

Speech: PM press conference with Taoiseach Leo Varadkar: 19 June 2017

I would like to extend a warm welcome to Leo Varadkar to Downing Street today for the first time and offer my congratulations on his appointment as Taoiseach and leader of Fine Gael.

The unique relationship shared between the United Kingdom and Ireland is one of friendship, close cooperation and a deep sense of shared endeavour, bound by common values and generations of family links between our people.

The Taoiseach has said he believes in an Ireland where every person has an opportunity to succeed and share in prosperity. And I share a similar belief that the United Kingdom should be a place where everyone should have the chance to live a secure and happy life – a country that works for everyone, not just the privileged few.

We also spoke about the unimaginable tragedy which struck Grenfell Tower last week. The government will continue to do absolutely everything possible to help all of those affected through the difficult days, weeks, months and years ahead.

We spoke too about the appalling attack on Londoners in Finsbury in the early hours of this morning. As I said earlier, this was an attack that once again targeted the ordinary and the innocent going about their daily lives. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of the man who died and those who were injured.

The Taoiseach expressed his deepest sympathies for those affected by these horrific events and we both agreed that this kind of hatred and evil that leads to terrorism would never prevail.

Last week, the Taoiseach and I spoke and we agreed on the crucial need for the parties in Northern Ireland to form a fully functioning Executive by the 29 June deadline and how we would continue to engage closely on this important issue and reaffirmed that today.

We have both met the two main parties to make clear that the UK and Ireland would do everything we can to work with them and the importance of reaching an agreement by 29 June.

It is my firm belief that with good will on both sides a resolution can be reached which builds on the progress made in the last round of discussions.

And my government remains absolutely committed to a successful outcome from these talks and we remain steadfast in our support for the Belfast Agreement and its successors.

As the United Kingdom embarks on leaving the European Union, I fully respect that Ireland will remain an EU member state and that's why it is more

important than ever that the relationship between our countries continues to go from strength to strength.

We are leaving the European Union, but we are not leaving Europe – and we want to remain committed partners and allies of Ireland and all our friends across the continent.

Trade between our countries is worth over £43 billion a year and supports 400,000 jobs. And there are also complex supply chains that benefit both our countries. And as I've said before, no one wants to see this diminished.

I am personally committed to ensuring a practical solution that recognises the unique economic, social, cultural and political context of the land border with Ireland – which so many people pass through everyday and it remain our priority to work closely with the Irish government to ensure a frictionless and seamless a border as possible.

And I made this clear in my letter to Donald Tusk triggering Article 50 and that we want to maintain the Common Travel Area between us to make sure the UK's withdrawal from the EU does not harm the Republic of Ireland.

We also want the reciprocal rights that our citizens enjoy in both countries to continue, including the rights guaranteed under the Belfast Agreement.

And both we and the EU have made clear that we want to resolve this as a matter of priority and I am pleased that as negotiations begin in Brussels today we can start working in earnest together on joint solutions.

And it is with this shared sense of purpose that I believe our 2 countries can build even deeper ties and our unique relationship will become even closer and stronger.

The Taoiseach and I have had constructive discussions today. I look forward to working with him and to continuing the close relationship that our 2 countries have enjoyed for many more generations to come.

[News story: New ministerial appointment June 2017: Leader of the House of Commons](#)

The Rt Hon Andrea Leadsom MP has been appointed Lord President of the Privy Council and Leader of the House of Commons.

Andrea Leadsom said:

“I am delighted to have been appointed as Lord President and Leader of the House of Commons in what is an historic period for our Parliament.

“I am optimistic about our prospects as the UK prepares to leave the European Union and plan to work diligently to ensure the Government can successfully bring in its new legislative programme.

“It is incumbent on all parliamentarians that we do so in a spirit of national unity – openly discussing our disagreements while working hard to resolve our differences in the best interests of the country. I look forward to working across party lines on this basis.

“As we anticipate the return of significant powers from the European Union to the Palace of Westminster, we will show the world why our democracy is so valuable and so important in helping provide fairness and opportunity for everyone.”

Also confirmed is the reappointment of Michael Ellis MP as Deputy Leader of the House of Commons.

Michael Ellis said:

“I am very pleased to return as Deputy Leader, a role I have greatly enjoyed and continue to relish.

“The Government is always committed to listening carefully to Parliament’s views and we will continue to do just that in the years ahead.”

Press release: British High Commissioner congratulates Zambia’s winner of the Queen’s Young Leaders Award

Speaking at a send off event in Lusaka today, British High Commissioner, Fergus Cochrane-Dyet OBE said:

I congratulate Natasha on this recognition of her achievements and leadership skills. She is making a real difference in the community by raising awareness about sexual health. We are looking forward to seeing more talented young Zambians being boosted through this Programme. I am confident that Natasha will use her leadership skills to inspire positive change in Zambia.

