

UK and Japan forge closer links on telecoms

- Two nations agree to closer cooperation to solve global telecoms supply chain issues
- Includes commitment to more information sharing on innovative ways to build networks
- Will support R&D collaboration on future tech such as Open RAN and 6G

The UK Minister for Digital Infrastructure Julia Lopez and Japan's Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications Yuji Sasaki met in London on Friday morning. They agreed several joint initiatives to support efforts to reduce the global overreliance on a small number of suppliers to build and maintain telecoms networks.

Both nations committed to greater information sharing on their respective policy approaches seeking to build a more competitive and diverse global market for telecoms equipment, including for 5G and future wireless networks.

Further commitments include deeper cooperation on research and development, particularly on open and interoperable network technologies such as Open RAN, which allow telecom providers to mix and match technical equipment from different suppliers within a network.

The Japanese and UK governments also agreed to share information and facilitate joint efforts between industry and academia in both countries to develop future communications technologies such as 6G.

UK Digital Infrastructure Minister Julia Lopez said:

The UK and Japan share a track record of strong leadership and expertise on telecoms and we both recognise the need for a more diverse global telecoms market.

This partnership opens up important new avenues for our countries to work together to pursue our shared goal of a more secure, competitive and innovative telecoms supply chain.

Japan's Vice-Minister of Policy Coordination for International Affairs Yuji Sasaki said:

It is my great pleasure to announce the telecommunications cooperation framework between Japan and the UK which will promote vendor diversification, including for 5G. Our countries both recognise the importance of initiatives to secure telecommunication infrastructure supply chains.

A secure, competitive and innovative supply chain is essential. Japan and the UK will pursue this together through this new framework.

The UK has already announced similar partnerships with India and the US to work closer together to achieve shared ambitions on telecoms diversification. These will support the UK's £250 million [5G Supply Chain Diversification Strategy](#) which seeks to build a more competitive and diverse telecoms supply market by supporting incumbent suppliers, attracting new suppliers into the UK market and accelerating the development and deployment of open-interface solutions such as Open RAN.

Read the [Joint Announcement on Telecommunications Supplier Diversity between the UK's Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and Japan's Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications](#) (ODT, 4.11 KB)

ENDS

[Guaranteed Minimum Pension](#)

News story

We undertook a review of the fixed rate of guaranteed minimum pension revaluation for early leavers. The work was commissioned as part of a government consultation.



Revaluation rate

Experts at the Government Actuary's Department (GAD) reviewed the fixed rate of guaranteed minimum pension (GMP) revaluation for early leavers.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) had asked GAD to undertake the review. It was for early leavers in contracted-out employment before 6 April 2016 and who leave service on or between 6 April 2022 and 5 April 2027.

Inflation and wage growth

As a result of GAD's analysis, we proposed a fixed revaluation rate of between 3% per year and 3.5% per year would be an appropriate range. This conclusion was based on current trends and expectations in inflation and wage growth, with 3.25% deemed a reasonable assumption.

One of the authors of GAD's report was actuary Hayley Spencer: "While GMP is a technical pensions subject, the fixed revaluation rate assumption does directly impact the level of individual pension payments.

"In our analysis we considered the consumer prices index and any upcoming gaps between inflation and earnings."

Following the GAD review, the DWP [launched a consultation](#) which ran from 23 September 2021 to 18 November 2021. It asked stakeholders on the new fixed rate percentage and [GAD's report](#) was included as an annex to the consultation.

Consultation ends

The [consultation response](#) to the GMP revaluation was published on 21 February 2022. The consultation received 2 responses, one from the Pensions Administration Standards Association and the other from an individual.

The government has said the small number of responses suggests the industry is largely content with the proposed rate.

New revaluation rate

DWP has now confirmed the fixed rate of revaluation of GMPs. It will be 3.25% per year for early leavers in contracted-out employment before 6 April 2016 and who leave service on or between 6 April 2022 and 5 April 2027.

This is a decrease from the current rate of 3.5% a year. This percentage is provided for in legislation and is reviewed every 5 years by DWP.

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[Chair and Trustees appointed to the board of the Theatres Trust](#)

Dave Moutrey

Dave Moutrey is Director and Chief Executive of HOME, a purpose built multi art form venue that opened in May 2015. He conceived and led both the merger of Cornerhouse and Library Theatre Company and the £25m capital project to create HOME which has attracted almost 1m visits per year since opening.

In April 2018 Dave was seconded to Manchester City Council in a part time role of Director of Culture. He is responsible for advising the Council on policy and strategy for culture and working closely with the Cultural Leaders Group on joint working and other collaborative initiatives.

Dave was awarded a Doctor of Arts honoris causa by the University of Salford and is a Fellow of the RSA, and a member of the Chartered Management Institute and the British Academy of Film and Television Arts. He is also an advisor to the British Council and holds a number of non-executive roles on not-for-profit boards.

