

In doing our part, we expect all elected representatives to get back to work

and deliver for the people of Northern Ireland.

[£30 million dry dock contract supports 300 Scottish jobs](#)

Press release

£30 million contract for dry-dock maintenance for the Queen Elizabeth Class (QEC) aircraft carriers has been awarded to Babcock International Group, in Scotland



- £30 million to provide dry dock maintenance for Queen Elizabeth Class carriers
- 300 jobs supported across Rosyth dockyard and wider supply chain
- Follows both QEC carriers undertaking international engagements with allies

The 10-year agreement will ensure the two warships – HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales – are able to undergo dry dockings for planned maintenance and repair at Babcock’s Rosyth facilities, meaning the vessels continue to operate safely and remain available for defence operations, both for the UK and its allies.

The work will help to sustain 300 jobs across the Rosyth facility and the wider supply chain, contributing to UK prosperity, strengthening the Union and supporting the government’s levelling-up ambitions.

Defence Procurement Minister Jeremy Quin said:

The Queen Elizabeth Class Carriers are the flagships of our Royal Navy and it’s crucial they remain ready to protect and defend the UK and our allies.

Both carriers had their final construction in Rosyth, and I’m

pleased they will return for their dry-dock maintenance, supporting vital jobs and skills in Scotland.

QECs require dry-docking periodically throughout their lives to undertake maintenance and repair activities that will ensure the UK continues to have a flexible and modern naval force that can respond to future threats.

The QECs continue to uphold security both in UK waters and overseas. HMS Prince of Wales recently supported [Exercise Cold Response](#) with her sister ship [HMS Queen Elizabeth carrying out vital training and exercises](#) in waters close to the UK to keep her ready for operations anywhere in the world.

Steve Coates, DE&S Queen Elizabeth Class Group Leader, said:

Securing this contract is another important step on the QEC journey. The agreed partnership is a real testament to the great working relationship forged between the MOD and industry. The work that will take place will help to sustain vital jobs and skills at the Rosyth shipyard where the carriers were built and, by drawing on an extensive supply chain, will contribute to wider UK prosperity.

The contract was awarded by Defence Equipment & Support (DE&S) through a robust and transparent competition, encouraging strong bids from viable dockyards with the requisite facilities and experience of docking large vessels, whether military or civilian.

Sean Donaldson, Babcock's Managing Director of Marine Engineering and Systems and the Rosyth site, said:

We are delighted to have been awarded the contract to provide dry dockings for the aircraft carriers over the next decade. The investments in our Rosyth infrastructure and facilities over the last 10-years mean we are ideally placed to deliver projects of this size and scale. The programme will also benefit from the extensive knowledge and expertise of Babcock's skilled workforce which is steeped in carrier experience. It's a really proud moment for us.