Natasha, a young leader from Zambia, is among 60 young people from

across the Commonwealth to receive an award from Her Majesty The Queen at Buckingham Palace in June 2017.

The Queen's Young Leaders award is part of The Queen's Young Leaders Programme aimed at identifying, mentoring and celebrating the achievements of young people who are taking the lead to transform the lives of others and make a lasting difference in their communities.

This year's Award winners, aged between 18 and 29 and who come from all over the Commonwealth, are working to support others, raise awareness and inspire change on a variety of different issues including; education, climate change, gender equality, mental health and disability equality.

- Natasha is committed to raising awareness about sexual health. In 2015, whilst attending medical school, she co-founded Copper Rose Zambia to teach women about the importance of sexual and reproductive health. Since then, the organisation has launched fundraising drives to provide menstrual hygiene kits to girls in rural areas, and, through its Candid Pride Campaign and Woman4Her programmes, has educated over 5,000 teenagers about reproductive health. Natasha is also the country co-ordinator for the International Youth Alliance for Family Planning and a member of the Youth Coalition on Sexual and Reproductive Rights, where she supports the inclusion of young people in policy making. Her goal over the next five years is to reach a million females through sexual and reproductive health programmes by 2021.

See a full list of Award winners and Highly Commended runners up, and read more about their stories please [here](#).

- For a copy of a short film introducing the partnership and the Awards scheme please click on this [link](#)
- The Queen's Young Leaders Programme

The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust, in partnership with Comic Relief and The Royal Commonwealth Society, has established The Queen's Young Leaders Programme in honour of Her Majesty The Queen's 60 years of service to the Commonwealth at the time of her Diamond Jubilee. Guided by the values of the Commonwealth Charter, the goal of the Programme is to enable young people to step up as leaders and improve the lives of people across the Commonwealth.

- The Queen's Young Leaders Programme is a new initiative established by The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust in partnership with Comic Relief and the Royal Commonwealth Society in recognition of The Queen's lifetime of service to the Commonwealth. Over the next four years the Programme will support thousands of young people. In addition to the Queen's Young Leaders Awards, the Programme will provide grants to support organisations in selected countries across the Commonwealth that work with young people to transform their lives.

Award details

Each year from 2014 to 2018, 60 exceptional young people will be selected to receive a Queen's Young Leaders Award and become 'Queen's Young Leaders' – one for every year that The Queen had served as Head of the Commonwealth at the time of her Diamond Jubilee.

As part of the Award, winners will receive bespoke mentoring and online learning provided by the University of Cambridge. Award winners will attend a week-long residential programme in the UK in June, when they will receive their Award at Buckingham Palace from Her Majesty The Queen.

The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust

The Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Trust is a charitable foundation, established in 2012, to mark and celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's 60-year contribution to the Commonwealth. The Trust has received donations from governments, corporate partners, trusts, foundations, community groups and individuals from across the Commonwealth, and its programmes work in alliance towards eliminating avoidable blindness and to empower a new generation of young leaders. With a five-year timeframe in which to deliver successful programmes, the Trust's aim is to leave a lasting legacy, owned by the whole Commonwealth, to honour Her Majesty The Queen. For more information go to the [Jubilee Trust](#) website. * Comic Relief

Established in 1985, Comic Relief is a major UK fundraising and grant making charity which uses the power of entertainment to create long-lasting change. Its vision is a just world, free from poverty. It strives to make this vision a reality by supporting poor, disadvantages and vulnerable people in the UK and across some of the world's poorest communities to change their own lives for the better. Discover more [here](#)

- Royal Commonwealth Society

The Royal Commonwealth Society (RCS), founded in 1868, is a network of individuals and organisations committed to improving the lives and prospects of Commonwealth citizens across the world. Working through a range of educational, civil society, business and governmental networks, the RCS addresses issues that matter to the Commonwealth citizens. For more information go to to [RCS](#) website

- For more information contact:

Tresford Mumba at the British High Commission on +260 211 423200
British High Commission, Lusaka

News story: Early public and private investment speeds up innovation

Start-ups often rely on external funding – whether that be from public or private sources, or both together – to get them on the right track for success.

Investment can help them do things they wouldn't be able to do alone, or do so at a faster pace. It can give them confidence and remove the need to find other funding resources. It may also help them to access business advice and market opportunities.

Below are case studies of businesses that received Innovate UK support and have gone on to attract private equity, speeding up the time it takes to develop and commercialise their solutions.

Improving female health and wellbeing

[Chiaro](#) – the female healthtech business behind the Elvie connected pelvic floor exerciser – was awarded a grant by Innovate UK in its start-up phase. This allowed the company to leverage the latest developments in wearable tech that underpin Elvie. The device has proved a success, with the company making a profit within 6 months of it going on sale.

