

The state of the Union – Mr Trump's address

Mr Trump rose to the occasion and delivered a powerful address, seeking to bring more people into his vision of a faster growing USA with more jobs and more take home pay

He was full of the American dream, though not so full of the American dreamers that the Democrats champion. The President hopes he has done a deal on migration. He gets an end to wider family members having an automatic right to entry, and more wall across the Mexican border, in return for offering full legal citizenship to the Dreamers, the young people born of illegal migrants and brought up in the USA. Republicans are presenting the extra border wall as an extension of the Democrats 700 mile border fence. Democrats including Mrs Clinton legislated for that in 2006. The Democrats see it differently.

Mr Trump pointed out that companies are offering to pay higher wages or special bonuses to their employees following the corporate tax cuts. He reminded the nation that these pay increases are worth more with lower taxes. He told them that a family of 4 with an income of \$75,000 would be \$2000 a year better off. A married couple on \$24000 will pay no income tax. He took credit for the decision of a number of car makers to expend or establish new factories in the USA. He announced the end of "the war on American energy" as he takes measures to produce more oil and gas at home. It looks as if his tax cuts will provide a welcome boost to jobs, earnings and US investment.

He was full of praise for the USA and for Americans, as he sought to get more buy in to his idea of making "America great again for all Americans". He concluded with some history from the founding of the Republic, saying the USA is:

"home to an incredible people with the revolutionary idea that they could rule themselves. That they could chart their own destiny. And that, together, they could light up the world."

Press release: New figures show larger proportion of strokes in the middle aged

Public Health England (PHE) today launches the [Act FAST stroke campaign](#) which

urges the public to call 999 if they notice even one of the signs of a stroke in themselves, or in others:

- Face – has their face fallen on one side? Can they smile?
- Arms – can they raise both their arms and keep them there?
- Speech – is their speech slurred?
- Time – to call 999

In England, one in six people will have a stroke in their lifetime, and [new statistics released by PHE](#) show that 57,000 people had their first-time stroke in 2016. It is estimated that around 30% of people who have a stroke will go on to experience another stroke.

Stroke is a leading cause of death and disability in the UK. There are around 32,000 stroke-related deaths in England each year. Deaths related to stroke have declined by 49% in the past 15 years. This has been accredited to a combination of better prevention, earlier treatment and more advanced treatment. Getting an NHS Health Check, for those aged 40 to 74 years, can identify early if you are at risk of a stroke.

While the majority (59%) of strokes occur in the older generation, PHE's figures also found that over a third (38%) of first time strokes happen in middle-aged adults (between the ages of 40 to 69). More first-time strokes are now occurring at an earlier age compared to a decade ago. The average age for males having a stroke fell from 71 to 68 years and for females, 75 to 73 years between 2007 and 2016.

Awareness is crucial, so the campaign reaches out to people of all ages to highlight the risk of stroke and reiterates the signs and how vital it is that people call 999 and get to hospital as soon as possible. Around 1.9 million nerve cells in the brain are lost every minute that a stroke is left untreated, which can result in slurred speech and paralysis. If left untreated, a stroke can result in permanent disability or death.

The Stroke Association's latest [State of the Nation report](#) reveals that in the UK almost two thirds (65%) of stroke survivors leave hospital with a disability. Around three quarters of stroke survivors have arm or leg weakness, around 60% have visual problems and around a half have difficulty swallowing and loss of bladder control. Communication is also affected in around a third of stroke survivors.

Professor Julia Verne, Public Health England Director, said:

Stroke is still one of the leading causes of death in England. While it's often associated with older people, the latest research shows that people are having strokes at a younger age. Everyone needs to be aware of the signs.

Calling 999 as soon as you see even one of the symptoms develop – in the face, arms and speech – is essential. Speedy treatment will help prevent deaths and disability.

Tony Rudd, National Clinical Director for Stroke with NHS England and stroke physician at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust, comments:

Thanks to improved NHS care, stroke survival is now at record high levels. Urgent treatment for strokes is essential, so friends and family can play a key part in making sure their loved ones receive care as quickly as possible.

