

# News story: University sector rises to challenge from Education Secretary

The Education Secretary has today (22 May) praised action taken by universities and companies after he challenged them to protect quality in higher education, while defending his right to speak out after being accused of making unlawful interventions.

Damian Hinds recently challenged the sector to do more to end the use of essay writing services, curb artificial grade inflation and stop using questionable student recruitment techniques.

Since being challenged by Mr Hinds in March to stop processing payments for online essay writing services, PayPal has committed to ending this function, which will reduce the number of students cheating at university.

In a further move to maintain the quality of our higher education sector, Mr Hinds also called for an end to the 'unjustifiable' steep rise in 2:1s and firsts awarded by universities, who have since stated their commitment to tackling grade inflation to maintain confidence in the system.

The Education Secretary has now welcomed that at least 15 universities ended or pledged to review their use of 'conditional unconditional' offers, which they stated following his letter to institutions expressing concerns over these practices.

In the last six weeks, 19 of the 23 universities challenged on their use of these offers have written back to the Education Secretary – with the majority making positive commitments – which he maintains is an acceptance that the practice is often not in the student's interest.

Preserving the reputation of the quality of England's higher education is in the interest of all universities, many of which attract thousands of international students. Universities will want to be sure that their competitors are respecting student interests in their recruitment practices, and not using less reputable means to increase numbers.

## **Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:**

Our universities are world-class and world-leading, with four ranked among the top ten across the globe. At the heart of that global reputation is a trust in the quality and high standards of the education provided – this reputation is hard won and should be fiercely protected.

That is why I am delighted by the actions taken so far to rise to the challenge of preserving that quality. I wholeheartedly support PayPal's decision to withdraw services from essay-writing firms that are exploiting university students. This is a big step forward

towards beating academic cheating but we now need more organisations to follow suit – it is their moral duty to do so.

I also welcome the responses from the universities I wrote to regarding their use of ‘conditional unconditional’ offers – particularly those who have informed me that they have ended this practice or committed to reviewing it.

The Education Secretary’s letter to 23 universities expressed his concerns over their practice of making ‘conditional unconditional’ offers to students, which means they must eliminate their other choices and put that institution as their first option. This recruitment technique could be influencing consumers to enter into a transaction they otherwise wouldn’t have.

When a university makes an unconditional offer, it guarantees the applicant a place regardless of what A level grades they obtain, which can remove the incentive for students to aim as high as they possibly can. It is a so-called ‘conditional unconditional’ offer as the requirement to obtain certain grades is removed in return for you making the offering university into your first choice.

Mr Hinds’ concerns were enhanced by the finding that 18-year-olds who received an unconditional offer were more likely to miss their predicted A levels by two or more grades.

Today, the Education Secretary has rejected some vice chancellors’ claims that his comments on how universities operate their admissions could be unlawful, and has defended his right to make his views known on the issue.

#### **Education Secretary Damian Hinds added:**

Prospective students should have a choice of where they study, but ‘conditional unconditional’ offers entice them to restrict their choices, in favour of one university. I maintain this is bad practice: bad in the end for both students and universities, and urge universities using them to stop.

While I am pleased that many university leaders are taking the issue seriously, it is a shame there are still some trying to justify practices which are damaging the integrity of our higher education and students’ interests.

I make no apology for speaking out as I have done. I could not stand idly by watching questionable practices spread and educational standards slide. Universities are making billions of pounds in public funds, as well as students own contributions, and I have a responsibility also to sixth form teachers, who want all their students to have the same incentive to reach their best. It is my job to make sure the education system works to help everyone make the most of their potential, and I am not afraid to get my hands dirty for this.

---

## [News story: £15 million investment to help keep families safely together](#)

Children at risk of being taken into care are set to benefit from programmes that tackle the root cause of family problems, by strengthening the expert support available from social workers, addiction specialists and psychiatrists.

The new programme, Supporting Families; Investing in Practice, will help families work on issues together, including those impacted by domestic violence, substance misuse or addiction, in order to help create stability in the home for young people and prevent them being taken into care, where that is in their best interests. This is part of wider Government work to improve outcomes for children in need of support of a social worker, by creating home and school environments in which they can thrive.

Modelled on existing Family Drug and Alcohol Courts (FDACs) and a programme known as Family Group Conferencing, the innovative new projects will be rolled out in up to 40 new council areas. The Government has today announced up to £15 million over the next year, following the emerging success of these existing programmes.

Children and Families Minister Nadhim Zahawi said:

Every child, no matter what hand they have been dealt, deserves the opportunity to grow up in a stable, loving family so they can develop into confident adults equipped to take on life's challenges successfully.

For too many children, this is not the reality, and we are seeing rising numbers of children going into care. Often, their parents are struggling with problems of their own and that has an impact on the whole family. Projects like these are making sure vulnerable families get the support they need from experts who can help them address their problems head on and stop them from spiralling out of control.

