

PM meeting with Swedish Prime Minister Andersson: 11 May 2022

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson met with Swedish Prime Minister Andersson in Harpsund, Sweden.



The Prime Minister was welcomed to Harpsund by Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson today, to discuss long term security collaboration between the UK and Sweden.

The leaders agreed that the aftershocks of Putin's abhorrent invasion of Ukraine had fundamentally changed international security architecture. They underlined that relations with Putin could never be normalised.

The invasion had also sharpened the focus on European security, the Prime Minister said, adding that the United Kingdom deeply valued its already close defence and security relationship with Sweden.

The leaders discussed how British and Swedish forces could increase their military cooperation in the coming months, and the Prime Minister said he believed today's security declaration would not only bring them closer together but allow both forces to adapt to the challenges of tomorrow, side-by-side.

Sweden has advanced, cutting-edge military technology and world leading Armed Forces, and the closer collaboration between both countries will benefit wider Euro-Atlantic security, the Prime Minister added.

Speaking about energy security, the leaders discussed closer collaboration on renewables, including wind farm technology.

Both agreed to stay in close touch in the coming weeks and months.

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350,000 households supported to buy a home through Help to Buy

Press release

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The major milestone was reached as the official Help to Buy statistics were published today (11 May 2022). The statistics show:

- 355,634 properties have been bought with a Help to Buy: Equity Loan since its launch.
- First-time buyers account for 83% of total purchases.
- The total value of Help to Buy: Equity Loan stands at £22 billion and the value of the properties sold under the scheme total £99 billion.

Housing Minister Stuart Andrew MP said:

Giving everyone the opportunity to own their own home is central to our levelling up mission – to spread opportunity and prosperity equally across the country.

It's fantastic that this milestone has been reached on the day we introduce our Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill which sets out our plans to deliver more homes and give everyone the opportunity to own their own home.

Alongside other government initiatives such as the mortgage guarantee scheme, Help to Buy has boosted the annual number of first-time buyers to a 20 year high.

Chair of Homes England Peter Freeman said:

It's brilliant to see the impact that Help to Buy has had to date. With the help of the equity loan, more than 350,000 young people and families, many of which are first-time buyers, have now been able to buy their own home.

The new Help to Buy: Equity Loan for first time buyers started on 1 April 2021 and will continue to help thousands more people to own their home until March 2023.

Purchasers can borrow up to 20% of the cost of a new build (40% in London), funding the balance via a mortgage and repaying the loan when they sell.

Help to Buy is just one of the ways the government is making homeownership more achievable and affordable. Shared Ownership, First Homes and the Mortgage Guarantee Scheme are supporting many more people into homes of their own.

The mortgage guarantee scheme statistics also published today show 12,388 mortgages have been completed since the scheme's launch in April 2021 to 31 December 2021, with the total value of mortgage loans at £2.2 billion. The majority of mortgage completions under the scheme were outside London and the South East (86%) with the highest proportion of property completions in Scotland (24%) and North West (12%).

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[PM remarks at press conference in Sweden: 11 May 2022](#)

Thank you, Prime Minister Andersson, and thank you for having me to your absolutely beautiful Harpsund retreat. It's breath-taking. It's great to be back in Sweden, and to see you once again.

This week many of us have been paying tribute to the brave men and women who secured victory and peace in Europe 77 years ago.

And so it's a sad irony that we have been forced to discuss how best to fortify our shared defences against the empty conceit of a 21st century tyrant.

When Europe celebrated VE Day in 1945 – a victory that was of course in no small part ensured by the heroism of the Russian people – we hoped that peace

on our continent endure.

Well Putin's bloodthirsty campaign against a sovereign nation has put an end to that hope.

And we face a new reality.

But one that we face together.

Throughout this conflict, our Nordic partners have been leading international support, not just for Ukraine but also for European security.

From sending defensive weapons and equipment, to bringing together international partners and standing shoulder-to-shoulder with us in the UN, the Human Rights Council and International Criminal Court.

The war in Ukraine is forcing us all to make difficult decisions.

But sovereign nations must be free to make those decisions without fear or influence or threat of retaliation.

So I am very pleased today, with you Prime Minister Andersson, to sign this mutual security assurances declaration.

It's an agreement that brings our two countries even closer together.

It will allow us to share more intelligence, bolster our military exercises and further our joint development of technology.

The many carcasses of Russian tanks that now litter the fields and streets of Ukraine thanks to Swedish-developed, British-built NLAWs certainly speak to how effective that co-operation can be. But most importantly, this is an agreement that enshrines the values that both Sweden and the UK hold dear, and which we will not hesitate to defend and, as you put it so well Magdalena, when we were out on the lake – we are now literally and metaphorically in the same boat.