Every minute counts and knowing when to call 999 – if you see any one of the signs of stroke – will make a significant difference to someone's recovery and rehabilitation.

Steve Brine MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Public Health and Primary Care, said:

Strokes still claim thousands of lives each year, so the message of this Act FAST campaign remains as relevant as ever. The faster you act, the greater the chance of a good recovery. That's why I'm urging everybody, and we must remember stroke can hit at any age, to familiarise themselves with the signs of a stroke and be ready to act fast.

Martin Flaherty OBE, Managing Director of the Association of Ambulance Chief Executives said:

We fully support Public Health England's Act FAST stroke campaign. This is an important message and we urge people to call 999 immediately if they notice the signs or symptoms of a stroke in themselves or in others. Even if it is not a stroke, it is likely to be something that needs medical advice and attention, so calling the ambulance service is the right thing to do.

Juliet Bouverie, CEO of the Stroke Association, said:

As the UK's leading stroke charity, we have said time and again that stroke devastates lives in an instant. Almost two thirds of stroke survivors leave hospital with a disability, but it doesn't have to be this way. The faster you seek and receive emergency specialist treatment for stroke, the better your chances of making a good recovery. Knowing the signs of stroke and being able to Act FAST could save a life – your life.

The FAST (face, arms, speech, time) acronym has featured in the advertising for a number of years and is a simple test to help people identify the most common signs of a stroke.

Background

1. The Act FAST campaign videos and pictures can be found on [Dropbox](#).
2. Interview opportunities with PHE, healthcare professionals and case studies are available upon request
3. The [Act FAST campaign](#) will run nationally from 1 February. The campaign includes advertising on TV, press, radio, bus interior posters and digital, supporting PR and a social media drive. Some activity will specifically target black and minority ethnic audiences because African, African-Caribbean and South Asian communities have a higher incidence of stroke. Twitter: [@ActFAST999](#), Facebook: www.facebook.com/ActFAST999
4. A stroke is a brain attack that happens when the blood supply to the brain is cut off, caused by a clot or bleeding in the brain. A mini stroke is also known as a transient ischaemic attack (TIA). It is caused by a temporary disruption in the blood supply to part of the brain.
5. The [Stroke Association](#) is a charity that believes in life after stroke and together we can conquer stroke. It works directly with stroke survivors and their families and carers, with health and social care professionals and with scientists and researchers. They campaign to improve stroke care and support people to make the best recovery they can. They fund research to develop new treatments and ways of preventing stroke. The Stroke Helpline (0303 303 3100) provides information and support on stroke.
6. The [One You campaign](#) is a nationwide programme that supports adults in making simple changes that can have a huge influence on their health. Changes that could help prevent diseases such as type 2 diabetes, cancer and heart disease and reduce risk of suffering a stroke or living with dementia, disability and frailty in later life
7. People aged over-30 are being encouraged to take Public Health England's online ['Heart Age Test'](#) to find out their 'heart age' which will show their potential risk of having a heart attack or stroke and gives them the opportunity to take action. To calculate someone's heart age, they will need to share some lifestyle information, including weight, height and smoking habits. They will then be able to see how their real age compares to their heart age and find out how many years they can expect to live without developing cardiovascular disease
8. Adults aged 40 to 74 are eligible for a free NHS Health Check which is designed to spot early signs of stroke, kidney disease, heart disease, type 2 diabetes or dementia. As we get older, we have a higher risk of developing one of these conditions. An NHS Health Check helps find ways to lower this risk. Those in the age group can expect to receive a

letter from your GP or local authority inviting you for a free NHS Health Check every 5 years.

9. Additional symptoms of stroke and mini stroke can include sudden:

- loss of vision or blurred vision in one or both eyes
- weakness or numbness on one side of the body
- memory loss or confusion
- dizziness, unsteadiness or a sudden fall, especially with any of the other symptoms

Celebrity campaign supporters

Celebrity supporters of this campaign include Shelley King, Gloria Hunniford, Marcus Birdman and Alastair Stewart. Quotes from the celebrities are included below and interviews are available upon request.

