

News story: Robin Walker: 'Gibraltar has particular interests'

Minister for Exiting the European Union Robin Walker, Foreign Office Minister Sir Alan Duncan and International Trade Minister Lord Price today (1 March) hosted the second Joint Ministerial Council (Gibraltar EU Negotiations) to discuss Gibraltar's priorities as we prepare to exit the European Union.

Gibraltar is a British Overseas Territory with a population of over 32,000. In 2015/16, its GDP was forecast to be £1.77bn. Its main industries are tourism, financial services, online gaming, shipping and construction.

The discussions today centred around the opportunities and challenges in areas such as trade and market access, with ministers in agreement that we must ensure Gibraltar's interests are taken into account.

Speaking after the meeting, Minister for Exiting the European Union Robin Walker said:

We recognise that Gibraltar has particular interests, and that is why this dedicated forum is vital. It gives us the opportunity to discuss Gibraltar's priorities and ensure their interests are taken into account.

We have had a useful and informative discussion today and I will continue to engage with Gibraltar throughout the negotiations, as we forge a new relationship with the EU and look outward into the world. As the Lords' report today has recognised, the UK has a responsibility to represent Gibraltar in these negotiations and we will do so better informed as a result of this process.

Minister for Europe Sir Alan Duncan said:

UK is steadfast in our support for Gibraltar, its people and its economy. As the UK leaves the EU, we are making sure we understand the priorities of Overseas Territories, including Gibraltar, so that the new relationship with the EU works for all. The JMC, and the useful discussion today, is a key part of that dialogue.

International Trade Minister Lord Price said:

The UK is banging the drum for British businesses across a range of international markets and we are committed to taking the needs of Gibraltar and other Overseas Territories into account during this process.

That's why I was pleased to be part of today's meeting to discuss the place of Gibraltar in the global trade agenda. This forum provides a welcome opportunity to hear from Gibraltar on their priorities and ensure we're working together as we look towards our future as a global leader on free trade.

As the UK leaves the EU, the government will ensure the priorities of the Overseas Territories, including Gibraltar, and the Crown Dependencies are understood through a range of engagements. These will continue after we trigger Article 50 and begin the process of exit later this month.

News story: UK Space Agency announces new Chief Executive

Graham has been Chief Executive of the Better Regulation Executive, a unit within the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, since 2011. He has a BA and a PhD in Particle Physics from Cambridge University for theoretical work on collision experiments at CERN. He also holds a diploma in public administration from the École Nationale d'Administration (ENA).

Graham has extensive experience across Whitehall and at a European level – a key priority for the Agency's head. He has worked in the European Commission and held several other posts in the UK Civil Service with a strong European element, including the Treasury's lead on the EU budget.

Recently he has been the BEIS representative on the Met Office board while outside of work he is a trustee of the Youth Hostels Association and a keen cyclist.

As the UK Space Agency's Chief Executive Graham will lead a team of more than 100 who manage the UK's civil space policy, regulation and programmes. He will be responsible for realising the agency's aims of increasing the size of the UK space industry, using space to understand planet Earth and the universe, supporting British businesses to deliver practical help to developing countries and overseeing the Agency's plans to establish commercial space flight in the UK.

Graham will take up his new role on the 1st of April. He replaces Interim Chief Executive Katherine Courtney, who has been with the Agency since April, 2016. During her time Katherine guided the Agency through the European Council of Ministers in Lucerne, Switzerland, where the UK committed to European collaboration on science and exploration, satellite technology and services, allocating more than €1.4 billion over five years to European Space Agency programmes.

Katherine also led the Agency at a key time for commercial spaceflight in the UK, inviting commercial space consortia to apply for grant funding to enable small-satellite launches and sub-orbital flights from the UK by 2020.

[Press release: Apply for hedgerows, boundaries, and woodland management plan grants online](#)

Applicants can apply through the [Rural Payments service](#). The online service allows those applying to log on at a time that suits them to submit applications for the [hedgerows and boundaries grant](#) or the [woodland management plan grant](#). Applications can be saved and returned at the applicant's convenience. The online service ensures only eligible fields are included. Instant confirmation is provided once an applicant submits an application.

Customers who already apply for Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) online should find submitting an online application familiar and the service easy to use. Last year 80% of BPS applicants took advantage of applying online.

The woodland management plan grant is open all year round for applications. This year the hedgerow and boundaries grant opened on 1 February and closes on 28 April.

Support is available from Natural England via the Rural Payments helpline on 03000 200 301.

Whilst applicants are encouraged to use the online service, paper applications will still be accepted for the hedgerows and boundaries grant and the woodland management plan grant.

The online service will be extended in spring 2017, when customers will have the option to submit their Countryside Stewardship annual revenue and capital claims.

