

Burial service held on the Western Front for two Unknown London Soldiers of the Royal Fusiliers

On Wednesday 9 October, on what was the Western Front just over a century ago, two Unknown Soldiers of The Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment) killed during the Great War were finally laid to rest with full military honours.

Father Patrick O'Driscoll, Chaplain to the 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers leads the service.

The ceremony took place at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's (CWGC) New Irish Farm Cemetery, near Ypres, Belgium and was conducted by Father Patrick O'Driscoll, Chaplain to 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.

Father O'Driscoll said:

To forget a human being is to say we want to be forgotten. Even though we do not know these two men by name, it is our duty and privilege to remember and learn from their human sacrifice on the battlefield. And even though time separates us, we place these men in this blessed and consecrated ground so as to always remember them and thank them for what they did for their and our generation and that in remembering their humanity they can rest here in dignity and peace, so that we can live in that way for what they died for.

The service was organised by the MOD's Joint Casualty and Compassionate Centre (JCCC), also known as the 'MOD War Detectives'.

Rosie Barron, JCCC said:

It has been an honour to work with The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers to organise this burial service. We have worked hard to try to identify these men, but unfortunately today they have been buried as unknown soldiers. Despite this, their sacrifice will not be forgotten, and they have been buried with full military honours.

The remains of these two soldiers were found alongside twenty-two others during ground work at an industrial development at Briekestraat, just north of Ypres. The location, thought to be the original Irish Farm, is an original

wartime cemetery created by 1st Battalion The Royal Fusiliers under war conditions. Until the discovery, it was believed that all those buried there had been transferred to the New Irish Farm Cemetery, some 300 metres away, after the war.

Two WW1 Soldiers Of The Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment) are finally laid to rest.

Nineteen of the twenty-four soldiers found were buried with full military honours on 28 September 2017. Five were not buried at the time as it was thought that they may be identifiable. This included the two Fusiliers.

Further research carried out by the JCCC War Detectives showed that they most likely died between May and September 1915 and that they were most likely soldiers of 1st Battalion The Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment). This pointed to four London soldiers who were all killed in June 1915 and who are commemorated on the Menin Gate.

DNA testing was carried out with the surviving families of the four potential candidates, but sadly all proved to be negative. The decision has therefore now been taken to provide a final resting place for these two Fusiliers as Unknown Soldiers of The Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment).

The burial service was supported by current soldiers of 1st Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers, who supplied two bearer parties and a firing party for the ceremony.

Of the remaining three soldiers, two are known to have been from The Essex Regiment. They will be buried in New Irish Farm Cemetery on 5 November 2019.

The graves will now be marked by headstones provided by the CWGC.

Christine Connerty, CWGC said:

Although it has not been possible to identify these two Royal Fusiliers by name, we are honoured to lay them to rest with respect and dignity alongside their comrades at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission's New Irish Farm Cemetery. We proudly mark their graves, ensuring that their service and sacrifice will not be forgotten. The Commission will care for them, together with all of those who served and fell, in perpetuity.

Two WW1 Soldiers Of The Royal Fusiliers (City of London Regiment) are laid to rest with full military honours.

'Cracking Ideas' competition launched for young inventors.

The Intellectual Property Office (IPO) and Aardman have launched a new Wallace & Gromit 'Cracking Ideas' competition. The competition is open to individuals and groups aged five to eleven. To enter, young inventors need to design something that will make life better.

Applicants are being encouraged to take inspiration from Wallace & Gromit's inventions. The techno trousers and the steam chair are two creations that made the duo's lives better.

The competition aims to introduce children to the concept of intellectual property (IP). They will learn how important it is for inventors to receive credit for their designs.

The winner's invention will star in a brand new Wallace & Gromit digital project in 2020. They will also win an Aardman model-making workshop for their school or group.

Tim Moss, Chief Executive Officer of the IPO, said:

All around us there are objects created by clever inventors like Wallace & Gromit. Whether simple or high tech, these inventions make our world a better, safer, easier place in which to live.

Young people have the gift of imagination without limits. We're excited to see what 'cracking ideas' the nation's budding inventors can come up with for making life better. We want to show them how to get the credit they deserve for their ideas and creations. That's where intellectual property comes in.

Merlin Crossingham, Creative Director for Aardman, said:

We can't wait for young people nationwide to start designing their inventions. We look forward to seeing their ideas for making life better, when they join Wallace & Gromit on their latest adventure.

The [competition](#) closes on Friday 24 April 2020.

Notes to editors

Competition learning resources and activity packs designed by Aardman are available for download from the Cracking Ideas website.

The future of international research collaboration

Thank you.

In particular, I wanted to thank David Cannadine for that warm welcome, and the British Academy for giving me the time and space to talk to you today.

As an MP and government minister, my base may be in Parliament and the departments across the park. But as a historian and writer, it is spaces like this that are my true spiritual home.

Since becoming minister – the first-time round – I've been keen to advocate for the value of the humanities and social sciences in society. But my contributions, I know, are not a patch on the far greater support that the British Academy gives to these disciplines, day in, day out, both nationally and internationally.

The study of peoples, cultures and society are fundamental to who we are.

So, more than perhaps any other organisation in the UK, the British Academy knows the power of words to start new discussions, to build bridges, to form new shared narratives – to illuminate the darkness, and to heal divisions.

It is in that spirit that I want to make this speech today – a speech that I have wanted to make for quite a while, since first coming into the role 10 months ago, but especially since returning to the role very recently.

And it's about that most emotive of topics – that source of so much discussion, consternation and concern in Britain today.

I'm of course talking about Europe and the need for us to get Brexit done.

First, let me say this. As a historian, I know that Britain is at its greatest when we reach out to the world, when we break free of our island mentality, when we see ourselves – yes, as a powerful, dynamic and proud nation, but also as an important part of a much greater whole.

And nowhere in our society is this clearer than in our universities and wider knowledge economy. After Brexit, we want not just a friendly relationship with our European neighbours and allies, but also to reach out and build better connections with the wider world.

But I am here today as your Universities Minister, and in this role I have made it my mission to get out of Westminster and Whitehall, to come to you, to understand your perspectives.

As I have said in previous speeches, I have always believed that engagement

is the key to better policy. That has been the very purpose of my 40-plus visits to different universities to date – to listen, to learn and to take action where it matters.

And what I have found, absolutely everywhere I have visited, is a research and innovation ecosystem that is truly international.

I'm always struck when walking down corridors in departments across the country by the wealth of international names adorning the doors. The staff, students and researchers I meet on my visits come from right across the globe.

To be a British institution means to be an international institution.

Our universities, and innovative businesses, are powered by openness, and are strengthened by it.

I'm talking about openness to ideas, to talent, to internationalism, and to collaboration – all of which bring real vibrancy to our universities and our wider research base in academia and industry alike.

This is a vibrancy that inspires us, that emboldens us, and that lifts us up.

If we want to see evidence of 'Global Britain', then we need to look no further.

One of the enablers of this great openness has been our partnerships with the continent of Europe, over many centuries, helping us to develop a shared sense of culture, shared collective experiences, and a like-minded approach to the values of civilisation, enlightenment and liberty.

Only recently, at the British Library, I was struck by the Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms exhibition, how truly interconnected our shared past with the continent is.

In the exhibition made possible by a shared endeavour with European museums and institutions across nations, one of the most striking loans was the Codex Amiatinus, the oldest surviving complete Latin Bible.

Now residing in the Laurentian Library in Florence, for centuries the book was assumed to have been created in Italy, until an erased inscription was detected, revealing that the book had in fact been manufactured in north-east England, and was sent as a gift to the pope in 716 AD.

It is just one example of many shared partnerships that has defined our relationship with the continent over the centuries.

Our intellectual and cultural bonds with Europe run deep and have lasted for centuries longer than any EU programme. They are at the heart of our identity and the foundation of our civilisation. They prospered long before the EU's existence, and must continue after we leave. As has been said, we are leaving the EU – we are not leaving Europe.

It is no coincidence that Shakespeare chose to set many of his great plays in other European nations, like Italy and Denmark.

That our great masters like Constable and Gainsborough were frequently inspired by art movements from the continent – from France and the Netherlands.

Even the Beatles crafted their trade in the bars and clubs of Hamburg.

And that our thinking and politics have developed in line with the great 'Dichter und Denker', the thinkers and philosophers of Germany.

But it's not all one-sided.

The UK, too, has given our European neighbours so much in return.

British composers and musicians have firmly impacted the European music scene – from William Byrd, who became one of the greatest composers of European Renaissance music, to the late, great Queen frontman, Freddie Mercury, who proudly sang about the European city 'Barcelona' in 1987.

British architects, too, have shaped the cityscapes of many of our European neighbours. Just take the dome on top of the Berlin Reichstag, designed by none other than our very own Sir Norman Foster.

Irrespective of Brexit, sowing the seeds of intellectual and cultural unity across Europe is something that absolutely can and must continue.

Yet, we cannot ignore the basic fact some of our largest international partnerships in science and research to date have been undertaken while we've been a member of the EU, where we've worked with our international partners to attract talented minds to the UK, forging new shared missions, and broadening our horizons.

I believe this recent history shows us the true value of international collaboration – and we should draw inspiration from this as we form new and wider collaborations outside the EU.

For instance, in 2017, nearly 20,000 UK higher education students and academics undertook placements abroad, as part of the Erasmus+ mobility scheme– which is itself not confined to the EU alone.

In return, the UK has hosted over 32,000 European higher education students.

Overseas placements like this bring untold value to individuals, to businesses and to culture and society as a whole.

Or just look the fact that the UK has secured a massive 13% of all funds in the Horizon 2020 funding pot, totalling around €6 billion. There is no doubt that Horizon 2020 is successful because it has been powered and inspired by British excellence.

And, as you know, the government has put in place guarantees for Horizon

2020, which apply whether or not we leave with a deal.

And if we needed further evidence of where British excellence has given us a leading role to play, we need only look at fusion energy research – a technology with immense transformative potential.

Look at Culham, praised just last week by the Prime Minister for its efforts to help the UK become a ‘global lead’ in nuclear fusion – and probably the first time the word ‘tokamak’ has featured in any Prime Ministerial address!

Until then, I’d have bet that Culham was probably not a place that many people outside of research and innovation circles would have heard of.

But, in the world of nuclear research, it’s as well known as Cape Canaveral or the Large Hadron Collider.

The work happening at the Culham Centre for Fusion Energy is years, if not decades, ahead of the game.

Right at the heart of Culham is the Joint European Torus, or JET – currently the world’s largest and most powerful tokamak, and the focal point of the European fusion research programme.

And once JET has wound down, Europe’s focus will move to Southern France, where engineers are hard at work building ITER in Marseille – an experiment inspired by Culham, building on the successes of JET.

Of course, outside the EU we will be able to invest in our own research programmes.

But I am committed to doing everything I can to ensure we can keep playing a key role in the global ITER project, to make sure we continue to lead from the front in European fusion.

And as you would have heard the Prime Minister announce last week, we are about to start developing the next generation of fusion reactor in Culham, alongside a major campus upgrade. This programme is known as STEP – and will build a fusion reactor not just for science, but for energy production.

This has the potential to be a game-changer, creating a new source of abundant clean energy, right here in Europe.

The benefits of which will last for decades, even centuries.

It is an experiment that shows our great British enterprising spirit – a spirit that will in turn attract the world’s leading scientists and engineers. It will build on JET and ITER. And it will renew and strengthen our strong international bonds.

Through nuclear research, we can see that decades-long collaboration, across borders, is central to scientific endeavour.

And we find deep and long-lasting collaborations in many other areas besides.

Just look at CERN.

More than 20 research groups across the UK helped prepare for the Large Hadron Collider. And it was only a few years ago that it made the major breakthrough of discovering the Higgs Boson, the so-called 'God Particle' first proposed by British scientist Peter Higgs in 1964.

British involvement in international research collaborations doesn't get more historic than that.