Shelley King, actress who plays Yazmeen Nazir on Coronation Street and supporter of the Stroke Association, said:

Both my mother and grandmother have been affected by a stroke so it's something incredibly close to my heart and I want to do anything I can to encourage people to be aware of the signs of a stroke and to act quickly if you notice them, either in yourself or in other people around you. Back in the 90s when my mother had a stroke, there was very little awareness – many people wouldn't have spotted the signs or known what to do, delaying action that could have saved lives. But today, with campaigns like Act FAST, we can be empowered to do more. A stroke can strike at any time – it might be someone just walking down the street who needs your help – so it's crucial that all of us take notice of the FAST acronym and know to call 999 immediately if we see any single one of the signs.

Gloria Hunniford, television and radio presenter and supporter of the Stroke Association, said:

I know first-hand the importance of recognising signs of stroke and acting fast, having had to do so for my husband, Stephen. I was about to head out of our home to work, when Stephen stumbled into the house from the garden saying his left arm felt like cotton wool. My dad had suffered a series of strokes, so recognising the warning bells, I knew I had to act fast. Not many of us realise how quickly the clock is ticking for someone who is suffering stroke – thankfully Stephen got to the hospital in time to receive clot-busting treatment within the crucial 3-hour time window. Whether it's just one symptom or more, and no matter how subtle, it's absolutely essential to call 999 at the first signs of a stroke. I dread to think what could have happened if Stephen was too late – his outlook could have been much worse. Fortunately, he fully recovered.

Alastair Stewart OBE, journalist and newscaster and supporter of the Stroke Association, said:

My father had a stroke and it was devastating for my family. He was my hero and to see him struggling with disabilities afterwards was heart-breaking. I'd encourage everyone to familiarise themselves with the Act FAST acronym so they can act quickly when they see a stroke happening and hopefully avoid someone experiencing the same difficulties as my father.

Markus Birdman, stand-up comedian and supporter of the Stroke Association, said:

I considered myself to be fit and healthy, so when I was 40 and had a stroke it was a shock. I woke up one morning and found it really hard to see; I had absolutely no idea what was going on. You never think it's going to happen to you, especially not when you're young, but strokes can happen at any age so it's important that people know the signs to look out of so they can act quickly. The faster you act, the less damage that is done and the better the person's chance of a good recovery."

[Public Health England](#) exists to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. It does this through world-class science, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships and the delivery of specialist public health services. PHE is an operationally autonomous executive agency of the Department of Health. Twitter: [@PHE_uk](#), Facebook: www.facebook.com/PublicHealthEngland.

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Remarks by Vice-President Dombrovskis at the European Financial Forum 2018 in Dublin

Honourable Minister,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to be here at the Dublin Castle this evening. This castle stands on what used to be a strategic point, with views down the River Liffey. From here, potential dangers could be spotted.

Luckily, those days are long gone. But this is a fitting vantage point to discuss challenges and opportunities ahead for the financial sector.

Now, Ireland is a country that is open to the world. For example, it has an exceptionally high share of trade compared to GDP. It is also the fourth largest exporter of financial services in the EU.

Ireland has made a remarkable comeback since the crisis. This year, economic growth is forecast at almost four percent.

But there are also clouds on the horizon. Of all EU countries, Ireland has the closest geographic, historic, and economic links to the United Kingdom, so there is understandably concern about Brexit. This is a challenge that Europe will need to manage for years to come. But the European Union will continue to stand by Ireland in this process, and together we will overcome stumbling blocks one by one.

At the moment our main focus is on the negotiations for a transition-period. As we move on to define our future relationship, we should bear in mind that financial stability is best protected by coordinating rules and supervision – this is a lesson from the financial crisis.

