

## **Press release: British-Irish Inter-Governmental Conference**

The British-Irish Inter-Governmental Conference (BIIGC) is a consultative forum established by Strand Three of the Belfast Agreement. It aims to 'bring together the British and Irish Governments to promote bilateral co-operation on all matters of mutual interest within the competence of both governments'.

The BIIGC is not an executive body and, as the Belfast Agreement states explicitly, "there will be no derogation from the sovereignty of either government".

The BIIGC is 'concerned with non-devolved Northern Ireland matters' and will include a discussion on East-West issues. It will take place in Dublin and be co-chaired by the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the Rt Hon David Lidington MP, and Simon Coveney TD, Tánaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade.

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Karen Bradley MP, and Charles Flanagan TD, Minister for Justice and Equality, will also be in attendance.

The BIIGC last met in London on 25 July 2018.

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## [Press release: Number of children in long-term workless households at lowest level in over a decade](#)

The [independent figures from the Office for National Statistics](#) today revealed that the number has been falling year on year since 2010, down 74,000 on the last year alone.

This is welcome news for the next generation, with evidence showing that growing up in a home with parents in work is linked to better performance in school and the increased likelihood of being in work as an adult.

Around 9 in 10 children now live in a home with at least one working adult, with 3.3 million more people in work than in 2010.

Latest figures also show that the number of children living in lone parent long-term workless households has fallen 70,000 on the year.

The fall in numbers comes as the government's welfare reforms are making sure it pays to be in work, with flexible payments designed to ensure that claimants are always better off in work.

Work and Pensions Secretary Esther McVey said:

Helping people into work and supporting parents and children is at the heart of what this department does. Over the last 8 years we have achieved something quite extraordinary, transforming this country's employment opportunities and with it, children's futures. And today we should celebrate that the number of children living in long-term workless households is at its lowest level for over a decade.

And with the latest budget announcements for Universal Credit, we intend to help even more families as we increase the amount people can earn by £1,000 before their benefit payment begins to be reduced – making sure it pays to work and helping people come off benefits.

The figures come while the UK has the lowest rate of unemployment since the

1970s and, in more good news for homes across the country, wages are outpacing inflation for the seventh month in a row.

Children who grow up in workless families are almost twice as likely as children in working families to not reach the expected attainment level at all stages of their education – analysis has shown that three-quarters of children in workless families fail to reach 5 full GCSEs at grade C or above, including English and maths.

Compared to children from working families, those from workless families are also more likely to be workless in adult life. The [Improving lives: Helping Workless Families](#) policy paper includes research on the impact of children being in a workless family.

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## **More information**

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## [News story: New scheme for NHS staff to tackle AMR abroad opens](#)

NHS staff are being invited to apply for a new scheme to help tackle superbugs abroad.

The [Commonwealth Partnerships for Antimicrobial Stewardship](#) scheme will send 12 teams of NHS staff to work with local health workers overseas in the fight against antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

The teams will be made up of NHS pharmacists, doctors, specialist nurses and other healthcare workers who will work with partners in:

- Ghana
- Tanzania
- Uganda
- Zambia

AMR is a natural occurrence, however, the rate at which AMR is occurring is increasing due to overuse and misuse of antibiotics. Misuse of antibiotics can jeopardise the safety of routine operations and threaten modern medicine.

To tackle this threat, the use of antibiotics needs to be optimised through antimicrobial stewardship. The role of pharmacists, doctors and specialist nurses is key to ensuring antibiotics are used effectively.

The government is inviting multi-disciplinary teams to apply for a grant of up to £75,000 to deliver a partnership project with a health institution in one of the partner countries.

Projects should aim to improve antimicrobial stewardship and support the development of policy and practice for the use of antibiotics in the partner country.

Interested applicants can learn more about the scheme at [launch events taking place across the country](#).

The events will introduce the scheme, outline the application process and share good practice for project planning. Events will take place in:

This scheme is funded by the Department of Health and Social Care's Fleming Fund and will be delivered by the Tropical Health and Education Trust (THET) and the Commonwealth Pharmacists Association (CPA).

The Fleming Fund is a £265 million UK Aid fund that seeks to enhance AMR surveillance in low- and middle-income countries across sub-Saharan Africa and south-east Asia.

Chief Medical Officer for England, Professor Dame Sally Davies, said:

I am delighted that UK aid – provided through the government's Fleming Fund – will enable these vital partnerships between our fantastic NHS staff and their counterparts overseas to take place.

AMR poses a risk to us all, wherever we call home – collaboration of this kind with our friends and neighbours internationally will be all the more important if we are to tackle this challenge together.

This scheme will play a crucial role in allowing specialists to share expertise and strengthen approaches to antimicrobial stewardship in hospitals both at home and abroad.