Insolvency Service transitions to regional hubs as part of efficiency drive

News story

Over the next five years, the Insolvency Service is set to transition to regional centres, reducing the number of offices whilst maintaining high

standards of customer service and delivering better value for money.



To enhance value for money for the taxpayer whilst maintaining excellent customer service, the Insolvency Service has announced plans to reduce its number of offices across England from 22 to 11 Regional Centres, in addition to maintaining its existing offices in Cardiff and Edinburgh.

Currently, the Insolvency Service operates from 22 different office locations across England, Wales and Scotland.

Over the next five years, the agency's smaller offices will be consolidated into larger existing offices. The move to regional centres will deliver savings of more than £20 million over the next 10 years, enabling improved collaboration and better utilisation of office space.

The Insolvency Service will continue to operate from Scotland, Wales, and each of England's regions. The agency will look to reinvest savings into improved online facilities, making the agency's services more customer focused, efficient and accessible.

The 11 existing offices which will become Regional Centres are:

- Birmingham
- Cardiff
- Croydon
- Edinburgh
- Exeter
- Ipswich
- Leeds
- London
- Manchester
- Newcastle
- Nottingham

Chief Executive of the Insolvency Service, Dean Beale, said:

This is an exciting development which will see us become a more modern and streamlined organisation in the right locations for our customers, enabling us to better meet their needs.

As well as supporting the government's effort to help the country build back better from the pandemic, we will be able to focus on improving our services while delivering best value for money for taxpayers.

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[Home Secretary stands firm on tackling guerrilla protest tactics](#)

Crucial new changes to public order law will put a stop to the relentless reoffending and significant disruption caused by a selfish minority of protesters, which impinge on the rights of the British public to go about their daily lives in peace.

Announced in the Queen's Speech, the Home Secretary will today introduce a new public order bill with a range of proposals to better protect the integrity of transport networks and fuel supply in England and Wales, making it a criminal offence to interfere with key national infrastructure.

Police will also be given the power to proactively stop and search people and seize items intended to cause serious disruption by 'locking on' – for example gluing themselves to busy roads or complex bamboo structures. This tactic is dangerous and removing people safely is a significant drain on police resource.

Despite a rise in these dangerous and highly disruptive protests in recent years, which have stopped the hardworking majority from going about their days, getting to work and even hospital, the measures introduced today were previously blocked in the House of Lords.

Home Secretary, Priti Patel, said:

What we have seen in recent years is a rise in criminal, disruptive and self-defeating guerrilla tactics, carried out by a selfish few in the name of protest.

Not only do these antisocial protests cause untold delays and misery for the law-abiding public wanting to get on with their lives, it tears police away from communities where they are needed most to prevent serious violence and neighbourhood crime.

This bill backs the police to take proactive action and prevent such disruption happening in the first place. These measures stand

up for the responsible majority and it is time that Parliament got behind them.

Most recently, fuel supply has been disrupted by protesters tunnelling under oil terminals and cutting the brakes on tankers, and police officers have spent hours trying to unglue people's body parts from some of the UK's busiest and most dangerous motorways. This includes groups like Just Stop Oil, which alone has cost the police over £5.9 million in a matter of months.

The public order bill will:

- make it a criminal offence to:
 - interfere with key national infrastructure – including rail, road and air networks, printing presses, oil and gas refineries and power stations
 - 'lock on' (for example, gluing oneself to roads or structures), or coming equipped with the intent to lock on and cause serious disruption
 - obstruct the construction of our major transport networks, such as HS2
- give the police the power to stop and search:
 - individuals where there is reasonable suspicion they may be carrying items they intend to use to cause serious disruption by locking on and other public order offences
 - anyone within a tightly-defined area for items that could be used to commit locking on and other public order offences
- give the courts the power to impose serious disruption prevention orders on those with protest-related convictions or a history of causing serious disruptions at protests, to prevent them from continuing to commit such acts
- allow the leaders of the Metropolitan and City of London police forces to delegate the powers to set conditions on protests to senior officers in their forces, ensuring police resources for responding to disruptive protests in London can be managed more efficiently

The measures complement the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act, recently passed into law, which will mean that from Thursday 12 May there is an increased penalty for wilfully obstructing a highway of a possible prison sentence of up to 6 months and/or an unlimited fine.

The act will also make public nuisance a statutory offence – ensuring that the penalties for both these crimes reflect the severity of such guerrilla tactics.

Deemed by police as one of the most challenging aspects of modern-day policing, the government's public order proposals have been drawn up based on policing feedback and will enable them to take more proactive action to prevent serious and dangerous disruption – and deter those determined to break the law.

Part of the reason today's measures were not supported in the Lords was because the House of Commons did not have the chance to scrutinise them, which this new bill allows for.