I want to see children to be able to stay with their family where it's appropriate and safe for them to do that – that's why I will continue to back innovative approaches with a track record of success in doing this, to give the most vulnerable children in our society the best chances in life.

The programme is in partnership with the What Works Centre, which will oversee the implementation of the programmes in local authorities. It will

gather further evidence of their effectiveness in keeping children and parents together, with the aim of spreading best practice in the future.

The projects being introduced or expanded in up to 40 new areas are based on:

### **Family Drug and Alcohol Courts**

This project provides a problem solving approach to care proceedings, where a team of substance misuse specialists, domestic violence experts, psychiatrists and social workers carry out an early assessment and agree an intervention plan with parents who come before the court in care proceedings. Once in proceedings, parents begin a “trial for change”, supported by the specialist team and with regular meetings with the judge, who reviews the progress being made as well as adjudicating in the case. The Family Drug and Alcohol Court model has been evaluated previously and found to have strong evidence of a positive effect on family reunification. As well as expanding the model to new sites, innovations of the FDAC model in existing sites will be tested to see if further improvements can be made.

### **Family Group Conferences**

This project puts families at the heart of making safe decisions and plans for children that are at immediate risk of being taken into care. Children and young people are involved in the conference along with their wider family network, and often supported by an advocate from outside the family. Together, a plan is agreed by all those involved and families agree to meet again to assess how well the plan is going and make the changes necessary to protect children.

Chief Social Worker Isabelle Trowler said:

Four years ago when the Innovation Programme was launched we held high hopes for identifying promising practice which we could spread across England. The announcement today has turned that into a reality.

Extending the reach of these tested programmes is indicative of the relentless hard work of everyone involved in developing practice to help support children and families. It is a very important milestone in our collective journey to giving the best response we can, to children, families and carers, in need of support.

Executive Director of the What Works Centre Michael Sanders said:

At the What Works Centre we're really excited to be launching this programme today in partnership with the Department for Education. By conducting large scale, robust evaluations of the impacts of these two programmes, we'll be able to help local authorities make a decisions about what mix of approaches is best for them, at the same time as ensuring that these promising practices are made

available to support more families than ever before.

Steve Bambrough, Associate Clinical Director at the Tavistock Clinic and member of the FDAC National Partnership, said:

The problem-solving Family Drug and Alcohol Court model achieves better outcomes for parents, better outcomes for children, and better value for money. It is a fair and trauma-informed approach which gives people the best chance of change and that's why it makes for better justice. We're delighted that this funding will enable more families and local authorities to have access to a compassionate and evidence-based approach to family justice.

The £15 million investment comes on top of £84 million committed by the Department for Education in April to help up to 20 councils support families to stay together through the Strengthening Families, Protecting Children programme. These projects aim to build resilience among more vulnerable families and improve how councils design and run services.

The work complements the Government's wider programme to improve the outcomes of vulnerable children, by recruiting and training the next generation of professional social workers.

---

## **[Press release: Gove takes action to ban plastic straws, stirrers, and cotton buds](#)**



**The government confirms a ban on plastic straws, stirrers, and cotton buds to slash plastic waste**

Environment Secretary Michael Gove has today confirmed a ban on plastic straws, drinks stirrers, and plastic stemmed cotton buds in England, following overwhelming public support for the move.

Following an open consultation, a ban on the supply of plastic straws, drinks stirrers and cotton buds will come into force in April 2020. The ban will include exemptions to ensure that those with medical needs or a disability are able to continue to access plastic straws.

The [government's response](#) to the consultation published today (22 May) reveals over 80% of respondents back a ban on the distribution and sale of plastic straws, 90% a ban on drinks stirrers, and 89% a ban on cotton buds.

There are instances where using plastic straws is necessary for medical reasons and the government will therefore ensure that those that need to use plastic straws for medical reasons can still access them. Registered pharmacies will be allowed to sell plastic straws over the counter or online. Catering establishments such as restaurants, pubs and bars will not be able to display plastic straws or automatically hand them out, but they will be able to provide them on request. The government believes this strikes the right balance between reducing environmental impact while protecting the rights of people with medical conditions and disabilities. The government will carry out a stocktake after one year to assess the impact of these measures and whether the balance is correct.

[In England, it is estimated that annually we use](#) 4.7 billion plastic straws, 316 million plastic stirrers and 1.8 billion plastic-stemmed cotton buds. An [estimated 10% of cotton buds are flushed down toilets](#) and can end up in waterways and oceans.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

Urgent and decisive action is needed to tackle plastic pollution and protect our environment. These items are often used for just a few minutes but take hundreds of years to break down, ending up in our seas and oceans and harming precious marine life.

So today I am taking action to turn the tide on plastic pollution, and ensure we leave our environment in a better state for future generations.

Even though non-plastic alternatives are readily available, [it is estimated that 95% of straws are still plastic](#). Cleaning up the effects of littering costs local government millions of pounds every year, with costs also imposed on the tourism and fishing industries, and the effect of plastic pollution worrying 89% of people.