Our financial markets may in the future be less integrated than today, but they will still have many ties. This requires maintaining strong convergence of rules and supervision in the EU and the UK. We are enhancing EU rules on equivalence, which is an important tool to ensure such convergence.

Whatever the outcome of the talks, financial firms should be prepared. Supervisors both in the EU and the UK are working with them to ensure this. Our most important common objective must be to preserve financial stability.

But let me today focus also on the opportunities the future holds for Ireland and the EU. The Commission see this country as a strong player – a dynamic financial centre within the European single market. Our work to build a Capital Markets Union will reinforce this position.

Tonight, I will use the example of the Irish funds management industry to make this point. I will then highlight our work to prepare Europe's financial sector for technological developments. And I will offer my first reactions on the final report of the High Level Expert Group on sustainable finance, which has been published today.

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Overall, the EU economy is outperforming expectations. The latest figures show that it grew by 2.5% in 2017. Economic sentiment in the EU is at its highest level since 2001. Unemployment is steadily decreasing, and Europe now has its highest level of employment ever.

Our main task ahead is to ensure that the benefits of this growth are felt by all Europeans. That is why we are focusing on inclusive growth and relaunching convergence among EU countries. This favourable economic background is a good opportunity to complete what we have started and ensure that we have a resilient and well-functioning Economic and Monetary Union.

Our immediate priority is to complete the Banking Union. For this, we should move in parallel on risk reduction and risk sharing. All elements are on the table. On risk reduction, this includes our November 2016 bank reform package and our ongoing work to reduce Non-Performing Loans. On the risk sharing side, we recently came with ideas on how to unblock negotiations on the European Deposit Insurance Scheme. And we have broad support to finalise the work on the backstop for the Single Resolution Fund. So the time is ripe to move at political level on completing the Banking Union.

The second immediate priority for deepening the EMU is setting up the Capital Markets Union. Deeper capital markets across Europe will increase risk-sharing among private investors and improve the shock-absorption capacity of the economy. In the past three years, we have taken fundamental steps towards deeper and more integrated EU capital markets. Of the 33 actions we announced in 2015, 25 have now been completed.

One strength of Ireland's financial sector is asset management. As of September last year, Irish fund managers had more than €4.2 trillion assets under management. A true Capital Markets Union would enable Irish fund managers to further benefit from the full scale of the single market. In March of this year, revised rules for the EU venture capital label – EuVECA – will enter into application. Large managers can then run EuVECA funds, providing economies of scale and trusted brands. We have also expanded the range of eligible assets, and decreased the costs associated with cross-

border marketing.

We are also looking more broadly at the rules for offering funds across the EU. This market is still predominantly organised along national lines. For example, 70% of the assets under management are held by funds available for sale in only one EU country. The share of alternative investment funds that is marketed in more than three countries is very low – only 3%. This spring we will present a proposal to address obstacles to the cross-border distribution of funds. We want to reduce the administrative burden and improve clarity for fund managers who want to market their funds across the EU. The aim is for a fund manager based in Dublin to be able to easily offer their funds in Riga, without compromising on investor protection.

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Another focus of the Capital Markets Union is to make sure that Europe seizes the opportunities of financial technology. That brings me to the topic of Fintech. As the largest user of information and communications technology, the financial sector stands to benefit enormously from the adoption of new technologies.

Europe has what it takes to develop a globally competitive Fintech sector. We can rely on our strengths in research and engineering. For example, we have 32 artificial intelligence research institutions in the world top 100, which is more than the US or China. I also see great Fintech potential here in Ireland, with its strong information technology culture.

But for us to become a Fintech superpower, we need to make sure that our companies are able to grow and scale up in Europe. If not, we risk driving them out of the EU and thereby losing valuable potential for creating economic growth in Europe. With this objective in mind, we will present in March an EU Action Plan on Fintech.

We will also present a legislative proposal to enable EU-wide crowdfunding and peer-to-peer lending. This type of financing is crucial for innovative start-ups to access funding and get off the ground. Crowdfunding and peer-to-peer lending is growing rapidly across Europe. Yet it remains subject to differing and sometimes inconsistent national rules. This hinders platforms from reaching scale. To solve this, we will propose an EU-level passport for this sector.

