

[News story: Lord Duncan learns of challenges and opportunities at Dounreay](#)

Lord Duncan travelled to Caithness to learn more about work on Scotland's largest nuclear clean-up and demolition project. Located in the far north of Scotland, Dounreay employs around 1,200 staff and a similar number of people through the supply chain.

From the mid-1950s, Dounreay was the UK's centre of research into fast reactors until 1994. The experimental nature of these now-redundant facilities, poses some complex decommissioning challenges that continue to require technological innovation and excellence.



Lord Duncan visits Dounreay Prototype Fast Reactor (PFR) and Dounreay

The NDA spends more than £177 million a year to decommission Dounreay. A significant part of this is spent in the local economy. NDA works in partnership, through the Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership (CNSRP), to support the local community and manage the impact of the future closure of the Dounreay nuclear site.

On learning more about the challenges and opportunities faced at the site and in the local communities, Lord Duncan said:

It was fascinating to see first-hand the decommissioning of Dounreay and meet the men and women behind the work.

I was impressed with the site's commitment to safety, as well as the considerable investment the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and Dounreay are making in the local community.

[Introduction to Dounreay](#)

Press release: Minister for Human Rights visits the Occupied Palestinian Territories and Israel

I have just returned from my first official visit to the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs) and Israel.

I was pleased to meet Palestinians in East Jerusalem, Hebron, and Abu Nuwar Bedouin Community in Area C of the West Bank. I heard from human rights defenders about the impact of Israel's occupation and saw the assistance that UK aid is providing to some of the most vulnerable in Palestinian society. I had a positive first meeting with Prime Minister Hamdallah to discuss these issues, the situation in Gaza and reaffirm the UK's commitment to strengthening the UK-Palestinian Authority relationship. In my role as Minister for Human Rights, including the right to freedom of religion or belief, I met with the Palestinian Minister for Religious Affairs Youssef Ideiss, and hosted an interfaith roundtable.

In Israel, I was humbled to attend the State Opening Ceremony for Holocaust Martyrs and Heroes Remembrance Day at Yad Vashem. I had constructive meetings with Israeli ministers Tzachi Hanegbi and Ayelet Shaked, re-affirming the UK's commitment to our bilateral relationship with Israel, and raising our human rights concerns relating to the occupation, including the issue of Palestinian children in Israeli military detention. I also met with Israeli companies working on counter terrorism technologies, to discuss what more we can do together to prevent terrorist use of the internet.

I remain deeply concerned about the situation in Gaza, and in particular by the high number of Palestinian deaths in recent weeks. With the Palestinian leadership I reaffirmed the right of the Gazan people, as indeed all peoples, to protest peacefully. It is important to understand the role Hamas continues to play in fomenting the violence. The UK recognises that Israel has the right to protect its borders against Hamas and other terrorist groups but as I said to Israeli Ministers, they must show restraint and consider carefully its use of force in response to future protests.

In my engagement with both Israelis and Palestinians I stressed the importance of addressing the underlying causes of the economic and humanitarian situation, and in particular to improve movement and access for people and goods.

My visit illustrated the urgent need for progress towards a two-state solution, so that Israelis and Palestinians can finally live with the peace and dignity they deserve.

[News story: 2018 Clinical Excellence Awards round closed](#)

The 2018 National Clinical Excellence Awards round closed at 5pm on Thursday 12 April 2018.

ACCEA will review and score all applications and announce results at the end of the year.

New awards will be backdated to 1 April 2018. Renewals will be renewed from 1 April 2019. Unsuccessful renewals will cease on 31 March 2019.

As in previous years, we will publish personal statements for successful applications.

[Press release: Emergency humanitarian UK aid package to DRC as violence escalates](#)

Harriett Baldwin visits a camp for displaced people in the DRC. Photo: Connie Fisher

During a visit to a camp for displaced families in Kalemie in the DRC, Africa minister Harriett Baldwin denounced recent escalations in violence across the east of the country and announced an emergency package of UK aid support which will provide additional lifesaving food, water and medical care to hundreds of thousands more people in desperate need.

This includes:

- giving over 390,000 more people access to clean drinking water
- providing over 85,000 more people with food or assistance to meet urgent food and other basic needs
- reaching over 38,000 more children suffering from malnutrition with vital nutrition support
- providing essential medical care to over 240,000 more people, including drugs for pregnant mothers

The UK recognised the crisis early and the Department for International Development (DFID) was one of the first donors to step up support.

