

Use Queen's Speech to end cuts to emergency services – Jeremy Corbyn

Labour has tabled an amendment to the Queen's Speech, which will be the first vote of the new Parliament, when voted on tomorrow (Wednesday), and a test case for MPs' approach to austerity.

After seven years of austerity, the amendment seeks to force the government to end cuts to the police and fire service and lift the Public Sector Pay Cap to give emergency and public service workers a pay rise.

Commenting on the amendment, Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party, said:

"You can't have safety and security on the cheap. It is plain to see that seven years of cuts to our emergency services has made us less safe; it's time to make a change.

"Our emergency service workers make us proud at the worst of times for our country, such as the Grenfell Tower Fire and the recent terrorist attacks, and deserve the pay rise they have been denied for seven years.

"Conservative cuts have failed. Labour has a different approach, which values those who look after us and will transform Britain for the many not the few."

News story: Jellyfish collagen pioneers set up biomaterial plant in Wales

Cardiff is now home to the first commercial manufacturing plant for extracting high-purity collagen from jellyfish.

The 7,500 square foot facility – established by medtech and biomaterials company [Jellagen](#) at Capital Business Park, Wentloog – will serve the research, medical, biotech and pharmaceutical markets.

Collagen is the most abundant protein in the human body and provides structural support for cells in the body's tissues and organs. It has been used in medical device and research applications for many years. It is usually sourced from pigs, cows, rats and horses.

Manufacturing in bulk quantities

As these mammals carry a risk of disease, Jellagen is moving away from traditional sources to develop a next generation collagen. This is with the help of £225,000 in grant funding from Innovate UK.

The company carries out sustainable harvesting of jellyfish off the west coast of Wales and operates a depot at Pembroke Dock.

Professor Andrew Mearns Spragg, Chief Executive and Founder, said:

This is a key milestone in Jellagen's evolution. To be able to manufacture jellyfish collagen in bulk quantities enables us to supply and meet the needs of world-leading medical device, biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies.

Jellyfish collagen is, in essence, the root of all collagens and is compatible with a broad range of cell types. This makes it ideally suited to support the growth of a wide range of human cells and enables it to be an effective biomaterial for applications such as cell culture, wound care and regeneration.

Investment from Finance Wales

The next step for the business is [ISO13485](#) certification, allowing it to produce material suitable for medical application and devices and to sell to the market. This will be in place by the end of 2017.

Since it was founded in 2013, Jellagen has raised more than £2.4 million in funding from grants and investment. That has included £1.8 million through the [Angels in MedCity](#) programme, with involvement from Finance Wales.

Last year the firm won the [Life Sciences Hub Wales](#) Boost Cymru competition to find the most innovative new life sciences business in Wales.

[News story: Department for Education Reports Gender Pay Gap](#)

The Department for Education has today become the first Government department to publish its gender pay gap and bonus pay gap, setting an example to other employers on promoting gender equality in the workplace.

The department has reported a mean pay gap – the difference between average salaries for men and women – of 5.3% and a median pay gap of 5.9%. This is

compared to the UK's national gender pay gap of 18.1% which is the lowest since records began in 1997.

The pay gap data will be published by all government departments and large private companies by April 2018 – shining a light on our workplaces to see where there is more to do and helping people make informed decisions about their career.

Secretary of State for Education and Minister for Women and Equalities Justine Greening said:

I'm proud that the Department for Education has taken an important step in reporting its gender pay gap, setting an example to other employers as we build a stronger economy where success is defined by talent, not gender or circumstance.

The UK's gender pay gap is at a record low, but we are committed to closing it. As one of the UK's largest employers, the public sector has a vital role to play in leading the way to tackle the gender pay gap which is why the DfE's step to publish our gender pay gap matters.

Through transparency we can find out what the situation is, where there is best practice and create pressure for more progress.

The Department for Education is committed to reducing its gender pay gap and has introduced a range of initiatives to support women in the workplace, including:

- Support for women returning to work: through shared parental leave, job sharing or part time opportunities. The department has also updated its guidance on supporting staff returning from maternity or adoption leave.
- Helping women progress in their careers: through talent management schemes such as the Positive Action Pathway, open to all from protected characteristic groups.
- Providing networks: the departmental women's equality network, Network 58, runs upskilling events, promotes campaigns and holds talks to support women in the workplace.
- Monitoring pay: to identify any pay differences and take targeted action where appropriate.
- Improving the recruitment process: the department has anonymised the application process to reduce unconscious bias and ensuring that all interviewers have undergone unconscious bias training.
- Focus on gender equality: the department has made gender equality a central part of the departmental Diversity and Inclusion strategy.

