

## [News story: New centre for excellence to boost modern foreign language skills](#)

New centre for excellence at the University of York, backed by £4.8m, will coordinate the work of nine MFL hub schools to encourage uptake across the country

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## [Speech: Japanese Prime Minister's visit is a chance to celebrate our friendship with like-minded nations: article by Jeremy Hunt](#)

I sometimes find that foreign leaders are more aware of Britain's national strengths than we are at home.

So let me itemise a few of them.

The UK has the fifth biggest economy in the world, the third biggest overseas aid budget, the second largest military budget in NATO, and a world-class diplomatic network, including permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council.

Our friendships and alliances span the globe. Britain's role is to use these connections to be what I call an 'invisible chain', linking the democracies of the world to uphold the post-1945 order.

Today, the leader of a fellow democracy with the same objective will arrive in London.

Shinzo Abe, the Prime Minister of Japan, represents a nation closely connected to Britain.

Some countries are endowed with immense natural resources; others are located in the midst of great continents. Britain and Japan have neither of these advantages. We are both islands off the Eurasian landmass with modest natural resources and no option except to prosper through enterprise, innovation, and a global outlook.

Although separated by distance, Britain and Japan have built a remarkable

economic partnership. As I write, about 1,000 Japanese companies are operating here, directly employing over 150,000 people and many thousands more in their supply chains.

In the last 4 decades, the ingenuity and expertise of Japanese management has helped transform vital sectors of the UK economy, from automotives to pharmaceuticals. All over Britain, people have benefited from the long-term, community-focused approach to business that is the hallmark of Japanese investment.

British business, meanwhile, is increasingly successful in the Japanese market. In 2017 alone, UK exports to Japan rose by over 12% to reach £13.5 billion.

I first visited the country in 1990 with the aim of learning Japanese. I was introduced to Japan and wonderfully looked after by Japanese families across the country. For almost 2 years, I lived in Kyoto, Nagasaki, and Tokyo.

I learned Japanese with the aid of part-time jobs as a waiter in a French restaurant in Nagasaki and a coffee shop in Tokyo. I soon discovered the difference between the exceptionally polite form of Japanese we would use with customers and the informal conversation in the family home.

This experience left me with a great admiration for Japanese politeness, perfectionism, and determination.

At that time, Britain's relationship with Japan was focused on economic ties. More recently, our friendship has gone a step further. At a time when the world order that we both wish to preserve is under greater strain than for many decades, Britain and Japan are cooperating in new fields.

The Royal Air Force, the Royal Navy and the British Army have all been in Japan for joint exercises since 2016. Just last week, a British frigate, HMS Argyll, saw in the new year in Tokyo. We are working side by side to enforce United Nations sanctions on North Korea and help other countries against terrorism.

Britain and Japan share the same values of human rights and the rule of law, and the same determination to uphold those values around the world.

It is our friendship with other countries which share our outlook that is the vital building block for a confident post-Brexit future.

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**[Press release: New UK-Japanese](#)**

# research partnership to tackle degenerative and incurable diseases

Medical researchers in Britain and Japan are to join forces in the fight to advance research into treatments for some of the most debilitating degenerative diseases.

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## Press release: New UK-Japanese research partnership to tackle degenerative and incurable diseases

- new UK-Japanese research programme to help treat patients with chronic degenerative diseases and bring together British and Japanese businesses to develop a new generation of assisted living products and services
- both countries also agree new collaboration on science and innovation, the ethical use of big data and robotics
- today measures aim to harness mutual strengths in science and innovation as part of the UK's modern [Industrial Strategy](#) and Japan's equivalent, Society 5.0

Medical researchers in Britain and Japan are to join forces in the fight to advance research into treatments for some of the most debilitating degenerative diseases such as diabetes, heart disease and arthritis, it was confirmed today (Thursday 10 January).

Prime Minister Theresa May, Business Secretary Greg Clark and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe announced a new £30 million partnership to promote new technology and innovation that could transform whole sectors and enable people to live longer, healthier lives in both countries.

