

News story: Prime Minister Theresa May's New Year message for 2018

2017 has been a year of progress for the United Kingdom.

In January, I set out our objectives for the Brexit negotiations, and in the months since we have pursued them with steady purpose.

In March we triggered Article 50, putting the decision of the British people into action.

In December we reached agreement on the first phase of negotiations with our EU partners.

Next year we will move on to the vital issues of trade and security, and I am determined that we will keep up our progress in 2018.

Because whichever way you voted in the referendum, most people just want the government to get on and deliver a good Brexit, and that's exactly what we are doing.

Making a success of Brexit is crucial, but it will not be the limit of our ambitions.

We also have to carry on making a difference here and now on the issues that matter to people's daily lives.

That means building an economy fit for the future and taking a balanced approach to government spending, so we get our debt falling but can also invest in the things that matter – our schools, our police and our precious NHS.

Our goal is simple: more good jobs in every part of the country, and more opportunities for young people to get on in life.

The first step to a better future is getting a place at a good school.

It's what every parent expects, and it's what every child deserves.

So we will build more good schools, keep a tight focus on standards and discipline, and give more help and support to our fantastic teachers.

We will build more homes, so housing becomes more affordable and more families can get on – and climb up – the housing ladder.

And we will protect and enhance our natural environment for the next generation.

2018 is a special year in the life of one of our most cherished institutions, as we will celebrate the 70th birthday of our National Health Service.

It is a year to rededicate ourselves to its founding ideal: that good healthcare should be available to everyone, regardless of income.

And it's a chance to celebrate the care and compassion of our wonderful NHS staff.

We will continue to invest in our NHS and ensure it can deliver a world-class service now and for generations to come.

As we mark the centenary of the end of the First World War, and remember the tremendous sacrifices of that conflict, the UK will remain a champion of peace and order around the world.

Together with our allies, we will continue the fight against all forms of extremism, and support our security services as they work every day to keep us safe.

When we host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in April we'll work with our partners to tackle global problems like climate change and plastic waste in our oceans.

And as we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the first votes for women, let's vow to eliminate all prejudice and discrimination from our society.

Because in the United Kingdom in 2018, everyone deserves the chance to succeed and everyone has a right to be treated with respect.

That means safe workplaces, free from harassment.

And it also means a public sphere where debate is constructive and courteous, and where we treat each other with decency.

Of course any year brings its challenges – that is true for each of us personally, as much as for our country and the world.

But the real test is not whether challenges come; it's how you face them.

Whether you allow a task to overcome you, or tackle it head on with purpose and resolve.

I believe 2018 can be a year of renewed confidence and pride in our country.

A year in which we continue to make good progress towards a successful Brexit deal, an economy that's fit for the future, and a stronger and fairer society for everyone.

And whatever challenges we may face, I know we will overcome them by standing united as one proud union of nations and people.

I hope that 2018 is a great year for you and your family – and I wish everyone a very happy new year.