In the global Fintech race, the pace of innovation is such that regulators and supervisors sometimes struggle to keep up. Some EU countries have innovation hubs, and some even have regulatory sandboxes. But for firms to scale up in Europe, we need to encourage all countries to create a safe space for start-ups to innovate under close supervision and tailored regulatory requirements.

To compare, financial centres such as Hong Kong and Singapore already have fully fledged sandboxes up and running. Despite our strong Fintech players and potential, Europe is still lagging behind. So we should start thinking about a common approach to sandboxes at EU level.

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The future of finance will not only be digital, it will also have to be green. So I would like to focus the rest of my speech on sustainable finance.

To limit global warming to well below 2 degrees, Europe will need an estimated €180 billion in additional yearly investments. Public money will not be enough. So we need to re-direct private capital towards investments in green and sustainable projects.

A year ago, the Commission appointed a high-level expert group on sustainable finance to elaborate a comprehensive set of proposals for the financial sector to support the transition to the low-carbon economy. To that end, this group of experts assessed the entire financial system to see where changes are needed.

Today they have published their final report. I believe this report is a manifesto for far-reaching reform. The Commission will use it to propose an EU strategy on sustainable finance in March, followed by several legislative proposals.

Let me refer to several recommendations:

- First, we need a unified EU classification system or taxonomy for sustainable assets. We need to define what is green and what is not green. And we need to identify the areas where sustainable investment is most needed and can make the biggest impact. A unified EU classification is fundamental for the development of any green finance policy. We will follow up this recommendation with the first piece of legislation in spring.
- Second, as recommended in the report, we will present a proposal on fiduciary duty. It will clarify the need to take sustainability into account when managing money for others. Clients have the right to know how sustainable their investments are.
- Third, we could boost green investments and loans by introducing a so-called green supporting factor. This could be done at first stage by lowering capital requirements for certain climate-friendly investments, such as energy-efficient mortgages or low-carbon cars. However, this exercise would be delicate. Green does not mean risk-free. Any measures would have to be carefully calibrated, and based on a clear EU classification.
- Finally, further development of the green bond market can drive the investment that we need. With a unified classification system for sustainable assets, we could establish criteria and labels for green bonds and investment funds. These labels would help investors to easily identify financial products that comply with green or low-carbon criteria. We could extend the existing European Eco-label to financial products.

Our ambition is to inspire also other countries to act in favour of a sustainable global financial system.

I count also on your support for this major reform of the world of finance.

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Ladies and Gentlemen, We have already taken important steps towards a true European Capital Markets Union. And as the Irish say: Tús maith leath na hoibre. A good start is half the work.

Now we should finish what we have started, and prepare our financial sector for the future. Our success and prosperity will be determined by our ability to embrace and lead developments in a fast changing world.

CHP reminds public on precautions against cold weather

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health (DH) today (February 1) reminded the public, particularly the elderly and people with chronic illnesses, to adopt appropriate measures to protect their health in view of the cold weather.

A spokesman for the CHP said that cold weather can easily trigger or exacerbate diseases, especially among the elderly and persons suffering from heart disease, respiratory illness or other chronic illnesses.

“Elderly people have less insulating fat beneath their skin to keep them warm and their body temperature control mechanism may be weaker. Their body may not be able to appropriately respond to the cold weather,” the spokesman said.

Some senior persons may have decreased mobility, which can in turn slow down their ability to generate and conserve body heat. Chronic illnesses, such as hypertension, diabetes and endocrine disorders, may undermine the health of elderly people and lower their metabolic rate, subsequently causing their body to generate less heat.

The CHP reminded the public, in particular the elderly and persons with chronic illnesses, to adopt the following preventive measures:

- Take note of the weather forecast. Wear warm clothing, including hats, scarves, gloves and socks accordingly;
- Consume sufficient food to ensure adequate calorie intake;
- Perform regular exercise to facilitate blood circulation and heat production;
- Stay in a warm environment and avoid prolonged outdoor exposure;
- Use heaters with care and maintain adequate indoor ventilation; and
- Seek medical advice if feeling unwell.

