

# [News story: Business Minister hosts diversity and the industrial strategy roundtable](#)

Employers, community groups and small business owners from across the North East today met Business Minister Margot James to discuss how diversity and inclusion can strengthen the Government's Industrial Strategy.

As part of the ministerial country-wide engagement tour, Margot James hosted a roundtable event at Stockton Council to find out directly from business how the Industrial Strategy can support diversity and inclusion in the workplace.

In its green paper, 'Building our Industrial Strategy', the Government outlines 10 key pillars of focus to be discussed as part of a 12-week consultation, inviting contributions from industry, businesses, community groups and workers across the North East and the rest of the UK.

The Government's commitment to create an economy that works for everyone and today Margot James urged employers at the event to take seriously their responsibilities to create diverse and inclusive workplaces, giving everyone the opportunity to reach their full potential.

## **Business Minister Margot James said:**

"Diversity and inclusion are key to the UK economy maximising its potential. Through our modern Industrial Strategy and investment in the Northern Powerhouse, we are building an economy that works for everyone and I enjoyed talking to employers in the North East about how we can work together to build on the regions strengths, raise living standards and create new, well-paid jobs in other industries and sectors."

The roundtable follows this week's publication of the Baroness McGregor-Smith review on black and minority ethnic (BME) labour market progression, which found the economy could receive a £24bn-a-year boost if people from ethnic minority backgrounds progressed in work at the same rate as their white counterparts.

As part of the Government's response to the findings, Margot James announced she will chair the new Business Diversity and Inclusion Group. It will bring together business leaders and organisations to coordinate action to remove barriers in the workplace and monitor employers' progress.

The group will meet every quarter at the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and will also bring together the leaders of three industry-led diversity reviews:

- Baroness McGregor-Smith

- Sir Philip Hampton and Dame Helen Alexander, who are leading a review aimed at increasing female leadership in FTSE companies
- Sir John Parker, who today concludes a consultation on recommendations to increase BME representation in the boardroom, to participate in the group

The Government has issued an open invitation to all industries, businesses, workers and local groups in the North East to visit the GOV.UK website and help set the priorities for a modern Industrial Strategy.

The consultation is open until 17 April, after which the Government will consider responses before publishing a white paper later in the year.

### **Notes to editors:**

. Among those in attendance at the roundtable were:

- ARC Stockton
- Association of Colleges
- Catalyst
- Cultures
- Daisy Chain
- EDF Energy
- Education Development Trust
- Groundwork NE & Cumbria
- Mencap
- Morrison Trust
- New Walk
- Nifco Ltd
- Recognition Marketing & PR LLP
- Shaw Trust
- Stockton Inclusion & Training Group, Cultures
- Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
- Teeside University

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## **[News story: £15 million boost for UK lamb exports](#)**

UK lamb will soon be back on dinner plates across Kuwait following a new deal worth up to £15 million, Food Minister George Eustice announced today.

The re-opened trade route was announced during the minister's visit to the Gulf to promote British food and drink and strengthen the UK's trading

relationship with this rapidly growing market.

Three major UK suppliers are already set to benefit from the five-year deal – with shipments prepped to leave soon.

The UK exported £625 million worth of food and drink to the region last year, including £80 million of cereal and £22 million of cheese.

Food Minister George Eustice said:

British lamb has a fantastic reputation around the world for its taste and quality and I'm delighted this export success will now be available for diners in Kuwait.

This move to re-open the market for UK-produced lamb is another example of how we are working hard to tap into international markets and build stronger relationships with trading partners around the world.

Total lamb exports from the UK reached £330 million in 2016, up from £300m the previous year, and this latest deal is a further boost to government's commitment to open more international markets.

The trade mission included a visit to Gulfood in Dubai, where cereal brand Mornflake from Cheshire and a mozzarella producer from Durham were among around 100 UK food and drink companies exhibiting at the world's largest annual trade show.

Jean-Pierre Garnier, head of export trade development at the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) said:

We have found for some time a high level of appetite from Kuwaiti importers and distributors for British lamb and are delighted to be able at last to supply this market.

We are committed to expanding sales of meat and dairy products in the Gulf region and support the Government's export work. Our presence at the important Gulfood exhibition with meat and dairy stands testifies our willingness to grow sales and open new markets.

As part of the minister's visit he witnessed the signing of two Memorandums of Understanding allowing greater collaboration between the UK government and Gulf on projects in aquaculture, fisheries, climate change and marine environments. The first was with the UAE Ministry of Climate Change and Environment and the second was with the Gulf-wide Regional Organisation for Protection of the Marine Environment.

To find out how to export click [here](#)

You can read the full International Action Plan for Food and Drink on [here](#)

The ban on UK lamb was introduced by Kuwait due to concerns around scrapie – a degenerative disease that affects the nervous systems of sheep and goats. Government vets provided the necessary evidence to allay concerns and demonstrate the world-leading approach we take to protecting animal health in the UK.

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## **[News story: Track workers struck by ballast, Chathill](#)**

Track workers struck by ballast thrown from the track bed by a passing train near Chathill, Northumbria, 16 February 2017.

At around 10:10 hrs on 16 February 2017 two track workers were struck by flying ballast. This was thrown from the track bed by a train on which a flexible hose had become detached at one end and was dragging on the ground. Neither track worker suffered significant injury.

We have undertaken a [preliminary examination](#) into the circumstances surrounding this accident. Having assessed the evidence which has been gathered to date, we have decided to publish a [safety digest](#).

The safety digest will shortly be made available on our website.

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## **[News story: King Challenger report and flyer published](#)**

Fatal man overboard from scallop dredger King Challenger while south-west of Scalloway, Shetland Islands.

MAIB's report on the investigation into a fatal man overboard from the scallop dredger King Challenger while 12 nautical miles south-west of Scalloway, Shetland Islands, Scotland on 23 June 2016 is now published.

The report contains details of what happened and the subsequent actions taken:

A [safety flyer](#) for the fishing industry summarising the accident and detailing the safety lessons learned has also been produced.

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## **Press release: PM meeting with King Abdullah of Jordan: 1 March 2017**

The Prime Minister met His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan at Downing Street today.

They both welcomed the historic and strong ties between the UK and Jordan and the close partnership we have developed over many years on areas such as security and defence.

On Syria, they noted the importance of securing a lasting ceasefire, and reiterated that political talks are essential to reaching a settlement that can bring about a long-term solution to the conflict.

They also discussed the vital regional role Jordan is playing in hosting Syrian refugees. The Prime Minister assured King Abdullah that the UK will continue to support Jordan in these efforts and encourage others to do the same, including through the Brussels Conference in April.

On wider regional issues, the Prime Minister reinforced the UK's commitment to working with all parties to bring about a two state solution in the Middle East, and they agreed on the need for inclusive political settlements in Iraq and in Yemen as the only way to ensure long-term stability. They also discussed progress in the wider campaign to defeat Daesh.

They ended by committing to further deepen the bilateral partnership for mutual benefit, for example on intelligence and counter-radicalisation.