These initiatives have helped to create a culture that supports women in the workplace and have been supported by strong leadership across the organisation, helping to close the gender pay gap.

In April, the UK became one of the first countries in the world to require

mandatory gender pay gap reporting, a key part of the government's work to eliminate the gender pay gap. Private, public and voluntary sector employers with 250 or more employees will be required to publish their gender pay gap and bonus pay gap by April 2018. The published gender pay gap data can be viewed [here](#).

The detailed information published today shows the department has also reported a mean bonus pay gap of only 0.8% and a 0.0% median bonus pay gap. Its bonus awards are based on performance and this 0.0% pay gap reflects the fact that men and women's performance is valued equally and fairly.

Breaking down the gender pay gap data by quartiles has helped the department to identify exactly where attention should be focused. Over half (55%) of the department's senior civil servants are female and there is a higher proportion of women than men in the department's top pay quartile. However, there is also a higher concentration of women to men in the department's lowest pay quartile, which has contributed to the gender pay gap. Through the initiatives referenced above, the department will work to continue to support women's progress in the workplace.

The gender pay gap mandatory reporting requirements are part of wider work the Government is doing to support women in the workplace. This includes £5 million to support returners, offering 30 hours of free childcare, and introducing shared parental leave and new rights to request flexible working. There is also extensive cross-Government work to get more women into the top jobs at the UK's biggest companies and to get more girls taking STEM subjects at school.

[Most people in Wales satisfied with their daily lives and public services](#)

The new wide-ranging National Survey for Wales 2016-17 provides a fresh picture of the levels of wellbeing and satisfaction with public services in Wales and the issues facing local communities. The results show 82% of people in Wales are overall generally satisfied with their lives.

The National Survey for Wales is a face-to-face survey of over 10,000 randomly-selected adults aged 16 and over, carried out across Wales. The results are used by the Welsh Government to help make Wales a better place to live.

The survey began in its original form in 2012. From 2016-17 onwards it replaces the Welsh Health Survey, the Arts in Wales Survey, the Welsh Outdoor Recreation Survey and the Active Adults Survey.

Key results from the National Survey 2016-17 include:

- 90% were satisfied with their GP care, 91% were satisfied with the care they received at their last NHS appointment and 96% of hospital patients felt treated with dignity and respect.
- 90% of parents were satisfied with their child's primary school and 85% with their child's secondary school;
- 70% rated their experience of social care as either excellent or good;
- 66% were able to keep up with all bills and commitments without difficulty;
- 73% felt that people in their local area treated each other with respect and consideration;
- 48% feel optimistic about the future;
- 80% visited the outdoors in the last twelve months;
- 62% walk or cycle to get around; and
- 85% of people use the internet.

The survey for 2016-17 reveals people's views on how the Welsh Government is doing its job and their views on the health and education, where zero is 'extremely bad' and ten is 'extremely good'. The overall rating for the Welsh Government was 5.6, for health 6.2 and for education 6.2.

Welcoming the results, Finance and Local Government Secretary Mark Drakeford said:

"This new wide-ranging survey provides us with a fresh picture of public services and the experiences of people using them and their lives more generally.

"This survey has been taken against the backdrop of uncertainty following the Brexit referendum result and the UK Government's continued austerity programme.

"Despite this, the results published today show that people in Wales are generally satisfied with the public services that are so important to us all.

"We know there are difficult times to come with our public finances and we all need to prepare for these challenges. The findings of this survey are very timely and will help us all ensure we are able to deliver the world class services people rightly expect.

"Hearing the views of people across the country will help us make Wales an even better place to live, work and enjoy."

