

Speech: PM's Vote 100 speech: 6

February 2018

The 6th of February 1918 may not be as well-known or instantly recognisable as the dates of the wars, battles and coronations that have shaped our nation's history.

But there is no doubt it was a day that forever changed our nation's future. A day when, for the first time, we went from being a country where most people could not vote to one where most people could.

It was another decade before equal suffrage was achieved.

But on that February day – seven centuries after Magna Carta, almost 90 years after the Great Reform Act – the Mother of Parliaments finally earned the right to call itself a true democracy.

A 1909 postcard published by the Women Writers Suffrage League shows a woman being dragged from the feet of Justice by the masked thug of Prejudice. And so it was in real life.

Because the right to vote was not handed over willingly. Rather it had to be forced, over many years of struggle, from the hands of those who held it for themselves. All around us here today are reminders of what that struggle looked like.

Through that small door away to my right is the cupboard where Emily Wilding Davison hid on census night. Up the stairs is St Stephen's Hall, where the statue of Viscount Falkland still bears the mark of Margery Humes, who chained herself to its spur.

Outside, beyond the grand arched window, lie New Palace Yard and Parliament Square, scene of such brutality when suffragettes clashed with police on Black Friday. Now these stories now dwell in the history books, dusted off to share with visiting constituents and schoolchildren. Yet in this hall tonight we see the living legacy of the suffrage campaigners. Hundreds of female Parliamentarians, past and present.

Women who serve or have served as ministers and shadow ministers. A female former Speaker of the House of Commons. A female Prime Minister.

A century after women won the right to send MPs to Westminster, nearly all the parties represented here have a female leader or deputy leader.

The women in this hall come from every corner of the country, indeed from right across the world.

We represent many parties and almost every point on the political spectrum.

None of us are exactly alike, none of our stories are the same.

Yet every one of us is here today because of the heroic, tireless struggle of those who came before us.

Women who led a campaign not just for themselves or their families, but for generations as yet unborn.

Of course, women were not the only people brought into public life by the 1918 act.

It also enfranchised, for the first time, more than five million working class men. Men who – for four, bloody years – had been expected to fight and die for their country, yet had not been trusted with the right to choose who governed it.

So the granting of Royal Assent was a truly momentous moment in our history. Yet when it came, the celebrations were muted.

In 1918, Europe was still at war. In the words of Emmeline Pankhurst – the founder of the Women's Social and Political Union, who I'm proud to say was later adopted as a candidate for the Conservative Party – "the sorrows of the world conflict precluded jubilations". A century on, we're putting that right.

And not just this evening. As we've heard, the celebrations and commemorations will run all year long, both in here in Parliament and across the country.

In an age where millions around the world are denied the right to vote and millions here at home are apathetic about exercising it, it's only right that we all learn more about those who fought so hard to extend the franchise.

We don't hear enough about these Edwardian radicals.

In fact I think for many people, the first time many of us encounter the suffragettes is when we see Mrs Banks in Mary Poppins. It's certainly an entertaining introduction to the "soldiers in petticoats". But in terms of detail I think it leaves a little bit to be desired.

We owe such a debt to the suffrage campaigners that they deserve greater recognition. And that's why, later this year, a statue of Millicent Fawcett will be unveiled in Parliament Square, It's why the government is also helping to fund a statue of Emmeline Pankhurst in her home town of Manchester.

And it's why the Government has put £5 million towards events marking this year's centenary. Events that will recognise and celebrate not just the Pankhursts and the Fawcetts, significant though they were. But also the many other women whose roles are often overlooked. Marion Wallace Dunlop, the illustrator of children's books who staged the first suffragette hunger strike. Sophia Duleep Singh, the Maharaja's daughter who faced both sexual and racial prejudice as she played a leading role in the Women's Tax Resistance League.

Helen Ogston, the “woman with the whip”, who in 1908 was driven from the stage by an angry mob during a suffrage rally in Maidenhead – a town that, many years later, I have the privilege of representing in Parliament. And, of course, the thousands – tens of thousands – of ordinary women and men whose names are lost to history. Some risked arrest and imprisonment. Others were forced out of their jobs. All faced being shunned by family, friends and society.

