

Press release: New support to help workless families and improve children's lives

[unable to retrieve full-text content]New plans to help workless families break the cycle of disadvantage have been announced, as part of building a fairer society.

Keir Starmer letter to David Davis raising ongoing concerns about the impact of Brexit on Gibraltar

Keir

Starmer MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Exiting the UK, has written to David Davis this evening to raise ongoing concerns about the impact of Brexit on Gibraltar.

Keir's

letter follows a conversation with the Chief Minister of Gibraltar, Fabian Picardo, earlier today.

In the letter Keir highlights three major concerns:

1.
The application of any new UK/EU trade deal on services to Gibraltar.
2.
Agreement on the continuation of access Gibraltar's access to the UK market.
3.
Agreement on the application to Gibraltar of any new trade deals the UK does with third countries.

Keir

Starmer said:

"This afternoon I spoke with Fabian Picardo [Chief Minister of

Gibraltar] and it is clear there are serious and ongoing concerns about the situation in Gibraltar. The Government need urgently to address this and to provide clear reassurances for British citizens in Gibraltar.”

Ends

Notes

to editors:

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Full

copy of the letter to David Davis below:

Dear

David,

After

discussions this afternoon with the Chief Minister of Gibraltar, Fabian Picardo, I am writing to raise a number of important issues concerning the ongoing situation in Gibraltar.

The

Chief Minister emphasised three outstanding concerns to me, all of which I hope

you will consider and respond to as a matter of urgency.

**1: Application of any
new UK/EU trade deal on services to Gibraltar**

A concern that the UK should be firm in continuing to defend the position that any new agreement which may emerge from these negotiations should cover Gibraltar.

The Chief Minister emphasised that the UK cannot just accept the Council's draft parameter, setting out Spain's position that any new trade deal can only apply to Gibraltar as a result of a bilateral agreement between the UK and Spain. A tough line needs to be taken and maintained.

**2. Agreement on the
continuation of Gibraltar's access to the UK market**

A concern that the Government of Gibraltar needs to be able to finalise the agreement with the UK to demonstrate that Gibraltar will have continued access to the UK market. This is important in respect of all services but in particular, in respect of financial services (especially insurance) and online gaming services. I am told that the wording used to date has been very helpful as political commitment but that a proposed one page agreement has not yet been finalised despite finding considerable favour and traction with colleagues in the Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC) from the

Department for Exiting the EU and the Foreign & Commonwealth Office.

3. Agreement on the application to Gibraltar of any new trade deals the UK does with third countries

I understand that this is also agreed but that Gibraltar need a very clear public statement of this. Clear language from yourself and The Secretary of State for International Trade on this point would be helpful to Gibraltar.

As
you and I discussed over the weekend, the sovereignty of Gibraltar should not be used as a bargaining chip in Brexit discussions. It is vital that the interests of British citizens in Gibraltar are protected and that ongoing uncertainty over Gibraltar is resolved urgently.

I look
forward to your reply.

Yours
sincerely,

**Keir
Starmer QC MP**

**Shadow
Secretary of State for Exiting the EU**

**MP
for Holborn & St Pancras**

[This announcement will do nothing to address the funding crisis facing schools across the country – Angela Rayner](#)

**Angela
Rayner MP, Labour's Shadow Education Secretary**, commenting on the Government's funding announcement for schools in England, said:

"None of today's announcement is new money. Seven years of Tory neglect has left our children in crumbling and overcrowded schools.

"The National Audit Office have

already told us that existing school buildings across the country are inadequate, while money has been ploughed into inefficient free schools and the Prime Minister's grammar schools vanity project.

"This announcement will do nothing to address the funding crisis facing schools across the country."

Jeremy Corbyn comment on the PM's visit to Saudi Arabia

Jeremy

Corbyn MP, Leader of the Labour Party,

commenting on the Prime Minister's visit to Saudi Arabia, said:

"The Prime Minister should put human rights and international law at the centre of her talks with Saudi Arabia's government this week.

"Numerous human rights organisations, including the UNHRC and Amnesty International, have documented the dictatorial Saudi monarchy's shocking human rights record.

"The Saudi-led coalition bombing in Yemen, backed by the British government, has left thousands dead, 21 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and three million refugees uprooted from their homes.

"Yemen urgently needs a ceasefire, a political settlement, and food aid, not more bombing. British-made weapons are being used in a war which has caused a humanitarian catastrophe.

"Britain must halt arms sales to Saudi Arabia immediately, throw its weight behind a ceasefire resolution at the United Nations and back a full and genuinely independent investigation of the evidence of war crimes in Yemen.

"As it stands, the British-Saudi relationship is damaging to the people of Saudi Arabia, Britain and the wider Middle East, and helping to export insecurity to the rest of the world.

"Unless the Prime

Minister challenges the Saudi regime over its abuses this week, it will be clear she is ready to sacrifice human rights and security on the altar of the arms trade.”

Press release: £2.4 billion funding boost for England's schools

Thousands of schools across England are to benefit from a £2.4 billion cash injection, Education Secretary Justine Greening announced today (3 April 2017).

It comes as new government figures show that almost 735,000 additional school places have been created since 2010 – with 92% of new primary places and 89% of new secondary places created in schools rated as ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’ by Ofsted in 2015 to 2016.

Local councils say they need to create over 230,000 primary and secondary school places nationally between 2017 and 2020. The funding announced today will provide a further boost to the government’s drive to help create over 600,000 extra places by 2021, which will generate additional capacity to meet local demand.

Schools, local authorities and academy trusts will also receive a share of £1.4 billion to invest in upgrading or improving their school buildings. As part of this, academies and sixth-form colleges throughout the country, will receive a total of £466 million to pay for almost 1,500 vital school building work projects.

As part of its [Plan for Britain](#), the government wants every child to have access to a ‘good’ school place, giving them the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in the future.

Alongside this multi-billion pound investment, the government is considering wider proposals to ensure school standards continue to rise by creating more ‘good’ places in every part of the country.

These proposals include lifting the ban on new grammar schools – on the strict condition they improve the education of other pupils in the system – as well as harnessing the expertise and resources of our universities, and our independent and faith schools.

Education Secretary Justine Greening said:

Our Plan for Britain is to build a fairer society, with a good school place available for every child.

This £2.4 billion investment, together with our proposals to create more good school places, will help ensure every young person has the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

The £2.4 billion allocated today is part of more than £24 billion the government has committed to investing in the school estate between 2015 to 2021.

1. We have announced £2.4 billion of capital funding allocations to create new school places across the country, and to maintain and improve the condition of school buildings.

This funding comprises [£980 million of funding allocations for local authorities in 2019 to 2020](#), to create over 60,000 school places needed. This is part of a wider investment of £7 billion in the course of this Parliament which, alongside our investment in the free schools programme, we expect to create an additional 600,000 places by 2021.

The funding also comprises [£1.4 billion of funding allocations for schools, local authorities and academy trusts](#) to invest in improving the condition of the school estate. This includes [£466 million through the Condition Improvement Fund](#) to fund 1,435 projects across 1,184 academies and sixth-form colleges.

2. The government's [‘schools that work for everyone’ consultation](#) closed in December last year (2016). The responses are currently being considered, and the government will respond shortly.
3. The government has also published today: