

News story: Education Secretary addresses ASCL conference

Justine Greening speaks to school and college leaders about the teaching profession and the recruitment and retention package.

In a [speech to the Association of School and College Leaders' \(ASCL\) annual conference](#) in Birmingham today (Friday 10 March), Education Secretary Justine Greening discussed her vision for the teaching profession and its role in school improvement.

Addressing the audience of school and college leaders, Justine Greening also explained how she wanted the teaching profession to embed flexible working as the norm, to help keep hold of the most talented teachers. As part of this she announced that a summit would be held later this year with teaching unions looking at ways of implementing flexible working more widely across the profession.

Education Secretary Justine Greening said:

If we really want to get great teachers into the schools that need them most – and keep them there – then we have to align the right incentives.

We need to take coherent, concrete steps to tackle the challenge in areas that need it most – beginning with a multimillion-pound investment to pilot new approaches to attracting and retaining teachers in the north of England.

Flexible working exists in most other workplaces and we need to work out how to embed it in teaching. This is about a culture shift – it won't be the whole answer to recruitment and retention but it is definitely part of it and many schools are already demonstrating what's possible.

Ms Greening also referred back to her commitment to strengthen qualified teacher status (QTS) and the CPD offer for the teaching profession, including:

- making absolutely clear that QTS will not be scrapped – instead, the government will work with the sector to develop and introduce a newly strengthened QTS from September 2019, so that all school leaders will want all their teaching staff to achieve it
- announcing the first round of bidding for the £75 million teaching and leadership innovation fund to enable new, high-quality continuing professional development (CPD) provision to be delivered where it can make the most difference, including in the 12 opportunity areas

- new, fully revised gold-standard national professional qualifications (NPQs), developed in partnership with the teaching profession, to be implemented from September this year – funding of £10 million from the teaching and leadership innovation fund will be made available to incentivise take-up of the new NPQs for high-potential professionals working in the most challenging schools.
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Press release: Minister Sir Alan Duncan meets Russian First Deputy Foreign Minister Titov

Minister for Europe and the Americas, Sir Alan Duncan, today held talks in London with Russian First Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Titov.

The Ministers had a frank and open discussion of the UK-Russia relationship and current international issues ahead of the Foreign Secretary's visit to Moscow in the coming weeks. They discussed shared priorities in the relationship between our two countries, including the Year of Science and Education; and cultural exchanges. They also discussed areas of difference including Ukraine, and recent human rights developments in Russia. Sir Alan Duncan noted the importance of a political settlement to bring an end to the war in Syria, on which Russia must play a role.

It is important we engage on these issues, push for change, and seek to find a way forward. Sir Alan Duncan's meeting with Mr Titov reflects the UK's policy of guarded engagement with Russia.

Norfolk farming company fined after death of worker

The grain storage facility

A family owned Norfolk farming company has been fined after an employee died at its grain storage facility.

Norwich Crown Court heard that on 9 July 2014, Arthur Mason, 21, took turns with a colleague to undertake cleaning work inside grain bins at Hall Farm, Fincham, near Kings Lynn, run by Maurice Mason Ltd. He was standing directly

on the stored grain, using a broom to clean down the exposed inner surfaces of the bin. He wore a harness fitted with a fall-arrest lanyard, which was secured to a fixed ladder inside the bin.

He began to sink into the grain, which was emptying slowly through a small opening at the bottom of the bin several feet below its surface. The court heard that any such movement or cavity in grain may be enough to create a 'quicksand' like effect.

The forces involved caused the fall-arrest component of the lanyard to unravel and extend. This caused him to sink still deeper into the grain. After alerting colleagues, who tried to assist, he swiftly became engulfed in the grain and subsequently drowned, despite most determined rescue efforts by farmworkers and emergency services.

An investigation by Health and Safety Executive (HSE) found that the employer of the deceased, Maurice Mason Ltd, failed to adequately identify and manage the deadly risks associated with cleaning grain stores. There was no safe system of work in place for this task, nor had anyone involved been provided with suitable training in how to complete it safely.

Maurice Mason Ltd of Hall Farm, Fincham, Kings Lynn, Norfolk, pleaded guilty to breaching Section 2 (1) of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, and was fined £50,000 and ordered to pay prosecution costs of £22,000.

Speaking after the hearing HSE Inspector Paul Unwin said: "This tragic incident led to the avoidable death of a young man. This death could easily have been prevented if his employer had acted to identify and manage the risks involved, and to put a safe system of work in place. There should be little need for anyone to enter such grain bins as it may be reasonably practicable to clean them remotely from outside".