The minister also called on the international community to increase support urgently for the country, announcing this humanitarian package as leaders from the international community are set to gather in Geneva today (Friday 13 April) for a UN pledging conference for the DRC.

Minister for Africa Harriett Baldwin said:

I have seen for myself the devastating impact of this terrible crisis – but UK aid is already on the ground and with today's emergency package, we are providing a vital lifeline for more desperate mothers and their starving children who have been forced to flee their homes.

This is a major humanitarian crisis and I have pressed for the DRC to fully recognise the scale of suffering, and cooperate with international efforts to help the millions of Congolese people affected. It is important that international partners also urgently step up their support.

The DRC has huge potential to be a prosperous nation, but it's vital we work now to establish the political stability which will create the foundations for future growth and a safer and brighter future for all Congolese people. Key to this will be credible, constitutional and inclusive elections in December 2018.

DFID's humanitarian response is already reaching over three million people across the country with lifesaving aid.

During her visit minister Baldwin asked to meet with President Kabila. She met with representatives from across government, including opposition candidates and the DRC's electoral commission (CENI), to stress the vital importance of the DRC holding credible, constitutional and inclusive elections by the end of this year, to help tackle some of the root causes of violence and suffering in DRC.

News story: New regulations to double the use of sustainable renewable fuels by 2020

Tough new biofuel targets coming into force on Sunday (15 April 2018) will double the use of renewable fuels in the UK transport sector within 15 years, cutting the sector's reliance on imported diesel.

Changes to the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) will compel owners of transport fuel who supply at least 450,000 litres a year or more, to make sure the mix is at least 12.4% biofuel by 2032.

Currently the industry, which supplies fuel to transport companies such as haulage firms and airlines, is only expected to meet a target of 4.75% biofuel.

The government is also challenging the sector to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 6% by 2020 – which coupled with the RTFO changes will support the UK's low carbon fuel industry while helping make sure the UK transport sector is one of the most sustainable in the world.

Transport Minister Jesse Norman said:

We are committed to reducing carbon emissions from transport to tackle climate change, and to making the sector as sustainable as possible. Increasing our use of renewable fuels is a key part of this.

The changes we are introducing will double our carbon emissions savings from the RTFO scheme by doubling the use of renewable fuels and reducing reliance on imported fossil diesel.

This will deliver emissions savings equal to taking hundreds of thousands of cars off the road.

The changes to the RTFO scheme announced today will also, for the first time, reward and support the production of sustainable renewable aviation fuels in the UK.

Willie Walsh, chief executive of the International Airline Group, said:

Providing sustainable fuel production for aircraft with the same economic incentives given to road vehicles is long overdue. This is a major step forward to help the UK aviation industry meet its carbon reduction targets.

These incentives have enabled alternative fuel sources to be developed for cars and lorries, while aviation has traditionally been heavily dependent on fossil fuels. This government initiative will support our plans to build Europe's first waste to jet biofuel plant in Britain, creating UK jobs and growth".

The key changes to the scheme are:

- increasing the biofuels volume target from the current 4.75% to 9.75% in 2020, and 12.4% in 2032
- setting an additional target for advanced waste-based renewable fuels, starting at 0.1% in 2019 and rising to 2.8% in 2032
- setting a sustainable level for crop biofuels, an initial maximum cap of 4% of fuel in 2018, reducing annually from 2021 to reach 3% in 2026 and 2% in 2032
- bringing renewable aviation fuels and renewable fuels of non-biological origin into the scheme.

Nina Skorupska, chief executive of the Renewable Energy Association, said:

We welcome the increased targets for renewable transport fuels and are excited by the new regulations which will encourage the production of novel fuels for hard-to-decarbonise sectors.

The UK's renewable fuels have excellent environmental credentials and their manufacture supports almost 1,000 direct jobs, many of which are in the north-east. As transport is now the UK's largest source of greenhouse gas emissions and air quality concerns are growing, this makes the transition to a cleaner system an imperative.

The majority of the biofuel used in the UK comes from waste. By introducing new targets, the RTFO promotes the development of cutting edge technologies to turn waste into valuable low carbon fuels.

The changes are in addition to the £22 million of government funding available to industry to develop waste-based advanced low carbon fuels in the UK for aviation and freight.

The new RTFO will contribute a third of the total savings from transport for the UK's carbon budget.