In addition, the public should avoid alcoholic beverages.

“Drinking alcohol cannot keep you warm. Alcohol accelerates the loss of body heat through dilated blood vessels, resulting in chilling instead,” the spokesman said.

“Parents should ensure that babies are sufficiently warm, but it is also important to keep babies lightly clothed to avoid overheating them,” the spokesman added.

Parents should observe the following safety measures when putting their children to bed:

- Keep the room well ventilated and with a comfortable temperature;
- Always place babies on their back to sleep. Babies usually sleep well without a pillow;
- Place babies on a firm and well-fitted mattress to sleep. Avoid soft objects and loose bedding;
- Leave their head, face and arms uncovered during sleep; and
- Let babies sleep in a cot placed in the parents’ room and near their bed.

Members of the public are advised to take heed of the following advice to avoid influenza and respiratory tract infections:

- Maintain adequate rest, a balanced diet and regular physical activity, and avoid stress and do not smoke;
- Maintain good personal and environmental hygiene;
- Maintain good hand hygiene via proper handwashing or use of alcohol-based handrub;
- Ensure good ventilation;
- Wear a face mask in the event of influenza-like symptoms, while taking care of patients and when visiting hospitals or clinics;
- Cover the nose and mouth while sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissue paper in a lidded rubbish bin and wash hands immediately afterwards;
- Seek medical advice when feeling unwell, and stay at home; and
- Receive seasonal influenza vaccination, which is suitable for all persons aged 6 months or above except those with known contraindications.

Food-borne diseases, particularly those linked to hot pot cuisine, are also common in cold weather. The following preventive measures should be taken:

- Wash hands before handling and consuming food;
- Do not patronise unlicensed vendors or those with poor hygienic standards while selecting food;
- Wash and cook all food thoroughly;
- Vegetables should be washed thoroughly in clean running water before cooking and consumption. When appropriate, scrub vegetables with hard

surfaces with a clean brush to remove dirt and substances, including pesticide residues and contaminants, from the surface and crevices;

- Shrimps should be fully cooked by cooking them until the shells turn red and the flesh turns white and opaque;
- For shellfish like scallops and geoduck, scrub the shells thoroughly and remove internal organs;
- Most hot pot ingredients should be stored in a refrigerator at 4 degrees Celsius or below, while frozen food should be stored in a freezer at -18 degrees C or below;
- Never use raw eggs as a dipping sauce for hot pot; and
- Use different sets of chopsticks to handle raw and cooked food to avoid cross-contamination.

In addition, the public should not use charcoal as cooking fuel in poorly ventilated areas, especially indoors, to avoid harmful exposure to carbon monoxide (CO) and prevent CO poisoning. While using other kinds of fuel, the public should also ensure adequate ventilation.

For more health information, the public may call the DH's Health Education Hotline (2833 0111) or visit the [CHP's website](#) and [Facebook Fanpage](#).

The public may also call Dial-a-Weather (1878 200) or visit the website of the [Hong Kong Observatory](#) for the latest weather information and forecast, or its page on [Weather Information for Senior Citizens](#).

Employers and employees should take precautions during cold weather

Attention duty announcers, radio and TV stations:

Please broadcast the following special announcement immediately, and repeat it at frequent intervals when the Cold Weather Warning is in force:

The Labour Department reminds employers that as the Cold Weather Warning is in force, they should take appropriate precautions such as reminding employees who have to work outdoors or in remote areas to wear appropriately warm clothing, and make arrangements for employees to rotate from outdoor to indoor or sheltered work sites as far as possible. Employees should take note of the weather report, wear appropriately warm clothing and be mindful of their health conditions. They should notify their supervisors and seek medical help immediately if feeling unwell, such as having cold limbs and body shivering.