Yet each played their part in securing a right we should never take for granted – and a right that is still not secure today. Because a century after women were first enfranchised, some are still prevented from taking their place on the electoral roll. Many survivors of domestic abuse are unable to register for fear of revealing their address to an ex-partner. That effectively means the threat of violence is removing women’s right to vote, something that is simply unacceptable. That’s why just before Christmas, the Government laid a series of statutory instruments that will make it easier for those who are at risk of abuse to register and vote anonymously.

Those changes will be debated in the House of Commons tomorrow. I’m sure that, in the week of this significant anniversary for women voters, MPs of all parties will set aside their differences to support this important change.

The need to expand anonymous registration is a reminder that the Act we’re commemorating tonight was only one step on a long journey.

I’m the 54th person to be Prime Minister of this country, but only the second to be a woman. Women make up half the population of this country, yet only a third of its MPs. I’ve long campaigned to get more women into public life at all levels. It’s not about appearances, or even just about giving women an equal chance to get on. I want to see more women in politics and government because greater female representation makes a real difference to everyone’s lives.

The same is true of the many other groups who do not see themselves properly reflected in public life.

People from minority ethnic groups, members of the LGBT community, people with disabilities, or those from less privileged backgrounds. At last year’s election, the proportion of MPs who were educated at comprehensive schools reached a record high – but it’s still just 51 per cent.

So let us celebrate this centenary, and give thanks to those who gave their all so that we might be here today.

But let us also commit ourselves to continuing their work.

To carrying forward the torch they passed to us.

To securing the rights they fought for and ensuring that everyone, regardless of background, is able to play a full and active role in our democracy.

The brave women and men who came before us left us the most precious

inheritance.

Now let us all, through words and deeds, be their fitting heirs.

Speech: Adapting the Security Council to Be More Inclusive, Transparent and Effective

Thank you Mr President.

And I would like to thank Ian Martin for his briefing, and the Kuwaiti Presidency for scheduling this open debate. I would also like to congratulate Kuwait on taking up the Chairmanship of the Informal Working Group on Documentation and Other Procedural Questions, and I look forward to a productive two years under your leadership.

Mr President, I am afraid that you have a tough act to follow. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Japan as the outgoing Chair, particularly their stewardship of the negotiations that led to agreement of a new Note 507.

The new Note 507 is a valuable resource for all current and future members of this Council. It brings together almost all of the Council's myriad procedural documents and contains a number of important changes. In particular, I would highlight the new language on the conduct of informal consultations, the negotiation process, and cooperation with non-Council bodies, including the Peacebuilding Commission and the African Union. And I echo what the distinguished representative of Ethiopia had to say on the value of African Union briefers to this Council, something we called on collectively when we were in Addis Ababa for our annual meeting.

Many parts of the Note reflect best practice which has built up gradually over the years. But it also signals our collective ambition for a more inclusive, transparent and effective Council that is better able to tackle the challenges of the modern world.

One of the ways that we can deliver this ambition is through a stronger relationship with external partners. Last week, the Cruz report reminded us of the risks faced by peacekeepers deployed by this Council. The United Kingdom is pleased to have worked with Pakistan to strengthen triangular cooperation between the Council, Troop Contributing Countries, Police Contributing Countries and the Secretariat and looks forward to further discussions on this crucial issue in the forthcoming session of the Special Committee on Peacekeeping. The Security Council needs to work closely with those countries whose troops and police are on the front line when we

consider our peacekeeping deployments, and we in the UK will continue to ensure that we do so when considering mandates.

We also need to hear more from civil society and particularly from women. And I would just note that today marks a hundred years since women first gained the right to vote in the UK. All too often, we hear only one perspective, and we do not hear from those that are most affected by our decisions in this Chamber. Last year just 30 representatives of civil society briefed this Council, and under a quarter of our briefers were women. We need to do better.

We also need to continue our efforts to make our meetings more effective and action-oriented. This means making sure that the briefings we receive from the Secretariat are comprehensive, but promoting more interactivity in consultations, and seeking outcomes from our meetings. This will not be accomplished by more changes to the guidance, but requires the commitment of all of us around this table, especially during Council members' Presidencies.