"The dangers associated with grain storage are well known and a wealth of advice and guidance is freely available from HSE and other organisations."

Notes to Editors:

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is Britain's national regulator for workplace health and safety. It aims to reduce work-related death, injury and ill health. It does so through research, information and advice, promoting training; new or revised regulations and codes of practice, and working with local authority partners by inspection, investigation and enforcement. www.hse.gov.uk^{[1][1]}
2. More about the legislation referred to in this case can be found at: www.legislation.gov.uk/^{[2][2]}
3. HSE news releases are available at <http://press.hse.gov.uk>

Journalists should approach HSE press office with any queries on regional press releases.

€6.7m EU boost to improve bathing waters in Ireland and Wales

The Acclimatize project will help to improve the quality of sea shores in both countries, helping to boost tourism and supporting marine activities, including shellfish harvesting.

Led by University College Dublin in partnership with Aberystwyth University, the project will identify sources of pollution and their impact on bathing waters as a result of climate change.

The project has been backed by €5.3m from the EU's Ireland-Wales cooperation programme and will use and develop a range of technologies, including smart real-time predictive tools to monitor water quality to protect human health and the marine environment.

Professor Drakeford said:

“Preserving and enhancing the marine and coastal environment in Wales and Ireland for economic prosperity and enjoyment by current and future generations is of vital importance.

“This is another positive example of how EU funds are supporting local economies and communities by helping to mitigate the impacts of climate change.”

The Acclimatize project will focus on bathing waters, including Dublin Bay and Cemaes Bay in Anglesey and other beaches. Real-time models will be developed to inform the effects of climate change through altered weather patterns, affecting rainfall, temperature and tides which impact on coastal areas.

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, Paschal Donohoe, T.D said:

“The Acclimatize project represent an important contribution to enhancing the quality and economic sustainability of the shared resource that is the Irish Sea. It is encouraging to see such EU-funded cross-border projects continuing. The Irish Government is committed to the continued implementation of the Ireland Wales programme.”

Professor Wim Meijer, from University College Dublin, said:

“Working in partnership with Aberystwyth University, the Acclimatize project will make a significant contribution to developing innovative management systems to protect our coastal waters from the impact of climate change.

“This will support economic growth through improved water quality which will lead to a range of benefits, such as increased tourism and shellfish harvesting in Ireland and Wales.”

Press release: Project launched to protect the Ouseburn River

Groundwork North East & Cumbria is working with partners from across the region to protect and preserve the upper part of the Ouseburn River.

The charity has secured £200,000 from the Environment Agency to fund the Ouseburn River Restoration Project.

Working with partners including landowners, communities, schools and local businesses, Groundwork will carry out a number of enhancements to the river and the surrounding environment to improve water quality through a number of environmental improvements.

The project will implement several physical measures to slow the flow of the river, including widening it at strategic points, sculpting areas of the river bank, altering meanders and installing silt traps.

In addition to the physical work, the Ouseburn River Restoration Project will also work with farmers and landowners about how to manage fertiliser and sediment run off, which causes high levels of phosphorus in the river, this diminishes invertebrate life and affects all aspects of river life.

Lesley Silvera, Senior Project Officer at Groundwork North East & Cumbria, said:

It’s fantastic that the Ouseburn River Restoration Project is now off the ground. Over the next two years, we will be working closely with third parties to improve the water quality and ecology of the river.

We’ll also be looking to survey and eradicate invasive species, remove litter, monitor wildlife and plant trees, which will keep the river cool, create riverbank habitats and help prevent bank

erosion.

We will be working in partnership with Newcastle University, the Environment Agency and Tyne Rivers Trust to observe and measure water quality to gauge the success of the scheme, which will also inform future work on the river.

Lucy Mo, the Environment Agency's Project Manager responsible for funding this work added:

The health of our rivers is better than it's ever been with drastic improvements to water quality over the past 20 years. However, there is still more to do and by working with partners on projects such as the Ouseburn River Restoration Project we can play to different organisations' strengths and deliver more.

We're pleased to be part of this exciting project, which will improve in-river and bankside habitats, and will also give us more water monitoring data and analysis.

The work is funded primarily through the Environment Agency. Additional funding is from Groundwork NE & Cumbria, Northumbrian Water Ltd, Newcastle University. Partners include Environment Agency, Northumbrian Water Ltd, Natural England, Tyne Rivers Trust, Newcastle City Council and Newcastle University.