And this also applies to space, where our membership of the European Space Agency – or ESA – gives the UK access to a huge €6 billion R&D budget and some of the most exciting space missions since the Apollo moon landings.

Two weeks ago, I spoke at the UK Space Conference in Newport, touching on the importance of international collaborations in space through ESA.

And it's here that I want to reiterate a really important point I made in that speech: that while we are leaving the EU, we will not be leaving ESA – which is not a European Union Institution.

I also said that if ESA did not exist, someone would have to invent it.

International collaborations of this sort allow us to do things at an unprecedented scale.

But it's not just about advancements in the natural and physical sciences. European partnerships have a significant role to play in Humanities and Social Sciences research too.

The European University Institute (EUI) is just one case in point – and an example of European collaboration on education and research.

As many of you will already know, the EUI is a world-class institution, and the UK has greatly benefited from its relationship with it.

It has produced some of our finest scholars and public figures, from political scientist Simon Hix to BBC journalist and Today programme presenter Mishal Husain.

I am pleased to announce that we have concluded an interim arrangement with the EUI, to cover the period from Brexit until the middle of next year, as a transitional measure if we leave the EU without a deal. And now that we have concluded an interim arrangement, I have asked my officials to explore the possibility of a future relationship with the EUI.

This announcement today, one which I have been working on for some time, is just one of the many continued demonstrations that I have been able to make of our willingness to continue our partnerships with our European research partners and universities after Brexit.

For instance, in May I announced that EU students coming to England to start their higher education in 2020/21 will have home fee status and financial

support, guaranteed for the duration of their courses.

And in July, I signed a new memorandum of understanding with Portuguese Minister Manuel Heitor, for the UK to join the AIR Centre, strengthening collaboration in the Atlantic region on ocean, space, energy and climate change science.

Also in July, I announced that the UK would be joining the Euro-Bioimaging European Research Infrastructure, hosted by Finland – enabling UK life scientists to access state of the art imaging technologies.

And back in March I announced a £45 million investment to expand the European Bioinformatics Institute, just south of Cambridge – demonstrating the UK's leading capability in both life sciences and open research methods.

Continued co-operation, continued participation, regardless of our future relationship with the EU.

I know continued cooperation in education and training with our European partners also remains a key priority for you, as it does for the government. And that's why I want to reassure you today that, irrespective of the outcome of current discussions, we want to make sure that students and young people can continue to benefit from international exchanges.

We have sought to put in place robust contingency plans so that Erasmus+ projects that are already underway can continue if we leave without a deal.

I hope that we will secure a deal shortly: a deal, which we all know would enable our continued participation in EU programmes such as Horizon 2020 and Erasmus+.

But if there is not movement from the EU, we are ready to leave without a deal. Politicians cannot choose which public votes they wish to respect. We will be ready for Brexit on 31 October.

Our Horizon 2020 no-deal guarantees are now in place. New guidance, [‘UK participation in Horizon 2020 after Brexit’](#), is being published today with further details. Treasury funds are set aside for this and the Erasmus+ underwrite guarantee. All of this funding is additional to the current domestic science budget.

These guarantees are really important. They mean that:

1. Important cross-border collaboration will be able to continue after we have left the EU. The guarantee would cover all successful competitive UK bids to Horizon 2020 submitted before the UK leaves the EU.
2. The guarantee extension would apply to successful UK bids to Horizon 2020 schemes which are open to third country participation from point of exit in a no-deal scenario until the end of 2020. Both the guarantee and extension would apply for the lifetime of projects.

3. The funding of UK applicants for all successful bids for Erasmus+ projects that are approved by the Commission before Brexit will be covered by the government, for the lifetime of these projects.

In addition to the guarantee and extension, the government committed on the 8 August to ensuring that all UK bids to mono-beneficiary calls – the European Research Council, Marie Skłodowska Curie Actions and the European Innovation Council Accelerator calls that are submitted to Horizon 2020 before Brexit would be evaluated in all scenarios.

This means researchers and innovators can continue to submit proposals to Horizon 2020 with confidence, right up to the point of exit, knowing that the best proposals will be funded – regardless of how we leave the EU.

