

# High-flying young women and girls celebrated at Downing Street reception

Campaigners, teachers and young women were welcomed to Downing Street by the Prime Minister to celebrate the global achievements of girls in education and entrepreneurship.

Teachers and pupils mingled alongside guests including FGM campaigner Fahma Mohammed; Science Girl director Anna Zacharia; Amy Stephens, founder of 'Chicks with Bricks' – a network connecting women in the construction industry; and Belinda Parmar, activist and founder of 'The Empathy Business' – a organisation which aims to encourage companies to encourage compassion towards their employees.

The PM also met several Youth Advocates from Girl Guides, one of the UK's most well-known charities for girls and young women. These included 19 year-old Isla Gerrard, 17 year-old Emily Jenkins, and Kim Singh Sall, aged 18, who discussed their girl-led manifesto, 'Future Girl' with the Prime Minister, as well as sharing with him the findings of their 'Girls' Attitudes' survey.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

This event was a fantastic opportunity to meet so many trailblazers in the world of education and empowerment for girls and women.

We've just seen a terrific set of GCSE and A Level results – a testament to the hard graft of young people, their dedicated teachers and their families.

Girls are bagging the majority of the top grade 9 results at GCSE and narrowing the gap in subjects like physics and maths at A Level.

I'm passionate about making sure girls everywhere get access to a good education – and that's why I announced funding for 600,000 children to have the chance to go to school for the first time at the G7 summit last week.

I was tremendously inspired by the young women I've met and I'm confident their successes will encourage a new generation of female leaders.

Other Ministers attending the reception included Gavin Williamson, Secretary of State for Education, and Alok Sharma, Secretary of State for International Development; and Matthew Rycroft, Permanent Secretary at the Department for International Development.

Gavin Williamson, Secretary of State for Education said:

This summer hundreds of thousands of young people received their GCSE, A Level and technical and vocational results, and showed what a pool of talent we have in this country.

Girls in particular have excelled themselves: for the first time, girls are now doing more science A Levels than boys, the highest proportion of GCSE entries achieving grade 4 or above were from girls, and more A Level entries from girls received A\* to A.

There's always more to do though, and I'll continue working to make sure every child and young person is getting the education they deserve. That means continuing to attract and retain talented individuals in our classrooms, giving teachers the powers they need to deal with bad behaviour and bullying, and getting more young people to consider high quality technical and vocational routes so this country has the skilled workforce it needs for the future.

International Development Secretary Alok Sharma commented:

Investing in quality education for girls isn't just the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do.

No country can truly develop and lift themselves out of poverty if half the population are locked out of economic opportunities. That is why UK aid is getting girls into school, giving them the skills they need to get a job and helping women with start-ups in Africa to grow their businesses.

I had the pleasure of meeting not just hard-working teachers and students but also female entrepreneurs who are breaking down barriers and proving an inspiration to girls around the world.

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Current Head of External Communications, James Hotson, talks about the role [Head of External Communications](#)

The deadline for applications is midnight, 16 September 2019.

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1. 29 August 2019 Updated to include Air Accident Investigation Branch (AAIB) and Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB).
2. 29 August 2019 First published.

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## [DWP announces the appointment of David Holt as Non-Executive Director](#)

David's departmental portfolio will focus on finance, risk and audit and in

his role he will chair the department's Audit Risk and Assurance Committee.

David has over 30 years' experience in the private sector, predominantly in senior commercial finance roles. He has a broad experience at board level gained from working across a wide range of sectors in both the UK and overseas.

With a degree in Economics and Geography, David is also a Chartered Management Accountant and has completed the London Business School's Corporate Finance Programme. He is currently Deputy Chairman of the Ebbsfleet Development Corporation, Senior Independent Director at Whittington Health and the Tavistock & Portman NHS Foundation Trust, a Non-Executive Director on the Planning Inspectorate.

The majority of David's career has been spent within FTSE 100 companies, most latterly Land Securities plc as Finance Director. He has also held executive roles at Unilever and Coats plc.

