

Speech: PM press statement at European Council: 14 December 2018

At this Council meeting, I have held a series of discussions with my fellow leaders on the Brexit deal and I was crystal clear about the assurances which are needed on the backstop having heard the views of MPs in the House of Commons.

I reiterated that it is in the interests of the EU as well as the UK to get this over the line. A disorderly Brexit would be good for no-one.

At 27 level, the EU have published a series of conclusions.

The EU made clear:

- that it is their firm determination to work speedily on a future relationship or alternative arrangements which ensure no hard border by 31 December 2020 so that the backstop will not need to be triggered.
- If the backstop was ever triggered, it would apply only temporarily and the EU would use its best endeavours to negotiate and conclude expeditiously a subsequent agreement that would replace the backstop.
- That the EU stands ready to embark on preparations so that negotiations on the future partnership can start as soon as possible.

As formal conclusions, these commitments have legal status and therefore should be welcomed.

As I have always said, the guaranteed way of avoiding the backstop is to have the future partnership in place by the time the implementation period is over. The EU is very firmly committed to this course.

But MPs will require further assurances, and I have discussed that this morning with my EU partners, including Presidents Tusk, Juncker and others.

I note there has been reporting that the EU is not willing to consider any further clarification. The EU is clear – as I am – that if we are going to leave with a deal this is it.

But my discussions with colleagues today have shown that further clarification and discussion following the Council's conclusions is in fact possible.

There is work still to do and we will be holding talks in coming days about how to obtain the further assurances that the UK Parliament needs in order to be able to approve the deal.

I say again. It is in the overwhelming interest of all our people – in the EU and the UK – to get this done, and as quickly as possible.

[News story: Appointments to the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council](#)

Sarah Newton, Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, on behalf of the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, is pleased to appoint 6 new members to the Industrial Injuries Advisory Council (IIAC) from 1 November 2018. Five independent members have been appointed for 5 years and the sixth, an employer representative for 3 years.

Dr Lesley Rushton, IIAC Chair, said:

I am very pleased to welcome the new members who will bring extensive expertise and experience in several important areas which will be of great value to the future work of the Council.

The 5 new independent members are:

Prof Kim Burton

Prof Kim Burton specialises in musculoskeletal occupational health research. He is an Associate Professor of Clinical Biomechanics at the British School of Osteopathy in London, and since 2015 has been an expert adviser to the government's Joint Work and Health Unit.

Prof John Cherrie

Prof John Cherrie is currently Professor of Human Health at Heriot Watt University and Principal Scientist at the Institute for Occupational Medicine (IOM), having previously been a Research Director at the IOM. He has extensive specialist expertise in occupational hygiene and epidemiology, having worked on a number of epidemiological studies to investigate hazards and risks from exposure to chemicals and dusts, particularly in relation to occupational cancer. Currently, he is also a member of the Health and Safety's Workplace Health Expert Committee. Previously, he had been a member of both the Advisory Committee on Pesticides (ACP) and the Expert Panel on Air Quality Standards (EPAQS). He was also an adviser to the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) on the science behind their "No time to lose" campaign to raise awareness of occupational cancer.

Dr Valentina Gallo

Dr Valentina Gallo is a medically trained scientist with specific interest in neurodegenerative diseases and mental health disorders. She is a senior lecturer in Epidemiology at the Centre for Primary Care and Public Health at Bart's and The London School of Medicine, University of London. She is also an Honorary Associate Professor at London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, and an honorary lecturer in Epidemiology at Imperial College London School of Public Health.

Dr Max Henderson

Dr Max Henderson is a clinician and academic in psychological medicine. He is a Consultant Liaison Psychiatrist at St James University Hospital in Leeds and co-founded the Occupational Psychiatry Special Interest Group in the Royal College of Psychiatrists and is its academic secretary. He was appointed to the Parliamentary Liaison Committee of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, was a member of the 2017 review into Mental Health and Employment by Lord Dennis Stevenson and Paul Farmer and a member of the Department for Work and Pensions and Department of Health Occupational Health Expert Group.

Dr Samuel (Chris) Stenton

Dr Samuel (Chris) Stenton is currently a Locum Consultant Physician at the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle upon Tyne and an Honorary Clinical Senior Lecturer at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. Formerly, he had been a lecturer in Medicine and Senior Registrar (General and Occupational Medicine) and lecturer in Medicine and Honorary Clinical Registrar at the University.

The new employer representative is:

Dr Ian Lawson

Dr Ian Lawson has been appointed to represent employers for 3 years. He is a retired occupational health physician, and formerly Rolls-Royce Chief Medical Officer. He has also been an honorary lecturer at the Royal Society of Public Health and a former President of the Society of Occupational Medicine and has particular expertise in Hand Arm Vibration Syndrome.

[Press release: Helping you get home](#)

for Christmas with miles of roadworks lifted

Highways England is doing its bit to help people get home for Christmas as it prepares to lift more than 200 miles of roadworks in time for the festive getaway.

Press release: Helping you get home for Christmas with miles of roadworks lifted

To help journeys flow more smoothly and to keep disruption to a minimum, more than 97 per cent of motorways and strategic A-roads will be roadworks-free in time for Christmas, meaning motorists and hauliers alike can get on with last-minute shopping and delivery journeys with as little disruption as possible.

Where it is safe to do so, roadworks will be lifted or suspended on England's motorways and major A-roads by 6am on Friday 21 December until 12.01am on Wednesday 2 January.

Highways England's customer service director Melanie Clarke said:

We're doing everything we can to make journeys as smooth as possible for this Christmas getaway and that's why we're keeping more than 97 per cent of our road network free from roadworks.

We know that the Christmas period is one of the busiest times on our roads and we'd also like to remind people about the importance of checking their vehicle before setting off on their journeys. Simple things like checking your fuel and oil levels, tyre pressures and that all lights are working properly, can keep you moving and the network flowing.

Highways England traffic officers will be working around the clock, patrolling the network to help those people who do get into difficulty.

And the company responsible for managing England's major road network is also reminding people to leave plenty of distance between themselves and the vehicle in front to avoid tailgating.

Statistics the company released earlier this year show that one in eight of all road casualties are caused by people who drive too close to the vehicle in front, with more than 100 people killed or seriously injured each year.

To celebrate the importance of the major A-road and motorway network in bringing families together over the festive break, a [special animation](#) has been produced.

The animation – hosted on the Highways England YouTube channel – follows the journeys of several people travelling home for Christmas with some notable landmarks on England's road network sighted along the way. It also features a cameo appearance from Michelin-starred chef Glynn Purnell travelling to cook Christmas dinner for Santa in the North Pole.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[Press release: On third anniversary of Tim Peake's space mission; report reveals over 2 million inspired by education campaign](#)

A new report has found more than 2 million children in the UK engaged with education and outreach programmes linked to Tim Peake's Principia Mission to space.