The partnership includes a £10 million programme led by the UK's Medical Research Council (MRC) and Japan's Agency for Medical Research and Development (AMED) that will advance regenerative medicine. The research will help understanding in critical regenerative processes in human health and translate research into tools and technologies to treat patients. This could lead to new therapies for use against many types of cancer, including brain tumours or leukaemia, and repair damage caused by degenerative conditions such as motor neurone disease, Parkinson's disease or multiple sclerosis.

British and Japanese businesses, including startups, will support this by working together to develop and showcase a new generation of assisted living products. Through a joint competition focused on employing Artificial

Intelligence (AI) and robotics in assisted living, they can access funding to help create safe, ethical and intelligent home environments. Additionally, Britain will join Japan in its Well Ageing Society Summit and Global Round Table for Dementia.

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

The UK and Japan are home to some of the most innovative businesses in the world, and we share the same fundamental belief in the power of enterprise to improve the lives of our citizens.

This government wants to give older people at least five extra healthy independent years of life by 2035. Our modern Industrial Strategy and its Ageing Society Grand Challenge aims to put the UK at the forefront of new technologies. We can do this most effectively by reaching out to other centres of excellence around the world. Japan is the perfect partner with which to build on our strengths in science, medicine and research and to lead the world in developing innovative solutions to help us live longer, healthier lives.

The new [NHS long term plan](#) and the modern Industrial Strategy's [Ageing Society Grand Challenge](#) will help people age well and use technology to detect and prevent diseases sooner. Today's announcements will harness the power of innovation to meet the needs of an ageing society, while putting the UK at the forefront of the AI and data revolution.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock said:

As global leaders, the UK and Japan must work closely together to tackle key emerging issues in healthcare, like the challenges of an ageing population and how we can harness the power of technology to revolutionise care.

The UK has one of the most advanced health systems in the world and is leading the way in life sciences, genomics and artificial intelligence. Japan will be a crucial partner in the future to develop the next generation of treatments as part of our long term plan for the NHS.

Digital Secretary Jeremy Wright said:

The UK is a world leader in AI and data and the unrivalled tech hub of Europe. By working closely with a country at the cutting-edge of AI like Japan, we can make sure we remain global leaders in developing tomorrow's technology to boost investment, grow our economy, improve people's lives, and support our long term plan for the NHS.

Dr Mark Palmer, Director of International Strategy at the MRC, said:

Regenerative medicine is a fast-moving, interdisciplinary field that holds the promise of revolutionising medical treatments. The UK and Japan are world leaders in regenerative medicine research and we very much look forward to the opportunity for further collaborative efforts in this field through a joint programme.

A further £20 million in new joint funding will support collaborations between British and Japanese researchers. The UK and Japan reaffirmed its commitment to use robotics and AI to carry out tasks too dangerous for humans. From disaster response to mountain rescues to exploring the seas, this technology could revolutionise whole industries and has the potential to save people's lives.

Helping break down the barriers faced by both nations' innovative businesses, UK and Japanese centres of excellence in Artificial Intelligence and data science – led by the [Alan Turing Institute](#) – will share solutions on using large amounts of data legally, ethically and safely.

Britain and Japan will also collaborate on best practice in accelerating clean energy innovation. The initiative will focus on making a low-carbon hydrogen economy possible – with the potential to revolutionise whole industries from transport to heating and creating a cleaner, greener landscape. This builds on the UK's strengths in carbon capture, utilisation and storage and Japan's leadership in hydrogen technologies.

Through Britain's modern Industrial Strategy and Japan's Society 5.0, Britain and Japan are committed to strengthening economic links, and will work together to tackle shared Grand Challenges of an ageing society, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data, clean growth, and the future of mobility.

The modern [Industrial Strategy](#) sets out a long-term plan to boost the productivity and earning power of people throughout the UK. It sets out how we are building a Britain fit for the future – how we will help businesses create better, higher-paying jobs in every part of the UK with investment in skills, industries and infrastructure.

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## **[Press release: International Trade Minister joins Stoke ceramics firm to keep Great British industry firing](#)**

Earlier this week, The Trade Policy Minister hosted a roundtable in Stoke for

ceramics firms to discuss the industry's trade priorities ahead of the UK's departure from the EU