David has had early experience of the Department for Work and Pensions whilst Chief Financial Officer at Land Securities Trillium, providing both property and supporting services across the estate during a period of significant change in the implementation of Jobcentre Plus. Alongside this, his recent experience within the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government has also given him insight into the key challenges faced by the public sector including the impact that austerity and the drive for efficiency have had on both budgets and the need to develop new operating models for the delivery of services.

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## [Foreign Secretary attends Gymnich 2019 in Helsinki](#)

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab visits Helsinki today (29 August) and tomorrow (30 August) to attend the Gymnich – two days of talks with EU Foreign Ministers to discuss issues including Iran, the Middle East, countering threats from modern hybrid warfare and security in the Western Balkans.

The Foreign Secretary will have a number of bilateral meetings with his counterparts.

Speaking ahead of his visit Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

As the UK leaves the EU, we will continue to work together with our European partners on shared challenges. The meetings in Helsinki are an important opportunity to cover key issues – whether it is maintaining the nuclear deal with Iran, countering the increasing

threats of cyber-attacks, or security in the Balkans.

## Further information

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# [Business Secretary launches £10 million Brexit readiness fund for business organisations](#)

- £10 million available to support trade associations and other business organisations in helping businesses prepare for Brexit
- funds will support businesses across the UK in understanding the steps they should now take to be ready for 31 October 2019
- events, training and advice will be open to both members and non-members, ensuring businesses of all sizes can benefit

The Business Readiness Fund is open to business organisations and trade associations throughout the UK and will support events, training and the production of advice packs to assist businesses in making sure they are fully prepared for a Brexit on 31 October 2019.

Activities funded by the grants must be open to both members and non-members, and to businesses large and small preparing for Brexit on 31 October. This will ensure all businesses will benefit and can be reassured that they are fully ready, from major British producers to the smallest tech startups and entrepreneurs. There will be no barriers, such as affordability of membership.

Applications for grants will be accepted up to Friday 20 September 2019 and administered through a dedicated website, to be launched on 29 August 2019 and available through GOV.UK shortly. Funding will have to be used on activities to be completed ahead of 31 October 2019 in order to ensure they are focused on Brexit preparations and that our businesses are fully prepared for Brexit day.

Business Secretary Andrea Leadsom said:

The UK will be leaving the EU on 31 October. For businesses that still feel unprepared, I am determined to do everything I possibly can to ensure they are fully ready for Brexit.

We know that companies often rely on the wider business community for help and advice with planning. Business groups will now be given the necessary tools to engage with this crucial task, communicating with non-members and businesses of all sizes.

The funding we are announcing today will mean business organisations from all sectors across the country can stand resolutely behind businesses large and small to support them in preparing for, and seizing the opportunities of, leaving the EU.

Craig Beaumont, Director of External Affairs at the Federation of Small Business said:

As an organisation representing 165,000 small firms and the self-employed in every local community across the UK, we welcome these funds that target small businesses. It is mission critical to the economy that they have the information they need, to prepare for Brexit.

### **Notes to editors:**

The fund will be open to business organisations (including the Federation of Small Businesses, BCC or Institute of Directors), trade associations, chambers of commerce, chartered institutes and other professional membership bodies with a significant membership.

Applications are invited for practical advice and support, including (but not limited to): advice packs; information campaigns; webinars; podcasts; events or training workshops.

Activities supported by the fund must:

- be delivered in their entirety by 31 October 2019
- be additional to those activities already in delivery or planned to be delivered
- be made available to all businesses in the sector or geographical area and cannot be restricted to an organisation's members or subscribers
- be free (non-chargeable) to businesses
- not create a competitive advantage to certain businesses

Proposed initiatives will be required to deliver their intended impact by the 31 October 2019, and this will be subject to HM Government scrutiny.

The funding forms part of the £108m recently announced by HM Treasury to promote and support businesses in ensuring they are ready for Brexit, including a national programme of business readiness and helping exporters to prepare for, and capitalise on, new opportunities.