But I know that these guarantees also need to be communicated effectively – to give you the reassurances you need to continue with your European collaborations.

It is vital that all EU research organisations who are partnered with British researchers or institutions know that the British government has made these guarantees, and that we stand by them.

Previously I have written to all higher education and research ministers in every EU country, along with several of the European academies, to highlight the guarantees that have been announced.

Now, through the British Council, Universities UK, the Confederation of British Industry, and UKRI, I will shortly be reaching out to all of our international partners across Europe, to make sure that the guarantees we have put in place are well-understood and effective.

This is critical to ensuring that we are protecting the interests of our students and researchers, both abroad and in the UK.

I will also be convening these key stakeholders for regular meetings in the run-up to Brexit, to ensure that we are doing everything we can to step up our communications efforts in this area.

Let me be clear, though, we would prefer to leave with a deal, and have been working in an energetic and determined way to get that deal. But these guarantees are there if we need them, should we have to leave without a deal on 31 October.

Researchers and innovators across the UK can continue to participate in Horizon 2020 programmes with confidence.

Ultimately, however, we will not be able to take part in negotiations on association to Horizon Europe until the programme has been finalised.

Continued international collaboration is the foundation for our strong future as a knowledge economy.

And that is the key point I want to make today.

I know that many out there are concerned about Brexit, and our future participation in European networks. To those people, I want to say this: while we are leaving the EU, we are not necessarily leaving our European collaborations behind.

It also means looking to the rest of the world, to broaden our horizons, and to form new partnerships.

This is the reason we published our [International Research and Innovation Strategy](#), and our [International Education Strategy](#) – both of which I announced earlier this year and which provide a clear framework for international collaboration.

In the last 3 years, over 52% of the UK's academics publications were produced in collaboration with international partners. Our International Research and Innovation Strategy aims to protect this, but also enhance this.

It is also why we have announced the return of the Graduate Route – or the 2-year post study work visa.

We have also announced reforms to the highly skilled visa route to make it easier for talented people to come to the UK to work in research and innovation roles.

To succeed after Brexit, we will do everything we can to make sure that the UK remains open and welcoming to the brightest minds.

Our future as a global knowledge economy depends on this Freedom of Talent – on protecting and enhancing our attractiveness as the best place to study, to undertake research, and to start and grow an innovative business.

That's why I will soon be publishing the outcomes of the independent review that Professor Sir Adrian Smith led, which will provide advice on options for funding international collaboration on research and innovation. These options will be especially important if we don't associate with Horizon Europe.

I know that many of you will have engaged with the review over the last few months, and I thank you for this engagement.

Sir Adrian and his colleague on the review, Professor Graeme Reid, are true experts in their field and, between them, have many years of knowledge and understanding of what the UK's opportunities might be.

I am therefore confident that, through their insight, we'll have some great new ideas to think about. Together with the advice we've also taken from the sector directly, this will give us opportunities to extend our international collaborations beyond Europe. Opportunities that I would be keen for us to explore after Brexit, deal or no deal.

If we are to become a truly global knowledge economy, then we must be open to collaborating in new ways.

After all, we have a greater research effort in the UK, and a more admired higher education system, than pretty much anywhere else in the world, let alone in Europe.

Only this week, the UK has won another 2 Nobel prizes. First, the Nobel Prize in Physiology and Medicine, given jointly to 3 scientists from Oxford, Harvard and Johns Hopkins, for their work on cell oxygen sensing. Second, the Nobel Prize for Physics – a collaboration between the universities of Cambridge, Princeton, and Geneva.

This again highlights the incredible strength of the UK, but with it also the power of our international research collaborations.

Our International Research and Innovation Strategy which I launched during our Chairmanship of EUREKA, demonstrates the future direction of our strategic priorities, which are truly global.

This builds upon the work we have begun this decade, with the investment in the Global Challenges Research Fund and the Newton Fund, partnering with countries across the globe, expanding research excellence in fields of study that are meeting global challenges for the future.

And as the minister who signed Net Zero by 2050 into law, and who helped to deliver our successful COP26 bid – which is in fact a partnership with another one of our great research partners, Italy – I recognise that the challenges that we meet are international ones.