Finally, this Council needs to work harder to meet the Secretary-General's ambition—and our own—to do more on preventive diplomacy. This means focusing our time on the conflicts of today and tomorrow, not only those of previous decades. It means being flexible in how we handle our agenda, and making the best use of the Secretariat's insights, including through situational awareness briefings.

Mr President,

As the world's threats evolve, so too must this Council. We must implement Note 507. We must also challenge ourselves to continue to adapt as a Council so that we better meet our mandate of maintaining international peace and security.

And may I just finish by thanking those who work so hard to support us as a Council, including in particular SCAD and our excellent interpreters.

Thank you.

[News story: PHE launches opioid treatment quality improvement programme](#)

Opioid substitution treatment (OST) plays a fundamental role in supporting people to recover from drug dependence. But sustained recovery is hard to achieve when addiction is combined with a lack of personal and social resources. Long-term recovery often needs high-quality treatment and a range

of other support, tailored to each person.

Clinical guidance, including the new [Drug misuse and dependence: UK guidelines on clinical management](#), describes quality drug treatment. PHE is helping drug services implement the guidelines and improve treatment where it is not optimal.

The OST programme will support services to improve the quality of treatment so that people understand how their treatment works, comply with it and stick with it. That way they should get more from it and increase their chances of recovery. This will include a focus on using psychosocial interventions to support changes in behaviour. There is already a lot of good practice in this country, and the programme will aim to harness and build on that.

Among the issues that we plan to address, one is people continuing to use drugs, particularly heroin, while receiving treatment. [Drug treatment monitoring data](#) (NDTMS) and [PHE's drugs evidence review](#) both found that people who continue to use illegal substances (especially heroin) while on substitution treatment are less likely to fully benefit from treatment and to reduce the wider harms caused by their drug use. Cutting down, rather than stopping drug use, is still a good result for many people and they still benefit from being in treatment. Pushing people too hard to stop all 'use on top' can drive them out of treatment or prevent them seeking help in the first place. The programme will develop resources to support services in getting this right.

The programme will also enhance wider recovery support for those in treatment by supporting services to help more in other aspects of their lives beyond drug use, such as employment, living arrangements, family relationships, trauma and abuse.

PHE will be making contact with providers and service user organisations shortly to gain their input and involvement.

[News story: Drivers' hours: changes to fines for commercial drivers](#)

Updated: Updated with the date (5 March 2018) that DVSA traffic examiners will start issuing on-the-spot fines for any drivers' hours offences committed in the last 28 days.

If you drive a lorry, bus or coach, you must follow [rules on how many hours you can drive](#) and the breaks you need to take.

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) can fine drivers up to £300 if

they're caught breaking the rules. They can also be prosecuted or have their vehicle immobilised.

At the moment, DVSA can only fine drivers for:

- offences committed that day
- ongoing offences, like manipulating tachograph records, which record drivers' hours

Drivers will be fined for older offences

From Monday 5 March 2018, DVSA traffic examiners will start issuing on-the-spot fines for any drivers' hours offences committed in the last 28 days.

In a single [roadside check](#), DVSA traffic examiners will issue fines for up to 5 drivers' hours offences. It means you could be fined up to £1,500 in a single check if you've consistently broken the rules.

It won't matter if the offences took place in Great Britain or elsewhere.

The rules will also apply to drivers who don't live in Great Britain. However, they'll need to pay any fines immediately, before being allowed to continue their journey. DVSA will immobilise their vehicle until they pay.

Fines to deter drivers from not resting properly

As well as giving fines to drivers for recent offences, DVSA traffic examiners have started issuing fines to deal with drivers who don't properly rest.

Lorry, bus and coach drivers must take a 45-hour rest break at least every fortnight.

Since 1 November 2017, DVSA has started to fine drivers up to £300 if they spend their full weekly rest break in their vehicle in places where it causes a problem. For example, if a lorry driver spends their full break in the cab of their lorry in a layby.