News story: British High Commissioner Fiji Speech at Queen's Birthday Party

Acting President Chief Justice Honourable Anthony Gates, Hon Vice President of Kiribati Kourabi Nenem, Attorney General Honourable Aiyaz Sayed Khayium, Hon Ministers & Members of Parliament, High Commissioners & Ambassadors, Members of the Diplomatic Corps, Distinguished Guests

Ni sa bula vinaka.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to Gordon House to the 2017 Queen's Birthday Party, celebrating the 91st Birthday of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. For Alessandro and I, as well as our daughters Lara and Tess, this is the first time we will celebrate this occasion with you. I want to start by saying a heartfelt vinaka for the wonderful welcome that you have given all four of us in our ten months in Fiji. We were back in the UK in May, after a couple of days, my daughters asked "when are we going home?". They also asked when are we going to see proper weather and wear proper clothes again but I'll gloss over that.

For the United Kingdom, we see ourselves as strategic partners in the Pacific. Each of you are invited here tonight because you have contributed in some way to the deepening of this very special relationship. We see the Pacific as family – in good times and in bad. I want to thank the Prime Minister as well as Madam Speaker, and the Leaders of Opposition parties for all your messages of solidarity following London & Manchester attacks.

More broadly, it is impossible to talk about the UK-Fiji relationship without talking about sport. Despite the fact that I arrived after Fiji Sevens' Olympic Gold win, I get to watch the team thrash team GB in the final over and over again. And just in case, I didn't get the message, Fiji Airways show the match on all their planes, so I can relive that moment of defeat any time I want! But tonight, I want to acknowledge the presence of the Scottish Rugby team here. Fantastic to see your kilts. Delighted that you will use your day off tomorrow to visit Hilton Special School and Gospel School for the Deaf and Veiuto Primary School. This shows the power of sport for social good – we will continue to use UK sporting and high level visits to promote sport for social good. At last week's Italy match, I divided my half-Italian family by supporting Fiji. This week, I will of course support Scotland, although my children have asked if they can support Fiji. I would like to congratulate FRU for hosting two international matches and we hope this is the just the start for you.

Turning from sport to culture, this has been an incredible year. Dance Group VOU attended the Edinburgh festival, winning an award, and are again in the UK this week to attend a different festival. Last autumn, His Excellency the President visited London and met Her Majesty the Queen. He also opened the exhibition "Fiji: Art & Life in the Pacific", at the University of East Anglia, the largest ever exhibition of Fijian artifacts. It is often said

that Her Majesty retains a soft spot for Fiji [reference to photo loops] and it was no coincidence that in January, Her Majesty undertook a visit the Fiji exhibition. I want to acknowledge the presence of Professor Hooper with us tonight – it is wonderful that you are now working as a cultural adviser to the COP 23 Secretariat to ensure that this important gathering sends a clear message on the deep cultural history of the Pacific. I am very proud that the British Government provided financial support not just for the exhibition in East Anglia, and for the Tabua exhibition here at the Fiji Museum, but to enable you to assist the museum with its strategic plan to strengthen this fantastic resource for all Fijians.

I would also like to acknowledge the presence of Ratu Meli Vesikula, of the Royal British Legion, representing the officers and families of Fijians who have served in the British Army.

For the next few minutes, I'm going to talk about the assistance that the UK provides in the Pacific. Rather than display a diplomatic beauty contest, I want to tell some of the stories of the individuals and events behind the headlines.

- Trade – Tate and Lyle, through its presence in the UK, has continued to purchase all of Fiji's sugar, and has recently undertaken further high level talks with FSC.
- Secondly, education – we offer approximately 16-18 scholarships per year. Masters level. Leadership. Acknowledge the presence here tonight. It makes us proud when we see our scholars do well in their studies. We had two such scholars, Krishnan Nair received a Distinction for his Master of Science in Sustainable Energy and Environment and Maika Tuicakau who was awarded the Dean's Award for Best Student on the MSC Structural Engineering programme. We were also pleased that we were able to award a scholarship to Krishneer Sen, our first Chevening Scholar from the Pacific with a disability who completed his Masters in Human Rights from the University of London. Krishneer started off as a student of the Gospel School for the deaf and is now UNICEF Pacific's Ambassador. In addition, the British Government – sole funder of Commonwealth Scholarship Commission, which provides approximately further scholarships per year in the region.
- Marine Economies – in 2015, the UK launched a new programme for Pacific Commonwealth countries. This opened up world-class expertise from the UK Hydrographic Office, the National Oceanographic Centre and the Centre for Environment Fisheries and Aquaculture Science to the Pacific. At the heart of this program is an offer to help with gaps in hydrographic mapping and to use this to develop action plans which balance economic growth with environmental protection.
- Bilateral projects – support to UNDP/police – video recording; funded women's political participation through support to Fiji Young Women's

Forum; police leadership training done in collaboration with Australia and New Zealand; a growing defence relationship with an offers of places at Dartmouth Sandhurst, and regional courses on governance and strategic leadership; capacity building to parliament hosted by the Rt Hon Speaker.