James Dacre

James has been Artistic Director of Royal & Derngate Theatres and Northampton Filmhouse since 2013 and is a Non-Executive Director of Spirit of 2012 and Talawa Theatre Company. Previously he's been Associate Director at the New Vic Theatre in Stoke-on-Trent, the National Youth Theatre and London's Theatre503 and held roles as a Franco-British Young Leader and Fulbright Fellow.

He has directed, produced, and toured work to several hundred theatres, opera houses and festivals across the UK and abroad, with his productions winning Olivier, The Stage and UK Theatre awards.

Suba Das

Suba Das is an award-winning director, producer and dramaturg, brought up in the North East of England before reading English at Cambridge. He is Creative Director Designate of the iconic Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse Theatres, taking up post from April 2022. He is currently Artistic Director and Chief Executive of HighTide, one of the UK's leading new writing theatre companies.

Prior to HighTide, Suba was Associate Director at Leicester Curve, overseeing all Artist Development and Community Engagement; and Resident Director at the National Theatre Studio and English Touring Theatre. Suba's other directing credits include the world premiere production of Ravi Shankar's only opera Sukanya for the Royal Opera House and London Philharmonic Orchestra; and for the Young Vic, The Roundhouse, Northern Stage, Nottingham Playhouse and Bolton Octagon.

Suba is passionate about access to theatre buildings and cultural activities for audiences of all backgrounds across the UK and he is also a trustee of the North Music Trust (Sage Gateshead); and the Coram Shakespeare Schools Festival.

Stephanie Hall

Stephanie Hall is a barrister specialising in town and country planning at Kings Chambers. She lives with her family near Leeds but works across England and Wales.

Stephanie represents both local authorities and developers at planning appeals and in the Courts. She has particular experience of large schemes and major infrastructure projects, sometimes involving theatres and very often involving works to or in the setting of listed buildings.

Stephanie appears in the list of top rated planning junior barristers, is a member of the Planning and Environment Bar Association, the Compulsory Purchase Association, the Parliamentary Bar Mess and the National Infrastructure Planning Association.

Lucy Osborne

Lucy Osborne is an award-winning set and costume designer based in London. She works internationally across the UK, Europe and United States, specialising in new writing and musical theatre. Current productions include a new production of Kander and Ebb's Cabaret for Gothenburg Opera and a new musical The Osmonds which is currently touring the UK throughout 2022. □ Lucy is also a co-founder of studio three sixty, working with performing arts venues to design and regenerate buildings which enrich people's lives and empower users. studio three sixty were recipients of the Stage Awards "Theatre Building of the Year" for their design of Paines Plough's pop-up theatre ROUNDABOUT.

Lucy is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and a member of the Editorial Board for the International Theatre Engineering and Architecture Conference (ITEAC) 2022. Through Inspiring the Future she works with young people in schools to share career pathways into theatre. She is a passionate advocate for inclusive design in theatre architecture.

The Theatres Trust Chair and Trustees are not remunerated. These appointments have been made in accordance with the Cabinet Office's Governance Code on Public Appointments. The appointments process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Under the Code, any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years must be declared. This is defined as including holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation, or candidature for election. Dave Moutrey, Suba Das, James Dacre, Stephanie Hall and Lucy Osborne have not declared any activity.

Scottish Secretary visits Norway and Finland to boost trade links

News story

Secretary of State for Scotland Alister Jack's visit included meeting with business representatives and key political figures.



Scottish Secretary Alister Jack this week travelled to Finland and Norway on a mission to boost post-Brexit trade links.

Finland and Norway have strong business links with Scotland, with Scottish exports to both countries are worth more than £1 billion a year in total. There is huge further potential for Scottish businesses.

Mr Jack undertook a packed programme in Helsinki, Oslo and Bergen. His engagements included:

- Meeting key business representatives – including from the defence, manufacturing and energy sectors
- Holding talks with leading political figures
- Visiting the Haakonsvern naval base

Speaking ahead of his visit, Alister Jack said:

It is an honour to promote Scottish and UK interests in Finland and Norway. We greatly value the strong and important ties between the UK and our European friends and neighbours. There are enduring cultural, business and trade links between Scotland and Finland and Norway, and I look forward to strengthening those further on my visit.

The Scottish Secretary's itinerary also included:

- Visiting Green waste management provider Fortum, paper manufacturer UPM, and seafood producer MOWI

- Meeting the Finnish Trade Minister, Ville Skinnari, and Foreign Affairs Minister Johanna Sumuvuori
- Meeting the Norwegian Defence Minister, Odd Roger Enoksen, and Norwegian Foreign Affairs Minister Anniken Huitfeldt.

Mr Jack travelled to Finland on Monday 28 February, then on to Norway on Wednesday 2 March. In both countries his visit was supported by the British Embassies, part of the UK's extensive diplomatic network.

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[New campaign promotes advice to introduce babies to solid food](#)

- Research led by OHID finds 40% of first-time mums introduced solid food before their babies are 5 months old
- NHS official advice recommends solid food should be introduced around 6 months alongside breast milk or formula
- New campaign backed by Dr Zoe Williams and nutritionist Charlotte Stirling-Reed aims to promote NHS advice and bring awareness of resources to support first time mums

Parents will be better supported to safely introduce their children to solid food following the launch of a new campaign from the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID).