Illegal parking, noise and litter nuisance

Spending the weekly rest break in the cab can:

- contribute to drivers not properly resting
- expose drivers to poor living conditions

It can also cause problems in local communities. In some areas, lorry drivers have parked illegally or inappropriately while taking the 45-hour break, and have caused residents to complain about noise, litter and anti-social behaviour.

During 2016, authorities in Kent took action against 3,700 lorry drivers for parking illegally or inappropriately.

Targeting problem areas

DVSA traffic examiners will target places where this is causing the biggest problems, such as residential areas and laybys.

DVSA will also work with its counterparts in other countries to deal with overseas operators whose drivers regularly do this.

Devastating consequences of driving tired

Crashes involving tired lorry drivers can be devastating. Almost a quarter of injuries in accidents involving lorries are fatal or serious.

About 40% of sleep-related accidents involve commercial vehicles.

According to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA), driving while tired may be responsible for:

- 1 in 5 of all accidents
- up to a quarter of serious and fatal crashes

6,300 drivers' hours fines were given to lorry drivers by DVSA between April 2015 and March 2016

Source: [Vehicle enforcement data for Great Britain](#)

In addition to the devastation caused to families and communities, road collisions cost the economy an estimated £16.3 billion a year, and add pressure on the NHS and emergency services.

Protecting you from unsafe drivers and vehicles

DVSA Chief Executive, Gareth Llewellyn, said:

DVSA's priority is to protect you from unsafe drivers and vehicles.

These tougher fines will help us to take stronger action against any drivers or operators who break drivers' hours rules and will help make our roads safer.

There's no excuse for driving while tired. The results of falling asleep at the wheel of 40 tonne lorry can be devastating to families and communities. Any drivers breaking these rules is putting other road users at risk and could face losing their licence and livelihood.

James Firth, the Freight Transport Association's Head of Licensing Policy and Compliance Information, said:

For some years, DVSA officers have been virtually powerless to take effective action against non-UK HGV drivers who may have committed a string of offences in the days and weeks before the vehicle is stopped.

These new powers mean the enforcement authorities will be more able – and more likely – to take action against all drivers who are found to have repeatedly flouted these critical road safety laws.

[News story: Cold weather prompts further health warnings from PHE](#)

Updated: Updated story with latest warning.

Latest update

Forecasts that current cold weather is here to stay for a while, have prompted PHE to urge people to check on older friends, family and neighbours, who may feel isolated.

The Met Office has said that cold conditions, presently affecting all parts of the country, are likely to stay in place for several days, meaning most people will have to contend with snow, ice and low temperatures.

Spells of weather like this can put older people, those with underlying health conditions and young children, at risk from a range of conditions because cold weather forces their bodies to work much harder than usual.

Dr Angie Bone, of PHE's Extreme Events team, said:

In events like this it's possible that some people who are not in the best of health will stay at home, rather than risk venturing out in cold and icy conditions, and this can lead to feeling more isolated than usual.

That's why as this colder period continues we should all check in on those we know, whether they're friends, family or neighbours, who may be at risk, and offer to lend a helping hand. Do they need shopping or a prescription collecting? Can they get to GP or hospital appointments? Do they just need some company?

It can be all too easy for those of us who are fit and well and able to cope with the cold – but it's really important to remember that it can leave some people feeling a bit cut off.

[Read top tips for staying safe in colder weather.](#)

Previous updates

17 January 2018

Colder weather has arrived in northern England prompting PHE warnings.

The Met Office today said North East, North West and Yorkshire and the Humber regions were all experiencing cold weather and were likely to continue doing so until the weekend.

Dr Thomas Waite of the Extreme Events team said:

Cold weather like this is part of winter – but just because we're used to it doesn't mean we shouldn't take steps to protect ourselves from falling ill. Every winter thousands of people die from illnesses linked to exposure to the cold when indoor and outside – that's why it's so important we all look out for each other.

If you can check on family, friends and neighbours who are older, have young children or who have heart and lung conditions all these groups are particularly vulnerable to cold.

Keep a close eye on weather forecasts so you're up to date with what's happening in your area, keep homes heated to at least 18C and remember wearing several thin layers can be more effective than fewer thicker ones.

