

News story: DFID staff recognised in Queen's Birthday Honours

I congratulate all the DFID staff who have been recognised for their contribution to international development.

Their awards reflect the important and life changing work being done across the world by people in this department, sometimes in challenging circumstances and dangerous environments.

The commitment and hard work of people like those honoured this year makes an important contribution to the transformative power of UK aid across the globe.

Press release: Government to confirm two-year Parliament to deliver Brexit and beyond

- Rare two-year Parliamentary session to give MPs the time to consider crucial legislation
- Double the length of a normal Parliamentary session
- Great Repeal Bill to be considered alongside other Brexit legislation and government's domestic agenda

Parliament will sit for two years instead of the usual one to give MPs enough time to fully consider the laws required to make Britain ready for Brexit. This includes the Great Repeal Bill, which by converting existing EU law into UK statute will enable the smoothest possible transition at the point of leaving.

The government will deliver this while also addressing deep-rooted inequalities in our society in order to give everyone the opportunities they deserve. Taken together, the EU exit process and the government's domestic agenda mean the new Parliament faces a substantial legislative programme.

By doubling the length of the session the government is providing the space for MPs and peers to scrutinise and debate the government's approach to both Brexit and its domestic agenda without interruption. Next week the government will confirm the legislation required to deliver Brexit, including new laws on immigration, as set out in the government's white paper on Brexit earlier this year.

Rt Hon Andrea Leadsom MP, Leader of the House of Commons, said:

Whilst our top priority right now is supporting the victims of the terrible tragedy at Grenfell tower, we also need to look ahead by setting out a legislative programme that not only delivers a successful EU exit but also a domestic agenda which aims to tackle the social injustices in our country.

The UK will spend the next two years preparing for our departure from the European Union in a way that best places us to realise the opportunities ahead and build a fairer society.

This will require substantial amounts of legislation, beginning with the Great Repeal Bill.

We will build the broadest possible consensus for our Brexit plans and that means giving Parliament the maximum amount of time to scrutinise these bills by holding a two-year session of Parliament. It will mean we can work together to deliver a successful Brexit deal and a strong social legislative programme that delivers justice and opportunity to everyone.

[Press release: UK to observe minute's silence for victims of Grenfell Tower fire](#)

The United Kingdom will observe a minute's silence at 11am on Monday 19 June in remembrance of those who lost their lives and all those affected by the fire at Grenfell Tower.

The silence will be marked at all Government buildings and other organisations may follow suit.

On Friday the Prime Minister met with survivors, residents, volunteers and community leaders where she set out a comprehensive package of support for victims of the tragedy.

This includes:

- A commitment that victims who lost their homes be rehoused within a maximum of three weeks;
- A £5 million Grenfell Tower Residents' Discretionary Fund, made immediately available; and
- A guarantee to rehouse people as close as practically possible to where

they previously lived.

Following the second meeting of the Grenfell Tower Recovery Taskforce, chaired by the Prime Minister, the Government is today announcing further measures to support those who lost loved ones and members of the emergency services:

- Providing an additional £1.5m to pay for mental health support to the Emergency Services through Mind's Blue Light Programme, including to ensure those involved in the response to the Grenfell Tower fire are able to receive targeted support should they need it; and
- Ensuring there is tailored bereavement support for the families of those who have lost loved ones, those who have family members still missing or have been affected by the tragedy. We will offer each family support from their own named mental health practitioner, in addition to the support they receive from the police Family Liaison Officers.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

The residents of Grenfell Tower, families who have lost loved ones, and the emergency services who have been working so hard to help them have been through some of the most harrowing and traumatic experiences imaginable. As we do everything we can to help them, we will make sure they have the counselling and emotional support they need in the difficult days, weeks and years ahead.

Secretary of State for Health Jeremy Hunt said:

What we have witnessed at Grenfell is truly horrific and my thoughts are with all those affected by this terrible tragedy. We are ready to do everything we can to help – which is why the NHS will be offering specialist bereavement support to all of the bereaved families.

I would like to pay tribute to our heroic emergency services for their response – particularly those NHS staff who once again have gone above and beyond in order to provide outstanding, compassionate care.