This is about cooperation, collaboration, and the collective desire to solve great challenges and to seize great opportunities.

It is about recognising that we are at our best when we strive for ideals that transcend borders – the pursuit of knowledge, the search for truth, the transmission of skills and learning from one generation to the next, regardless of the place where you were born.

It's about striving to understand, recognise and respect our diverse perspectives, in search of shared values and shared goals.

This is about much more than a handful of schemes. It is about what people are capable of when we work together.

It is also about recognising that these research partnerships are not simply about the funding, vital though that is. These are not impersonal bonds, tied by transaction: they are your partnerships, created by you, the academic communities.

And indeed, these are friendships. Friendships cultivated over decades, the result of hours of dedicated meetings, exchanges, building your networks.

I recognise all this.

We all have a duty, in our research communities, and myself as your minister, to continue to work together, to expand the possibilities for the acquisition

of knowledge, and the potential for creation and discovery.

You have my commitment that I will continue to do everything I can, to protect what you have crafted, to work to continue the friendships and alliances that you have built. I am delighted to announce that we are able to continue our involvement in the EUI, but it signals a wider willingness, that, though we are leaving the EU, we will not be leaving Europe.

But I also want us to embrace the possibility that we can go even further, that we can reach even wider. To embrace a future where our pursuit of knowledge includes new perspectives, where the search for truth takes us to new places, and where our great European tradition of learning can be re-shaped into a truly global endeavour, not just for the benefit of the UK, but for the benefit of the whole world.

That is when our modern knowledge economy becomes truly 'powered by openness' – when the UK becomes truly global.

Thank you.

ESFA Update: 9 October 2019

[unable to retrieve full-text content] Latest information and actions from the Education and Skills Funding Agency for academies, schools, colleges, local authorities and further education providers.

How we build an NHS that's there for every member of society

This feels familiar: it seems like it was only a week ago I was on a stage in Manchester making a speech about the biggest hospital building programme in a generation – I'm assuming you all saw it?

Well, if you didn't, one of the highlights of my last trip was going to North Manchester General Hospital with the Prime Minister to see one of the 40 hospitals we're building or upgrading over the next decade.

We met with Raj Jain (CEO) and his brilliant leadership team, and we met with some of the patients being cared for by the brilliant doctors and nurses there.

But as we were looking around, it became abundantly clear that those facilities, built in 1876, aren't fit for the modern age. It's like one of the staff there said: asking Premiership footballers to play on a ploughed field.

All I can say: it's a good job Solskjaer isn't running an NHS trust – or Man United would be in special measures by now.

But poor facilities are not something that you should have to accept for your teams.

The right leadership is so important to the health of the NHS, but what's even more important is that our NHS leaders have the right support.

That you're not trying to operate with one arm tied behind your back.

As health secretary, I've listened to you about what support you need to do your jobs, and what I've seen is that the best chief execs, with the best-run trusts, all talk in the long term.

Of course, we all face short-term challenges, day-to-day pressures, but good leadership is about looking ahead, being able to anticipate and plan, think about the resources, the changes and innovation that you're going to need to meet the demands of tomorrow.

One of the most pressing demands is for more people – and that is what most of the £33.9 billion extra funding will be spent on.

There will be more on that in the People Plan later this year. Today, I'd like to talk about 3 other things that are going to be integral to the future of every NHS trust: the [Long Term Plan](#), capital and tech.

And I'd like to take a moment to focus on each one.

First: the Long Term Plan Bill.

Simon Stevens, and his team, have consulted with you, and colleagues from across the NHS, to develop proposals collaboratively for an LTP Bill.

We want any legislative changes to have widespread support, and to ensure they help speed up delivery of the plan.

At their heart, the proposals, which I'm considering carefully, will empower you to work collaboratively with other providers and commissioners, so you can reduce bureaucracy and procurement costs, and so we can improve care and get the best possible return for taxpayers.

The proposals set out how the NHS is moving from competition to collaboration as the main driver for service improvement.

