

Press release: PM call with Taoiseach Leo Varadkar: 15 June 2017

The Prime Minister spoke to Leo Varadkar on the phone earlier today to offer her congratulations on becoming Taoiseach.

The Taoiseach expressed his deepest sympathies for recent tragic events and said the thoughts of the Irish people were with the people of London at this time.

Both leaders agreed on the importance of continued cooperation between the 2 countries and the Prime Minister said she was personally committed to a close and special partnership with Ireland as the UK embarks on leaving the European Union.

They also spoke about a crucial need for the parties in Northern Ireland to come together to form a fully functioning Executive by 29 June and how both leaders would continue to engage closely on this important issue.

The Prime Minister also emphasised her steadfast commitment to the Belfast Agreement and its successors and the two leaders agreed to meet in person at the earliest possible opportunity.

Press release: PM statement following Northern Ireland talks: 15 June 2017

Today I met Northern Ireland's five main parties with a clear focus on restoring devolved Government to Northern Ireland as soon as possible.

Speaking with the parties today, it was clear that real progress was made in the last round of discussions and agreement can be reached if there is good will on all sides.

But time is running short and the parties must come together by the 29 June for the return of a strong voice at Stormont and for a brighter future for everyone in Northern Ireland.

My government remains absolutely committed to doing everything we can to help take this process to a successful conclusion, remaining steadfast to our commitments in the Belfast Agreement and its successors.

The Northern Ireland Secretary will continue to engage with the parties before this crucial deadline and if no resolution is reached then we will

need to consider what steps we need to take, to ensure Northern Ireland has the political stability it needs.

Press release: Department for Work and Pensions welcomes new ministerial team

The new team at the Department for Work and Pensions is:

- Secretary of State – Rt Hon David Gauke MP
- Minister of State for Employment – Damian Hinds MP
- Minister of State for Disabled People, Health and Work – Penny Mordaunt MP
- Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Pensions and Financial Inclusion – Guy Opperman MP
- Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Family Support, Housing and Child Maintenance – Caroline Dinenage MP
- Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Lords) – Baroness Buscombe

Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, David Gauke said:

It's a privilege to be leading a department which touches the lives of so many people. The work we do here really matters, so I'm delighted to be leading a team of talented ministers committed to ensuring a welfare system which transforms lives and offers help to those who need it most.

I'd like to welcome Guy, Caroline and Peta, and welcome back Damian and Penny. Together we will work tirelessly to deliver fairness and opportunity for all, whatever people's background or where they are from.

Minister for Employment, Damian Hinds said:

Our dedicated Jobcentre Plus teams and ground-breaking reforms like Universal Credit have contributed to record numbers of people getting back into, and staying in work.

This is great news but we want to go even further. I'm determined to build on this success and support more people into jobs as we aim towards full employment.

Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Penny Mordaunt, said:

Disabled people face barriers in all aspects of their lives and we believe in a comprehensive approach to tackling them.

I'm very pleased to be returning to the role to continue this important work. We've made good progress, and with the support of the sector, businesses and wider society I am confident we can do even more. I look forward to working together with all those who are passionate about this agenda to stop discrimination and improve opportunities for everyone.

Minister for Pensions and Financial Inclusion, Guy Opperman said:

It is a privilege to have this opportunity to undertake a role promoting financial inclusion and helping people prepare for later life, with both a state and private pension.

Automatic enrolment has been a huge success and I look forward to our efforts to build on this.

Minister for Family Support, Housing and Child Maintenance, Caroline Dinenage said:

I'm committed to doing everything possible to support families to get on, have a secure place to live, and give their children the best start in life.

From making sure working parents can access good childcare, through to having the right support in place for families experiencing difficulties, I know how important these issues are in helping people to improve their lives and make the most of the opportunities available.

Lords Minister for Work and Pensions, Baroness Buscombe said:

The department plays a major role in helping to support people across Britain, and it is an honour to be their voice in the House of Lords.

I look forward to working with my colleagues across the department, and wider government, to ensure a sustainable welfare system which delivers vital help to the people who need it most.

[Read more about the ministers.](#)

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 3267 5144

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[Press release: Government confirms emergency funding available in response to Grenfell Tower incident](#)

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid has confirmed that a government emergency scheme – the Bellwin scheme – will be activated to support the immediate response operation following the horrific incident at Grenfell Tower in London.