Paul Farmer, Chief Executive of Mind, said:

This funding enables us to extend and expand Mind's Blue Light Programme so that we can continue to support and reach more people who work in the emergency services. As recent terrible events in London and Manchester have brought to light, Blue Light workers do an extremely challenging job, encountering difficult and traumatic situations. That's why it's so important that comprehensive, ongoing mental health support is available in the short and long

term.

If a family is in need of extra psychological support, or if a Family Liaison Officer believes that they are and obtains the agreement of the family, the bereavement pathway announced today will provide a named NHS mental-health practitioner to provide that specific support.

Additional information:

1) LIBOR provided £10m between 2014 and 2016 to support Emergency Service Charities, including Blue Light mental health projects. At the Autumn Statement in 2016 the Government committed a further £2.3m to the Ambulance Services Charity and £1.5m to MIND for additional Blue Light Mental Health. Today the government is announcing an additional £1.5m for Blue Light Mental Health Support.

2) Mind is delivering the Blue Light Programme to provide mental health support for emergency services staff and volunteers from ambulance, fire, police and search and rescue services across England and Wales. Thousands of staff and volunteers across these services have actively challenged mental health stigma, learnt more about mental health and made positive changes in their approach to wellbeing with the support of the Blue Light Programme so far. More detail here:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/news-campaigns/campaigns/bluelight/>

3) To provide a comprehensive government response to the tragedy the Prime Minister set up the dedicated Grenfell Tower Recovery task force, chaired by her with representation from a number of Whitehall departments including the Treasury, Home Office and Department for Communities & Local Government.

Press release: Grenfell Tower: Statement from the Prime Minister : 17 June 2017

Earlier today I met with victims of the Grenfell Tower tragedy and the volunteers and community leaders who are working so hard to help people rebuild their lives.

I wanted to listen to their concerns and reassure them personally that Government is there for them – and that everything possible will be done to help them through the hugely difficult days, weeks, months and years to come.

The response of the emergency services, NHS and the community has been heroic.

But, frankly, the support on the ground for families who needed help or basic information in the initial hours after this appalling disaster was not good enough.

I have heard the concerns and I have ordered immediate action across the board to help victims' relatives and the survivors.

People lost everything in the fire and were left in only the clothes they were wearing.

I can confirm that a £5million emergency fund that I announced yesterday is now being distributed on the ground so people can buy clothes, food and other essentials. If more funding is required, it will be provided.

Residents rightly want to know when new housing will be provided. I have fixed a deadline of three weeks for everybody affected to be found a home nearby. I have today requested daily progress reports.

There have been huge frustrations that people do not know who to talk to, that they can't get through on the council hotlines.

I have ordered that more staff be deployed across the area, wearing high visibility clothing, so they can easily be found, dispense advice and ensure the right support is provided. Phone lines will have more staff.

Victims have concerns their voice will not be heard, that their many questions about this tragedy will not be answered.

That is why I ordered a Public Inquiry, with the costs for providing victims with legal representation met by Government.

The inquiry will be open and transparent. Government and ministers will cooperate fully. I anticipate the name of the judge will be announced within the next few days and that an open meeting will be held with residents to help shape the terms of reference.

It has been decided today that the public inquiry will report back to me personally. As Prime Minister, I will be responsible for implementing its findings.

Understandably, those living in similar high rise blocks to Grenfell Tower also want answers.

I have ordered councils to complete urgent safety checks on all these buildings. If any further action is required, it will be taken.

After something this traumatic, many people will be in need of not just financial support, but also counselling. NHS London will provide that support.

I can also announce that NHS London will provide specialist long-term bereavement support for the families who have lost loved ones, and immediate psychological support is being provided by Cruse and Red Cross.

If other issues become apparent – if the victims need more help and support – I will make sure it is forthcoming.

The fire at Grenfell Tower was an unimaginable tragedy for the community, and for our country. My Government will do whatever it takes to help those affected, get justice and keep our people safe.

Delivering for Scotland

This week we learned unemployment in Scotland has hit a 25-year low, Scotland has achieved its annual carbon emissions reduction target, new money was pledged for house-building across the country, and radical new education reforms were unveiled.