For enquiries (media only) contact: Mary Tomlinson, Senior Press Officer, Natural England. Email: mary.tomlinson@naturalengland.org.uk Telephone: 07771 834 975.

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Press release: Schools to teach 21st

century relationships and sex education

□□The government has today (1 March 2017) tabled amendments to the [Children and Social Work Bill](#) which will make it a requirement that all secondary schools in England teach relationships and sex education (RSE).

The amendments also allow the government to make regulations requiring personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) to be taught in all schools in England – primary and secondary, maintained and academy – in future.

Relationships education, RSE, and PSHE are designed to ensure pupils are taught the knowledge and life skills they will need to stay safe and develop healthy and supportive relationships, particularly dealing with the challenges of growing up in an online world.

Currently only pupils attending local-authority run secondary schools – which represent around a third of secondary schools – are guaranteed to be offered current sex and relationships education, and PSHE is only mandatory at independent schools. Neither are currently required to be taught in academies.

The government is proposing the introduction of the new subject of 'relationships education' in primary school and renaming the secondary school subject 'relationships and sex education', to emphasise the central importance of healthy relationships. The focus in primary school will be on building healthy relationships and staying safe. As children get older, it is important that they start to develop their understanding of healthy adult relationships in more depth, with sex education delivered in that context.

The statutory guidance for RSE was introduced in 2000 and is becoming increasingly outdated. It fails to address risks to children which have grown in prevalence in recent years, including online pornography, sexting and staying safe online. As a result now is the right time to address these issues.

The government is already taking action to address this with the introduction of a new internet safety green paper later this year, which will set out a series of steps to make the internet a safer place for young people.

This will be complemented by a comprehensive programme of engagement by the Department for Education (DfE) with stakeholders to set out suitable, age-appropriate content on RSE which focuses on mental wellbeing, consent, resilience, age-appropriate relationships and sex education, and keeping safe online. Regulations and statutory guidance will then be subject to full public consultation later this year, and we expect to see children and young people being taught this new curriculum in schools as soon as September 2019.

Schools will have flexibility over how they deliver these subjects, so they can develop an integrated approach that is sensitive to the needs of the local community; and, in the case of faith schools, in accordance with their faith.

Education Secretary Justine Greening said:

RSE and PSHE teach children and young people how to stay safe and healthy, and how to negotiate some of the personal and social challenges they will face growing up and as adults. These subjects form part of the building blocks young people need to thrive in modern Britain. At the moment, too many young people feel they don't have the RSE they need to stay safe and navigate becoming an adult.

It is time to make this change to ensure all children and young people have access to these subjects and to update the current statutory guidance for RSE which was introduced nearly 20 years ago, in 2000. We need high-quality, age-appropriate content that relates to the modern world, addressing issues like cyber bullying, 'sexting' and internet safety.

We will now begin a review and gather expert opinions to ensure these subjects really have a positive impact on young people.

Both young people themselves and parents are calling for a consistent approach on RSE. A survey of 16- to 24-year-olds carried out by the Terence Higgins Trust in July 2016 showed that 99% of young people thought RSE should be mandatory in all schools; and 1 in 7 had not received this education.

The amendments will continue to allow parents a right to withdraw children from sex education, and schools will be required to publish a clear statement of their policy and what will be taught, so that parents can make informed decisions. As is already the case where sex education is currently mandatory, schools will also have flexibility over how they teach these subjects so they can ensure their approach is sensitive to the needs of the local community and, in the case of faith schools, in accordance with the tenets of their faith.

Russell Hobby, General Secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT), said:

NAHT have long advocated age-appropriate sex education and PSHE for all pupils in all schools, to help prepare young people for the challenges they will encounter in their adult lives and the current challenges they will face beyond the school gates. We welcome the duties set out today and look forward to playing our part in ensuring RSE/PSHE delivers for young people.

Barnardo's Chief Executive, Javed Khan, said:

We are thrilled the government has listened to our campaign to provide all school children with age-appropriate school lessons on sex and healthy relationships to help keep them safe. Barnardo's has long campaigned for this vital education so children can better understand the dangers in the real world and online. We believe this will give children the knowledge and skills they need to help prevent them being groomed and sexually exploited.

Sarah Green, Co-director of the End Violence Against Women Coalition, said:

This is a real step forward in ending violence against women and girls and we commend the government for listening to experts and responding. It opens the door to high-quality RSE that will let young people have the essential conversations about consent, respect and LGBT equality. Quality RSE is a chance to talk with young people about how men and women treat each other, and to challenge the attitudes which minimise or make excuses for abuse of women and girls. It is a chance to emphasise such violence is always unacceptable, whether on our streets or in our schools.

1. The government has today (1 March 2017) published a policy statement which sets out the topics that the regulations and statutory guidance will need to reflect, and which the work of DfE will therefore consider.
2. We expect to see children and young people being taught the new curriculum in schools as soon as September 2019.