5 January 2018

Another wave of cold weather, including the chance of ice and snow for some, has prompted PHE to urge people to keep homes warm and to keep an eye out for friends, family and neighbours.

The Met Office says that the weather will start to turn much colder from tonight (Friday 5 January 2018) with the cold creeping down the country from the north and that the bad weather could remain until early next week.

Dr Thomas Waite, of the PHE Extreme events team, said:

As temperatures drop it's really important to think about what you

can do to prepare for the cold and protect more vulnerable friends and family from the ill-effects of the cold.

Ensure they wear lots of thin layers, have plenty of warm food and drinks to stay warm and check weather forecasts before heading out. Also wear shoes with a good, slip-resistant grip to prevent any accidental falls and when indoors stay warm and heat homes to at least 18°C.

This advice is important for everyone but particularly important if anyone in the home is very young, 65 or over or has a long term health condition.

27 December 2017

Arrival of cold weather across Yorkshire and the Humber, the North East and North West of England that is due to spread across the rest of the country has prompted further warnings from Public Health England to look out for others and to take extra care during the cold, snowy conditions.

A band of rain, sleet and snow followed by a very cold and frosty period is forecast to spread southeast across the country from today until Saturday. Because every winter cold triggers thousands of illnesses and deaths across the UK, PHE is urging people to wrap up warm and take extra care when out and about.

Dr Thomas Waite of the Extreme Events team at PHE said:

Cold weather like this is part of winter – but just because we're used to it doesn't mean we shouldn't take steps to protect ourselves from falling ill. Every winter thousands of people die from illnesses linked to exposure to the cold when indoors and outside – that's why it's so important we all look out for each other.

During this Christmas period many people will be out and about more, so it's important to make sure you're prepared when leaving the home. Also, there will be a number of people who will have been on their own all this time. If you can, check on family, friends and neighbours who are older, have young children or who have heart and lung conditions. All these groups are particularly vulnerable to cold.

Keep a close eye on weather forecasts so you're up-to-date with what's happening in your area, keep homes heated to at least 18°C and remember wearing several thin layers can be more effective than fewer thicker ones.

Steve Willington, Chief Meteorologist at the Met Office said:

A band of rain, sleet and snow will slowly clear east during Wednesday, with sunny but cold weather following. However some wintry showers could also move into North Sea coasts. A cold, breezy night follows with widespread frost, and a risk of ice. Thursday will then be cold and sunny, although wintry showers are likely to spread southeast from Northwest England into the Midlands. This will be followed by winds easing, and a very cold, and frosty overnight period. Milder conditions are expected to move across all parts by Saturday morning.

6 December 2017

Weather forecasters are warning that all parts of England could experience cold, snow and ice over the next week, prompting PHE to again warn people to plan ahead.

The change of weather will bring cold air to all parts of England from Thursday and is likely to affect all areas of the country over the weekend says the Met Office. At the same time, the Flood Forecasting Centre has reported a risk of coastal flooding impacts as high tides and strong winds affect the whole of the east coast of England and Cumbria.

Dr Thomas Waite of the Extreme Events team at PHE said:

It is unusual that we are warning about the risks from cold and floods at the same time, but that's why it's absolutely critical that people keep up to date with the Met Office's weather forecasts and the Environment Agency's flood warnings. There is lots we can do to prepare for cold weather. We can all keep an eye out for family, friends and neighbours who may be at risk.

Those with heart and lung conditions, younger children and older people, are at particular risk during cold weather. Experience shows us that every winter thousands of people are seriously affected and even die from illnesses linked to the cold. That's why it's so important that we all play a part in minimising the risks to health this winter.

If your home or business is at risk of flooding, you can sign up for flood warnings by phone, email or text message.

Steve Willington, Chief Meteorologist at the Met Office, said:

Cold Arctic air is expected to spread south across all parts of England through Thursday and Friday. A brisk northerly wind will give significant wind chill. Whilst many areas will remain dry with sunny spells through the day, occasional snow showers are expected giving localised accumulations and icy patches. These are possible anywhere, although most likely in north-west and north-east

England, and east coastal areas. A band of rain moving east on Sunday and Monday may turn to sleet or snow in Midlands, and areas northwards, potentially producing further accumulations. This period of cold weather is then likely to continue into next week.