Weaning is a key milestone within the first 1,001 critical days, influencing children's eating habits and their health later in life and improving babies abilities to move food around their mouth, chew and swallow.

The campaign will promote NHS advice on weaning and tackle confusion around how to introduce solid foods. The official NHS guidance recommends solid foods should be gradually introduced from around six months – alongside breast milk or infant formula.

If a baby is showing these three signs, it means they're ready for weaning:

- Stay in a sitting position, holding their head steady
- Coordinate their eyes, hands and mouth so they can look at food, pick it up and put it in their mouth
- Swallow food, rather than push it back out By around 6 months of age, infants are usually developmentally ready to accept foods other than breast (or infant formula) milk.

The introduction of solid foods or infant formula before 6 months can reduce the amount of breast milk consumed and is associated with greater risks of

infectious illness in infants. Giving solid foods to breastfed infants before six months may also reduce breast milk intake without increasing total energy intake or increasing weight gain.

The campaign comes as new research by OHID found 40% of first-time mums introduced solid food by the time their baby is five months old, earlier than the NHS recommendation of around six months, and almost two-thirds (64%) say they have received conflicting advice on what age to start weaning.

Health Minister, Maria Caulfield, said:

The first 1,001 days are crucial for development and impact a child's health for the rest of their life.

Every child should have a solid foundation on which to build their health and I am determined to level up the opportunities and support for all children, no matter their background or where they grow up.

This campaign will ensure parents have the support and confidence to introduce their babies to solid food and ensure they have the opportunity to thrive and achieve their full potential.

The campaign includes an online [Start for Life Weaning Hub](#) featuring tips, advice guidelines from the NHS all in one place for ease to better support parents and reduce confusion and is backed by experts, including GP Dr Zoe Williams and nutritionist and author Charlotte Stirling-Reed.

The Start for Life Weaning hub also contains over 120 healthy and easy to prepare recipes and meal ideas which cover every step of the weaning journey, such as blueberry porridge and fish curry.

With more than 1 in 4 (27.7%) children being overweight when they reach school age, the Better Health Start for Life Weaning campaign will play a crucial role in supporting parents to get their child's diet right at the earliest stage, encouraging healthy food variety and developing good food habits.

More widely, the government remains committed to improving babies' and children's healthy development through the £500 million package to provide support for parents and children, as well as continuing to implement the recommendations from Andrea Leadson's Early Years Review to promote best practice across the health system and ensure babies and children can get the best possible start

Charlotte Stirling Reed, Registered Nutritionist, Association for Nutrition said:

I know lots of parents may feel nervous and overwhelmed at the thought of introducing their baby to solid foods, but this research

just goes to show you're not alone. The Start for Life weaning hub is a great tool to make parents feel confident about how to wean their baby. It's so important to teach little ones about food in a fun and relaxed manner as we want them to grow up enjoying mealtimes, so the weaning hub is designed to help parents enjoy this milestone by having lots of helpful advice all in one place.

Dr Zoe Williams, GP and TV Doctor said:

The research released today confirms that with so much conflicting advice available, weaning can be a very confusing time for parents. That's why it's so important to have all the information and NHS advice in one place. For most healthy babies, the easiest way to cut through the confusion is to wait until your baby is around six months old – this gives them time to develop properly, so they can cope with solid foods. When you do eventually start, there will be days when your baby eats more, some when they eat less, and then days when they reject everything! Don't worry – this is perfectly normal.

Vicky Sibson, First Steps Nutrition Trust said:

The introduction of solids is an important and exciting milestone for babies, which can have lasting impacts on their dietary habits and health. To get it right, their parents/carers need information and advice that is practical and independent. For that reason we are pleased to support Better Health – Start for Life's new 'introducing solids' campaign.

Mum of eight month old baby Rex said:

We started weaning Rex just after he was six months and at the beginning we didn't know where to start! My friend pointed me in the direction of the Start for Life weaning hub, and it was a godsend. Everything was so clear and easy to understand. As busy parents, we all need some extra help and inspiration from time to time, so we particularly loved the meal ideas and found the recipes really easy to make. We also loved documenting all the funny faces Rex would pull when discovering new foods!

Background information

- For [more information on weaning](#)
- Assets [for the campaign](#)
- The research is based on a survey carried out on 1,000 parents with children aged 3-18 months and found:

- Three in five (59%) first-time parents found the decision to start weaning confusing
- Almost two-thirds (64%) have received conflicting advice on what age to start introducing solid food
- 40% of first-time mums introduced solid food by the time their baby is five months old
- After partners, grandmothers are the biggest influence on decision making with over a quarter (28%) of first-time mums reporting their mother had the biggest influence on their decision to start weaning
- The majority (74%) agree there should be one official source for weaning advice
- As part of the wider commitment to better support new parents, the government is investing £50 million in breastfeeding support services. This funding forms part of £300 million investment in Start for Life and Family Hub services
- Data on children being overweight or living with obesity when they reach school age is available [from NHSD](#)