So more joint working. Choice for patients must remain, and competition should be encouraged where it can lead to better outcomes, but it doesn't have to be done in a bureaucratic, crass way. It isn't the organising

principle for NHS services.

On mergers: trusts need to be able to make merger decisions in the best interests of patients – and patient interest should be clearly defined.

But the Competition and Markets Authority merger review process adds an unnecessary layer of bureaucracy that's time consuming and costly with knock-on effects for staff and patients.

So the proposals recognise that while the CMA has an important public interest role to play, when it comes to things like pharmaceutical pricing, proposed trust mergers are better assessed by the NHS.

They're better placed because quality of care, and best use of NHS resources, should be the guiding principles when it comes to deciding on mergers, tariff-setting and licence conditions.

And on tariffs, the Long Term Plan sets out how we're moving away from activity-based payments to population-based payments.

Why?

Because we need more flexibility to spur innovation and to remove perverse incentives. We're already doing it with blended payments for emergency care and multi-year tariff setting, but we can go much, much further.

Fair, transparent, locally-set prices will make it easier to redesign care across providers, support preventative care models and reduce transaction costs.

And on procurement, you know there are too many complexities and costs with little added value for patients in return.

So we hear what you're telling us and it's clear: we need simpler, more refined procurement, that reduces bureaucracy when you're developing competitive tender bids, that makes it easier for you to work with commissioners to develop innovative clinical models.

And this new procurement model should cover commissioning of all healthcare services not just arrangements with NHS statutory providers.

So, we hear you, the voices of the NHS.

Second: let's talk capital.

Last week, here in Manchester, we launched the Health Infrastructure Plan: the biggest, boldest hospital building programme in a generation, properly funded – not painful PFI deals – and properly planned so the NHS is ready for the 2020s and beyond.

Now, you all know the topline figures: 6 new hospitals, ready-to-go now, will start immediately, and another 34 new hospitals, in the pipeline, have been given the green-light, and seed funding, to develop their plans.

But the Health Infrastructure Plan (HIP) isn't just about building new hospitals: it's about capital to modernise diagnostics and tech, modernise our primary care and mental health buildings, and help address critical safety issues in the NHS.

It's about the capital system as a whole.

You know better than anyone the challenges we face – that capital is too stop-start, the disjoint between the national allocation and local decisions, and the last-minute nature of some approvals.

This new regime will provide indicative, multi-year planning envelopes that will be confirmed annually.

To balance control and delivery, we're proposing 2 sets of changes: one, to offer more assistance to providers in developing their business cases, and 2, to streamline the approvals process.

To ensure that funding reaches the frontline as soon, and as efficiently, as possible, all national organisations will need to work together more closely to manage NHS capital expenditure, through greater budget transparency and improved forecasting.

Under this new system, providers will remain responsible for maintaining their estates, and for setting and delivering their organisation's capital investment plans. But local providers must work much more collaboratively to plan capital investment. After all, if one trust breaches capital spending limits, then clearly that's going to have a knock-on effect on others and their capital plans: we all share the same national pot.

Integrated care systems (ICS) will have primary responsibility for spending within their capital envelopes – covering both types of acute trusts, mental health trusts, community trusts, primary care – and of course linking in with ambulance and specialist trusts.

I want to see more capital and estates collaboration through ICSs. I want to see providers who think they can better use local assets currently owned by NHS Property Services (NHSPS) to take over these assets and use them for the very best of the local health system. We've seen some early examples of use of the new powers for trusts to request ownership of NHSPS assets – starting in my own patch with Newmarket Hospital. And I will in principle be open to all such transfers, within the accommodative rules we've set out.

Trusts need to think of their physical assets as working for the ICS, and ICSs need to work to make the most of all the assets there are locally, and everyone needs to focus on using our physical assets to bolster the most important asset: the health of the population who we serve.

That is the new vision – and I need you to help me make it a reality.

The role of regions will be advisory: to support ICSs with advice to deliver their plans, to ensure ICSs in turn work with each other, and to make the relationship between the centre and local systems tractable.