The business has since gone through a number of funding rounds. In its latest, it attracted £4.8 million of external investment, including Octopus Ventures and Allbright. This will support the development of 3 more smart products for female health and wellbeing and its global expansion into 25 countries. Chiaro's total capital now stands at £9.6 million.

[Chiaro: healthtech innovator launches pelvic floor exerciser](#)

Early cancer detection

Cambridge company, [Owlstone Medical](#) has developed a breath biopsy tool that offers early diagnosis of cancer and other diseases.

Owlstone Medical has received funding from us totalling £277,000. This has allowed it to conduct a feasibility study into a diagnostic test for Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, and go on to develop the core technology for its breathalyser: a microchip field asymmetric ion mobility spectrometer (FAIMS) sensor.

The company has raised £19.3 million (\$23.5 million USD), including an investment by [Aviva's venture capital arm](#). This is helping to promote Owlstone Medical in the healthcare sector, build awareness of breath biopsy and commercialise the platform.

Quicker, more personalised treatment

[Imperial College London](#) spin-out [Entia](#) has pioneered image analysis technology to create a hand-held, portable blood test kit. It helps to test and manage treatment for blood cancers and conditions such as polycythaemia and anaemia.

The kit was developed with a £99,000 smart award and £139,000 through the Biomedical Catalyst, which allowed Entia to work up its idea and test the potential for monitoring cancer patients' response to chemotherapy. A further Biomedical Catalyst award for personalised chemotherapy treatment has seen Entia partner with The Royal Marsden Hospital, University of Oxford and Imperial College Health Partners.

Entia has gone on to secure £1 million in private funding plus venture capital financing led by [Sussex Place Ventures](#). It also won a place on [Microsoft's London Accelerator programme](#).

[Entia: pioneering blood tests outside of the laboratory](#)

Cutting the UK's lighting bill

Suffolk-based Cambridge Nanotherm benefited from Innovate UK support, to go from start-up to full-scale manufacturing in 3 years. Through a funding competition, the company partnered with LED lighting specialist [Juice Technology](#) to prototype a novel electrochemical process that manages heat produced in electrical devices.

Through a separate investment from venture capital company Enso, plus further Innovate UK funding, Cambridge Nanotherm was able to fund and test more prototypes, get market feedback, and eventually open a successful production line. The technology they sell today reduces working temperature of LED lights by 15-20C and increases their efficiency by up to 20%.

Novel cold and power

[Dearman](#) is the creator of a novel piston engine, which is powered by liquid air or liquid nitrogen.

With our support, Dearman began developing cold and power technologies that leverage the engine, such as transport refrigeration units and back-up power systems. This includes testing in an Innovate UK and [Office for Low Emission Vehicles](#) (OLEV) co-funded project consortium with [HORIBA MIRA](#), [Air Products](#) and [Loughborough University](#).

The company has gone on to secure private equity, most notably a £16 million investment from [Park Vale Capital](#). This will allow Dearman to expand its operations and take its technology to market in the UK and overseas.

[Dearman technology firm drives a cold and power revolution](#)

Weight-saving, low emission technology

[Impression Technologies](#) – an Imperial College London spin-out – used research to develop a revolutionary aluminium forming process.

It received early support from Innovate UK, the [Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council](#) and OLEV to pioneer hot form quenching (HFQ®). This can form ultra-high strength aluminium into complex pressings, offering vehicle manufacturers a cost-effective way to reduce weight. The process is already being used in premium manufacturers' vehicles, including the Aston Martin DB11.

Following a £6 million investment – £2 million from the [Advanced Manufacturing Supply Chain Initiative](#), plus £4 million from venture capital backers – Impression Technologies was able to open a new production and technology facility.

Investment accelerator competition

Attracting private investment after an early government grant can be a difficult task for start-ups – but can be hugely beneficial to their success.

Our investment accelerator pilot aims to connect UK businesses with grant funding and early venture capital investment simultaneously.

If your organisation is based in the UK and works in either infrastructure systems or health and life sciences you could be eligible for a share of up to £8.5 million in grants and venture capital investment for early stage projects.

[Press release: Committee to hold 'horizon scanning' event](#)

The Committee on Standards in Public Life will hold a seminar on 10 July to discuss potential ethical standards issues arising over the next 5 years.

The Committee will be holding a horizon scanning breakfast seminar on Monday 10 July, looking ahead at possible standards issues over the next 5 years.

On the same day, the Committee will also be publishing its annual report and strategic plan. The event will be held at 9.00am – 10.30am on 10 July in central London. The seminar discussion will be under the Chatham House rule but an unattributed note will be made available after the event.

This event is open to interested members of the public. Spaces are limited so

please contact the Secretariat by email at public@public-standards.gov.uk if you would like to attend.