Under the scheme, financial assistance is available to local authorities to help with immediate costs following a disaster or emergency in their area that involves danger to life or property. They can apply to have 100% of their eligible costs above a threshold reimbursed.

Communities Secretary Sajid Javid said:

First and foremost my thoughts are with the residents and families of those affected by the horrific incident at Grenfell Tower. Emergency services and the local community have been tremendous in their response.

As the Prime Minister has been clear, the Government stands ready to help in anyway possible. We're determined to stand squarely behind the affected communities.

Funding through the Bellwin scheme will help councils support the community to get back on their feet.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond, said:

We are all deeply saddened by this terrible tragedy and are determined that all necessary support will be there for victims and their families.

That is why we have made emergency funding available so the local council can provide much-needed services to everybody affected.

Housing Minister Alok Sharma also confirmed today that working with Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, the Government will guarantee that every single family from Grenfell Tower will be rehoused in the local area.

Background

The Bellwin scheme compensates authorities for the exceptional costs incurred in incidents such as flooding. Relevant authorities are eligible for costs under Bellwin when they have spent more than 0.2% of their calculated annual revenue budgets on emergency works.

Eligible authorities include:

- councils
- police authorities
- fire and rescue authorities
- national park authorities

The scheme provides emergency financial assistance to local authorities under section 155 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

The scheme is named after former Department of the Environment Minister Lord Bellwin.

[News story: More A&E funding to help hospitals prepare for winter](#)

The Secretary of State for Health Jeremy Hunt has today (15 June 2017) announced a second wave of funding to ease pressure on hospital emergency departments ahead of next winter.

The Secretary of State will confirm that a further £20.74 million has been awarded to 27 hospitals in England, which follows an initial £55.98 million given to 70 hospitals in April. This money is part of the dedicated funding announced in the Spring Budget to ensure local A&Es are prepared for the additional demands that winter brings.

Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt said:

The NHS prepares well in advance for winter each year, but despite the hard work and dedication of staff, demand on services continues to increase as a result of our ageing population.

This vital investment will help hospitals change the way they assess and see patients so people are given the most appropriate medical care as quickly as possible.

The funding will be used to help hospitals properly equip themselves ahead of winter, particularly to handle the large volumes of patients attending A&E.

Hospitals will be able to 'stream' patients when they arrive in A&E, with a clinician assessing their needs and deciding where they can receive the most appropriate care.

It will also allow hospitals to build GP practices within their A&E units where patients with less urgent needs can receive treatment, further alleviating pressure.

Today's funding will also support wider plans set out by NHS England to improve A&E performance in England by 2018. In particular, it will help hospitals hit the target of admitting, transferring or discharging 95% of patients within 4 hours.

List of agreed proposals

Region	Bid value	Name
London	£750,000.00	Epsom and St Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust
London	£757,554.00	Barts Health NHS Trust – The Royal London Hospital
Midlands	£596,976.00	East & North Hertfordshire NHS Trust
Midlands	£998,900.00	Norfolk & Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Midlands	£221,000.00	The Queen Elizabeth Hospital King's Lynn NHS Foundation Trust
Midlands	£400,000.00	South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust
Midlands	£968,000.00	United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust
Midlands	£650,000.00	University Hospitals Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust – (QE site)
Midlands	£1,000,000.00	West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust
North	£1,000,000.00	Aintree University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
North	£975,000.00	Doncaster and Bassetlaw Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust – Doncaster site
North	£1,000,000.00	Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
North	£875,000.00	City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust
North	£981,560.00	Co Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust – Darlington site
North	£200,000.00	Countess of Chester Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
North	£825,500.00	County Durham And Darlington NHS Foundation Trust – North Durham site
North	£879,000.00	East Cheshire NHS Trust
North	£340,000.00	Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust
North	£660,000.00	St Helens and Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
North	£990,667.00	Wirral University Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
North	£830,000.00	York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
South	£944,291.00	Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust – Darent Valley Hospital
South	£732,982.00	Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust – John Radcliffe Hospital

Region	Bid value	Name
South	£645,000.00	Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust
South	£855,000.00	Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust Queen Alexandra Hospital
South	£600,000.00	Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust St Peters Hospital (Chertsey) site
South	£842,600.00	Weston Area Health NHS Trust
South	£225,000.00	Yeovil District Hospital NHS Foundation Trust