And then we need more integration at a national level too. There will be one capital sign-off nationally: a Capital Committee including NHS England, NHS Improvement and DHSC. I want the national sign-off to be spectacularly more straightforward. We will be guardians of the national capital expenditure limits, and strategic in allocations of central capital, and encourage planning for the future through the HIP process. But the bureaucracy around sign-offs will be radically simplified.

The system must be fair to everyone: NHS trusts and foundation trusts alike.

We want to make sure capital better flows to where it's most urgently needed, while still rewarding trusts for strong financial performance, preserving the autonomy trusts have while ensuring the whole system uses capital as strategically as possible.

It's about building a more equitable, fairer system, where every constituent part of the NHS lives up to its responsibilities by acting in a collaborative way – and that, collectively, we all act in the best interests of patients and taxpayers.

And I want to say a word about what I mean by integration. This isn't superficial. I want trusts to be bold when it comes to integration.

It's very easy to point at real or perceived barriers and say: 'let's just do the bare minimum'.

Primary care, community care, mental health and adult social care should all be looking at ways, including structural ways, in which they can properly integrate to provide a more seamless experience for the patient.

Engaging and inspiring the workforce is critical to achieving this.

Empowering frontline staff to own the integration and find all the myriad ways to break down barriers and make things work better.

And that means investment in wider health and care infrastructure, such as genomics, prevention and public health, life sciences, and the wrap-around care and support we provide to elderly people and people with physical or learning disabilities.

The whole of the NHS is moving towards system-level working – and you are a vital part of that system.

Which brings me to the third – and final – thing I want to talk about: tech.

Now, I'd like to think since last year's conference we've got to know each other a bit. I've made my case for tech passionately and repeatedly, and to give a lot of providers credit, you've listened and responded.

We're axing the fax, purging the pager, and I've set up NHSX to drive digitisation across the whole of health and social care.

And the team at NHSX is getting the right architecture in place: common

standards on privacy, encryption, inter-operability and data.

And not just the right technical architecture but shared standards on governance, procurement and contracts, so that you can buy whatever you want, from whoever you want, as long as it's safe, inter-operable and does the job.

This standards-led approach, open to innovation from outside the NHS, is the only way to go for an organisation as large and as complex as the NHS.

And this approach is already bearing fruit.

Just under a third of the population (26%) are now registered for a GP online service: that's more than 16 million people.

By the end of this year, every member of staff at Imperial College, and Chelsea and Westminster trusts will be using a single shared electronic patient record (EPR) system. Around 17,000 staff will have only one EPR to learn and patient records will be available across organisational boundaries.

We trust you to do your job so we're going to mandate tech standards for providers, like we've done with GPs.

We don't want to micro-manage you: we want to empower you to make the right decisions for your communities and their care needs – but they must fit standards so everyone's systems can fit in with each other.

But the truth is that getting the right architecture in place and mandating shared standards isn't going to be enough – it's also about cold, hard cash.

Let me be clear: it's not about getting the latest gadgets and gizmos into the NHS, it's about ensuring we upgrade slow, outdated – and often dangerous – systems so we can save lives, and save time for staff.

As I've seen in Salford and Addenbrooke's – and it's happening in Birmingham and Southampton – they're investing in the right tech to support their staff and make their patients' experiences better.

The driving force should be meeting a minimum set of core digital capabilities, but without the necessary spend, that's impossible.

How can we unleash the potential of our national NHS AI lab if hospitals are still printing off X-rays and sending them by courier to be analysed?

So we need the right architecture and standards, the right innovation culture and the right tech spend.

This is about seizing the once-in-a-generation opportunity that the record £33.9 billion we're putting into the NHS offers us to build a health service that is truly fit for the future. And with our multi-year full capital budgets to be set at the next capital review.

So a Long Term Plan that looks to the next decade and beyond.

A Health Infrastructure Plan that takes a strategic future-focused approach to capital.

And a new tech priority, properly mandated and properly funded, across the NHS to save lives and save time.

That's how we ensure you get the right support to do your jobs.

That you can build up your organisations and back your teams.

That you can lead with confidence and optimism about the future.

And that's how, together, we build an NHS that's there for every single member of our society, for generations to come, whoever they are and wherever they live.