- Multilateral – the most interesting part. Very proud to be a lead funder of the UN – UK funds between 9-13% most agencies. As a Board Member of the World Bank, the UK has pledged £3.3bn to the International Development Association between 2014-17. As the Pacific draws down more IDA, we estimate that there will be more UK funding to the Pacific than at any other time.
- In addition, I want to underline the contribution the United Kingdom makes to the European Union's support to the Pacific. I particularly want to underline the good work done through the Access to Justice programme, with UNDP, which provides a welcome boost to legal aid, the climate partnership with Pacific Small Island States, and the support to the Commonwealth's hub and spoke trade capacity building, including advisers to the PIF and to the Ministry of Trade. For the UK, whilst we are negotiating a new partnership with Europe, make no mistake, we will continue to be a leading partner on foreign and security policy, globally and here in the Pacific.
Finally, I want to touch on climate. I wish to pay tribute to Fiji's Presidency of COP and leadership of last week's UN Oceans conference alongside Sweden. Attorney General, Ministers, I wish to congratulate you on an outstanding achievement including over 1300 new commitments to protect Oceans. The UK fully recognises the interconnectivity between oceans and climate, as well as the particular context of the Pacific, and warmly welcome this leadership.
- On COP, the United Kingdom is fully committed to the Paris agreement. We are delighted to support Fiji's COP Presidency, not least through our support to the European Union. We are ready to lead, shoulder to shoulder with our European partners. We are the 3rd largest contributor to the Green Climate Fund. We are proud that London is a leading centre on green finance. To have credibility internationally, it is vital to show leadership domestically also. As you may already know, the UK was the first developed nation to have legally binding targets for Greenhouse Gas emissions through our 2008 Climate Change Act. Last week, the energy mix from renewable overtook coal and gas for the first time. We are the first country to propose an end date for all unabated coal-fired power stations in this time frame as part of our plans for a cleaner energy future. This, ladies and gentlemen, is history in the making.

Before concluding, I want to look ahead to the coming year. I am delighted that the UK will host the next Commonwealth Head of Government Meeting in

April 2018 and will be chair in office of the Commonwealth for a 2 year period. As the much-needed reform program of the Secretariat moves ahead, I look forward to deepening our understanding of what Pacific States want to see from a reformed Secretariat.

In 2015, the Queen's Young Leader Programme was launched – we are honoured to have the Fiji recipients here tonight. [Elisha Bano and Luisa Tiulau both use creative arts to advocate social issues, including social inclusion and climate change. The Queen's Young Leaders are in the UK this week and will receive their awards from Her Majesty on 29th June. Next week marks the launch of the search for the Queen's Young Leader 2018 and we need to your help to publicise this life-changing programme and to nominate the very best young men and women.

We will have other opportunities to reflect on the depth of the Commonwealth partnership in the months ahead. The Commonwealth Games will be in our neighbourhood at the Gold Coast in Queensland, Australia. The Queen's Baton Relay will be in Fiji in November this year. In another example of leadership, Fiji will host the Commonwealth Education Ministers here next February. Overall, the Commonwealth offers many practical areas of assistance in terms of trade policy support, parliamentary capacity building and other programmes associated with governance/rule of law, greater access to climate finance and election support, including observer missions. We look forward to working with all Pacific countries more closely in order to insure a dynamic Summit which renews the Commonwealth as an effective global institution, attuned to the particular needs of Small Island States.

In closing, I will be pleased to report to Her Majesty that we have celebrated her birthday in style in Suva – with Bula-Kilt combination found nowhere else on earth.

I also want to thank all the staff of the British High Commission Suva who have worked tirelessly to prepare tonight's event.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I would now like to offer you a toast, if you could charge your glasses, The toast is: to the President, the Government and the People of Fiji. To Fiji.

Vinaka Vaka Levu.