

News story: New minister for the Cabinet Office: Damian Green

[unable to retrieve full-text content]Damian Green has been appointed First Secretary of State and Minister for the Cabinet Office.

Preparing for Brexit top issue for 4000 farmers at roadshow events

Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Rural Affairs, Lesley Griffiths, said the positive feedback from the 4,000 plus farmers who attended one of Farming Connect's 'Farming for the future' roadshow events showed how important it was to speak to farmers on the ground about the future of their industry.

Lesley Griffiths said:

"There is a lot of uncertainty for agriculture as we transition from the EU and I am keen to support farmers to become as resilient as they can to any changes that are to come. These events have been an excellent way of communicating with the industry and to highlight the support I have made available through Farming Connect and the Farm Business Grant."

Eirwen Williams, director of rural programmes with Menter a Busnes, which delivers Farming Connect on behalf of the Welsh Government, said the regional campaign had a fantastic response, with capacity audiences at each event already resulting in an increased number of enquiries and applications for services.

"The support mechanisms provided by Farming Connect provide the appropriate support which can improve both technical and business performance to help ensure long term financial viability at this critical time."

Attendance at a 'Farming for the Future' event allows farmers access to the technical advice now available through the Advisory Service without the need for a business plan. It also enables Welsh farmers to apply for a Farm Business Grant (FBG) which provides one-off grants of between £3,000 and £12,000. The first window will close on 30 June with another due to open in August. Additional events arranged by Farming Connect will be scheduled this

summer to enable more farmers to attend.

Platform speakers at each event included representatives from Welsh Government as well as leading agricultural business and financial experts. The line-up also included a number of farmers who had driven forward their businesses with support from Farming Connect.

Wendy Jenkins, director of rural consultancy CARA, was a speaker at a number of the events.

“These events made it clear that alongside any financial incentives, every business must take matters into their own hands now to ensure they achieve optimum levels of technical and business performance and make best use of resources in all those areas they can and must control.

“Making small improvements in a number of key performance indicator areas can reap significant rewards longer term, and the whole raft of services provided by Farming Connect can contribute greatly towards this,”

said Ms Jenkins.

The Cabinet Secretary said in the coming months she would continue to urge all farmers in Wales to consider their long term business objectives, to access the services of Farming Connect and to consider applying for a Farming Business Grant to help them achieve these.

“It is essential to ensure your business is prepared and in the best possible position for the future. There has never been a more important time to find out what is available to you and to make best use of all support and guidance.”

Following his attendance at the Farming Connect roadshow event at the Royal Welsh Showground, Lloyd Powell, a young farmer who farms with his family at Glanmiheli, Newtown, said:

“I left the meeting with a greater understanding of what my family can do to prepare our farm business for Brexit. We are already tapping into a number of Farming Connect services which have helped us make better use of our soil and crops. Nutrient management planning proved hugely beneficial and has resulted in considerable financial savings by reducing fertiliser costs and improving the quality of our grassland.”

Press release: Foreign Secretary to meet Gulf counterparts to discuss ongoing regional tensions

The Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson will meet a number of his Gulf counterparts this week, as foreign ministers engage with allies on the tensions in the region.

Reflecting the UK's close friendship with all of the Gulf states, this morning (Monday 12 June) he met the Qatari Foreign Minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani. Later this week, the Foreign Secretary will hold talks with the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates.

In all meetings, the Foreign Secretary will urge his counterparts to take immediate steps to de-escalate the current tensions and find a rapid resolution through mediation. He will say that it is in the interests of the wider region as well as the UK that a swift solution is found. He also will express the UK's concern that collective action by the other Gulf states is having an adverse impact on the lives of ordinary people in Qatar.

At this morning's bilateral with Sheikh Mohammed, the Foreign Secretary urged Qatar to engage with neighbours on their concerns and do more to address support for extremist groups, building on the steps already taken.

After the meeting, the Foreign Secretary said:

I have been in touch with my counterparts across the region about the current tensions with Qatar. I have urged all sides to refrain from any further escalation and to engage in mediation efforts. In that regard I pay tribute to the work of the Amir of Kuwait.

In finding a resolution, I call on Qatar to take seriously their neighbours' concerns. Qatar is a partner of the UK in the fight against terrorism but they urgently need to do more to address support for extremist groups, building on the steps they have already taken to tackle funding to those groups.

I am also concerned by some of the strong actions which Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt and Bahrain have taken against an important partner, and urge them to ease the blockade on Qatar. I call on all states to take immediate steps to de-escalate the situation and to find a rapid resolution through mediation.

News story: Keeping the nation safe: Ministry of Defence Police rise to the challenge

The MDP deployments involved close co-operation with the various Home Office Police Forces that had requested support, and with the 1,000 military personnel who were mobilised at the same time.

In the first 24 hours following the activation of Operation Temperer, MDP officers were deployed to support 8 police forces across England and Wales. This number increased to 18 over the Bank Holiday weekend, with up to a quarter of the force's total strength of Authorised Firearms Officers deployed to provide reassurance to the public at a variety of iconic sites, crowded places and public and major sporting events around the country.

The MDP also provided armed officers to support British Transport Police with keeping the rail network safe, including at London transport hubs, and MDP officers were also deployed at Stansted Airport to support Essex Police.

The busiest day for the MDP was Saturday 27 May, when the force supported policing operations at 60 public events across England and Wales, including high profile music concerts, festivals and sporting occasions.

These included:

- Chester Races
- Radio One Big Weekend in Hull
- Tall Ships Festival at Gloucester Docks
- Iron Maiden concert at London's O2 venue.



Joint patrol at Porton Down. Photo: Ministry of Defence Police. All rights reserved

The police forces who received support from the MDP ranged from the Metropolitan Police Service in London to Dyfed-Powys in Wales, and from West Mercia to South Yorkshire, a response described by MDP Gold Commander Assistant Chief Constable Paul McLaughlin as 'extraordinary'. He said:

We responded exceptionally well. The professional manner and attitude of our officers and staff was first class. We provided very large numbers of officers in response to what was requested, and the transition at local level in terms of military personnel back-filling for the MDP also went very smoothly.

Advance planning was key to the success of the MDP deployments, together with solid liaison with the National Police Co-ordination Centre and the Operations Directorate, he added.



Deployment guarding the Stansted Express, Photo: MDP Photographer, Paul Kemp. All rights reserved

And MDP Deputy Chief Constable Andy Adams commented:

The MOD response to Operation Temperer has been impressive and I know that the wider department will be expressing their own support for what their colleagues have been doing. I would like to take the opportunity to recognise the important role MDP officers and staff undertake through our dual focus at times like this: our role within the MOD and that of delivering a policing service which can be called upon outside of the department.

Critical incidents always generate the 'can do' attitude in those who are operationally focused; people put themselves out, are prepared to endure long hours and simply want to get on with the job. For these people, public service overrides personal interests and other commitments.

I saw many examples of that throughout this operation. There has been an enthusiastic approach to 'getting the job done' and I, for one, am extremely grateful for the commitment of everyone involved.

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