

## [Press release: PM call with President Ghani: 7 November 2018](#)

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

This afternoon the Prime Minister spoke with President Ashraf Ghani of Afghanistan. The Prime Minister reiterated the UK's firm commitment to Afghanistan and congratulated President Ghani on the achievement of the first Afghan-led and secured election since 2001, praising the courage of the Afghan people who voted. The Prime Minister and President Ghani agreed that the elections mark an important step forward.

The Prime Minister commended President Ghani for his offer to the Taliban of talks without preconditions and the leaders agreed that the prospects for peace are more promising than they have been for a number of years. The Prime Minister pledged the UK's continuing support for a political settlement.

Both the Prime Minister and President Ghani paid tribute to the sacrifices made by UK and Afghan military personnel in Afghanistan and their continuing efforts in pursuit of peace.

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## [Press release: Women in Defence awards showcase Dstl scientists](#)

270 guests including 30 finalists from across the Defence world attended the third annual Women in Defence UK awards. Hosting the event was BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour presenter Dame Jenni Murray with the Secretary of State for Defence, The Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP announcing the winners.

Dstl's Professor Petra Oyston scooped the top award in the Innovation category for her work in developing synthetic biology techniques for the next generation of materials for protection, such as use in body armour for military personnel. Petra's work included using genetically modified *E. coli* to provide a toughening mechanism in ceramic material and producing high strength adhesives from barnacle genes.

On receiving her award, Petra said:

I feel very surprised, there was some very stiff competition, and

some absolutely brilliant women here tonight. It just speaks volumes about the high quality work we do at Dstl, and I thank the fabulous team that I've had surrounding me delivering brilliant innovative solutions for Defence.

During his opening speech, Gavin Williamson, said:

This year's nominees hail from right across Defence. Some command teams and others lead cyber. Some specialise in intelligence and others from industry. These are women who have been deployed across the world from Belize to Bosnia, from Kosovo to Kenya, who have fought terror and made Salisbury safe. Not all will take home awards, but each and every one are winners – strengthening our nation and representing the very best of British.

Other Dstl finalists included Penny Brookes, nominated in the Most Collaborative category for her work building an international research team that is delivering cutting-edge forensic techniques to benefit defence and security. Carolyn Stothard was nominated in the Unsung Heroine category – a dedicated line-manager, mentor and mediator who supports many with mental health difficulties and neurodevelopmental conditions.

Dstl's Chief Executive, Gary Aitkenhead said:

It's been an absolutely tremendous evening. I am a father of three daughters, I was thinking about them growing and achieving what some of the women here tonight have achieved and to see three Dstl finalists doing fantastic things and for one of them to get a top award is absolutely thrilling – it's been a brilliant evening, well done to all of them.

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## **[Press release: FCO Minister to visit Singapore, Hong Kong and Vietnam](#)**

FCO Minister for Asia and the Pacific Mark Field has arrived in Singapore today (7 November), to take part in a SIIA-Chatham House Dialogue on the UK's future relations with ASEAN. He will also attend a roundtable with business leaders and meet Foreign Minister Balakrishnan.

The Minister will then travel to Hong Kong where he will meet ministers to discuss a range of issues including trade and security, and meet with members of the British business community. In Vietnam's capital, Hanoi, Mr Field will

attend the 'Inspire Me' festival, celebrating 45 years of diplomatic relations between the UK and Vietnam, and showcasing British business, education, science and culture. The Minister will also attend a Remembrance service in Vietnam.

On Sunday 11 November, Minister Field will join staff from the British Consulate-General Hong Kong to lay a wreath at the Cenotaph in Hong Kong for Armistice Day, which this year also marks the centenary of the end of the First World War.

Speaking on arrival in Singapore Minister for Asia and the Pacific Mark Field said:

The UK has a strong and enduring relationship with South East Asia, with many shared interests, such as advancing our prosperity, security and mutual values. I am looking forward to my meetings with ministers, business leaders and young people to strengthen our partnership even further.

As my visit coincides with Armistice Day, it will be an honour to lay a wreath at the Cenotaph in Hong Kong as we remember those who paid the ultimate sacrifice on the anniversary of the end of the First World War.

## **Further information**

- Follow Foreign Office Minister Mark Field [@MarkFieldUK](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
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## **Media enquiries**

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# [Press release: Interim Managers appointed to Achiezer Association Limited and Achiezer](#)

The Charity Commission has appointed joint Interim Managers to Achiezer Association Limited ([registered charity number 255031](#)) and Achiezer, ([registered charity number 234038](#)).

The appointment comes as part of the regulator's [class statutory inquiry](#) into both charities, which began in June 2015. The charities are linked by common trustees and similar objects.

Due to continued concerns about the governance, administration and financial management, the Commission appointed [Geoffrey Carton-Kelly](#) and [Jason Baker](#), of FRP Advisory LLP, as joint Interim Managers to both charities on 30 October 2018 under section 76(3)(g) of the Charities Act 2011.

The Interim Managers will take over the general management, administration and operation of both charities and their property, and discharge the functions and duties of the trustees to the exclusion of the current trustees. These are temporary appointments and will be reviewed on a regular basis in line with normal procedures.

The inquiry is examining the governance, administration and financial management of the charities. The full scope of the investigation is set out on [GOV.UK](#).

Both charities were previously investigated by the Commission as part of a double defaulters class inquiry.

The inquiry continues and the Commission intends to publish a report setting out its findings and conclusions in due course.

Ends

## **Notes to editors**

1. The Charity Commission is the regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work see the about us page on [GOV.UK](#).
2. Search for charities on our [check charity tool](#).
3. The Interim Manager appointment is a temporary and protective power that will be reviewed at regular intervals. It will continue until the Commission makes a further Order for its variation or discharge.
4. It is the Commission's policy, after it has concluded an inquiry, to publish a report detailing what issues the inquiry looked at, what actions were undertaken as part of the inquiry and what the outcomes were. Reports of previous inquiries by the Commission are available on [GOV.UK](#).

## Press office

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## [Press release: Communities Secretary sets out vision for high streets as vibrant community hubs](#)

The Communities Secretary, James Brokenshire will today (7 November 2018) set out his vision for tackling social problems linked to declining high streets – such as crime, unemployment and loneliness.

Speaking at the Locality Convention in Bristol the Communities Secretary will launch the government's flagship Open Doors project, linking landlords with vacant retail units with community groups offering vital services to young and old.

Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP will say:

We need to be imaginative in tackling the social and economic challenges our communities face.

This includes seizing the enormous opportunity before us to transform our high streets into vibrant community hubs where people work, live and shop.

That is why I'm delighted to be launching the new Open Doors project that will see empty shops being opened up to community groups offering services to the most vulnerable in our communities.

Reflecting on the scale of the opportunity offered by converting empty retail units into homes and community hubs the Communities Secretary will point to new figures showing that there are currently over 27,000 premises lying vacant in England's town centres.

If just a fraction of these vacant premises were turned into homes, thousands

more people could have a roof over their head.

Research also shows that higher numbers of residents on our high streets can generate higher footfall and, in turn, higher demand for shops and services.

The Communities Secretary will also launch a new Community Roadshow, which will see him and his ministerial team travelling across the country to learn from and celebrate the work being done by community groups.

The first of the Roadshow visits will see the Communities Secretary visiting a winter shelter and a community-led housing project in Bristol.

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