27 November 2017

PHE is issuing further take-care warnings after forecasts have predicted a prolonged cold spell for all of England.

On Friday, the Met Office issued warnings that the north was likely to see colder weather. Today (27 November 2017), they have extended that warning for the whole of England and said that cold conditions could last until Saturday.

Dr Thomas Waite, of PHE's Extreme Events team, said:

As the weather is going to get colder everywhere in the coming days, this is a really good time to check on those who may be at risk. People with diseases such as heart and lung conditions, older people, and young children can feel the ill-effects of cold weather more than the rest of us.

To stay well this winter, we all need to play a part. Is there someone you know who could be at risk when the weather gets cold? Could you help them out by fetching shopping or prescriptions?

When the colder weather arrives there are several things we can do to keep well: wear several thin layers instead of fewer thicker ones, keep parts of the home you're using heated to at least 18°C and keep a careful eye on the weather forecasts.

Laura Paterson, Chief Operational Meteorologist for the Met Office, said:

Colder air will gradually spread south during Monday and Tuesday, with overnight frosts becoming more widespread, along with a brisk northerly breeze.

A period of more widespread cold temperatures is then expected from Wednesday onward, whilst showers down the east coast are also expected to be wintry at times with some snow and ice possible.

24 November 2017

Keep warm keep well warnings are being issued by Public Health England (PHE) today (24 November 2017), as weather forecasts suggest the winter's first blast of cold weather is on its way.

Met Office forecasters have said today that by tomorrow (Saturday)

temperatures in the north east, north west and Yorkshire and the Humber will fall below 2°C.

This first drop in temperatures has prompted PHE's Extreme Events team to remind people all over the country that before cold weather arrives is the best time to prepare.

Dr Thomas Waite of PHE's Extreme Events team said:

We're well used to winter in this country so most people know what to do to protect their health before and during cold spells.

But there are people who may not take precautions and who are at a very real risk. We know that every winter thousands of people fall ill and many die because of exposure to cold both in the home and while outdoors.

Those most at-risk include older people, very young children and those with conditions like heart and lung disease. That's why every cold season we urge people to look out for family, friends and neighbours who may be at risk. Ask yourself if you could check on a neighbour to see if there's anything they need?

Paul Gundersen, Chief Operational Meteorologist at the Met Office, said:

Colder air has now reached most parts of England, with temperatures expected to fall further by Saturday, when the cold will be accentuated by strengthening winds. Wintry showers are also likely in places, but any snow showers are expected to be confined largely to higher ground. A temporary incursion of warmer air is expected on Monday, with the colder air forecast to return by Tuesday.

Top tips to prepare for colder weather

You should:

- look out for friends and family who may be vulnerable to the cold and ensure they have access to warm food and drinks and are managing to heat their homes adequately
- try to maintain indoor temperatures to at least 18°C, particularly if you are not mobile, have long term illness or are 65 or over
- stay tuned for weather forecasts, ensure you are stocked with food and medications in advance, have deliveries or ask a friend to help
- take weather into account when planning your activity over the following days
- seek entitlements and benefits such as Winter Fuel Payments and Cold Weather Payments, which are available to some
- avoid exposing yourself to cold or icy outdoor conditions if you are at a higher risk of cold related illness or falls.

- discuss with friends and neighbours about clearing snow and ice from in front of your house and public walkways nearby

Power and utility companies have schemes which make at-risk groups a priority for reconnection following power cuts. Find out if you meet the criteria and if so, sign up. Visit [ofgem.gov.uk](https://www.ofgem.gov.uk) for more information.

There's lots of useful advice on the [Stay Well This Winter website](#).

Dr Waite added:

We know that more deaths occur every winter in the UK than in the summer due to a wide range of causes including cold weather, influenza and other respiratory infections. The flu vaccination is the best protection we have against flu and it's really important to have it if you are eligible. If we all keep a close eye out for each other over the coming months hopefully we'll all be able to stay well this winter.