It is estimated there are over [150 million tonnes of plastic in the world's oceans](#) and every year one million birds and [over 100,000 sea mammals die from eating and getting tangled in plastic waste](#). A [recent report estimates that plastic in the sea is set to treble by 2025](#).

An exemption will also be in place to allow the use of plastic-stemmed cotton buds for medical and scientific purposes, where these are often the only practical option.

Today's announcement follows the success of the [government's world-leading ban on microbeads](#) and [5p charge on single-use plastic bags, which has seen distribution by major supermarkets drop by 86%](#).

Hugo Tagholm, CEO, Surfers Against Sewage said:

Surfers Against Sewage welcome the ban on plastic straws, stirrers and cotton buds. Stopping the production and distribution of these single-use plastic menaces will prevent them from polluting beaches nationwide. It's a really positive and bold step in the right direction in the battle against plastic pollution.

It also helps further drive plastic-free options and alternatives for the public so they can truly make more sustainable choices in their daily lives.

Lauren West, Trailblazers Manager at Muscular Dystrophy UK, said:

Plastic straws are sometimes the only type of straw that work for disabled people due to their flexibility and ability to be used in hot and cold drinks. While we appreciate the need to reduce the use of plastics, traditional single-use straws are essential for some disabled people.

If disabled people cannot access plastic straws when out it could put their health at risk as they may not be able to drink and could become dehydrated. We're pleased the Government has recognised this in its proposals put forward today. We would encourage Defra to continue consulting disabled people and groups like Trailblazers to ensure we are not disadvantaged or targeted and stigmatised for using single-use plastics.

The government has recently announced a range of measures to eliminate all avoidable plastic waste underpinned by its [recently published landmark Resources and Waste Strategy](#). Other recent [key government actions include a world-leading ban on microbeads, taking over 15 billion plastic bags out of circulation](#) with our 5p plastic bag charge and plans to extend it to all retailers, and [consulting on introducing a deposit return scheme](#) to drive-up the recycling of drinks bottles and cans.

The [UK government has also committed a £61.4 million package of funding](#) to boost global research and help countries across the Commonwealth stop plastic waste from entering the oceans. Building on this, [the government's £20 million Plastics Research and Innovation Fund encourages researchers and businesses to develop new innovations](#) that can bring changes in the UK's

plastics manufacturing and consumption patterns, which will be key to developing a cleaner, greener economy through the [Industrial Strategy](#).

Earlier this year, the government [launched a consultation on a world-leading tax on plastic packaging](#) which does not contain a minimum of 30% recycled content from April 2022.

### **Further information:**

- [Single-use plastics can be defined](#) as all products that are made wholly or partly of plastic and are typically intended to be used just once and/or for a short period of time before being disposed of.
- The government will ban the supply of plastic stirrers.
- The government will ban the supply of plastic stemmed cotton buds, with an exemption for scientific uses. This will cover use in medical practice, scientific research and forensic purposes to support criminal investigations.
- The figure that it is estimated there are over 150 million tonnes of plastic in the world's oceans is from: ['Plastics, the environment and human health: current consensus and future trends'](#). 2009, Thompson, R.C., et al.
- The figure that every year one million birds and over 100,000 sea mammals die is from: 'Economic Impacts of Marine Litter', 2010, Mouat et al.
- [The figure that plastic in the sea is set to treble is taken from the Future of the Sea report](#), 2018.
- The figure of the effect of plastic pollution worrying 89% of people is from Populus: Ocean Plastic Survey.

---

**[Press release: From airport to spaceport: £2 million available to develop horizontal spaceflight in the UK](#)**





**Future spaceports can apply for a share of £2 million to support plans for small satellite launch from aircraft and sub-orbital flight from the UK, Science Minister Chris Skidmore announced today.**

- UK Space Agency opens £2 million development fund for horizontal spaceflight
- Existing airports could develop new infrastructure to allow aircraft or spaceplanes to take off and deploy satellites in space
- Horizontal spaceport runways also offer an attractive option for space tourism in the future.

Future spaceports can apply for a share of £2 million to support plans for small satellite launch from aircraft and sub-orbital flight from the UK, Science Minister Chris Skidmore announced today.

Sites such as Newquay in Cornwall, Campbeltown and Glasgow Prestwick in Scotland, and Snowdonia in Wales are already developing their sub-orbital flight, satellite launch and spaceplane ambitions. The £2 million strategic development fund, opened by the UK Space Agency, will help sites like these accelerate their plans further.

Science Minister Chris Skidmore said:

The UK space sector is thriving, and horizontal spaceflight is an exciting prospect which could provide services to our world-leading small satellite industry as well as international customers and space tourists.

This new fund will help develop ambitious proposals to enable spaceplanes and aircraft capable of deploying satellites to operate from future UK spaceports, as part of the government's modern industrial Strategy.

The potential spaceports can now submit applications to enable research into the market opportunities offered by new and emerging horizontal spaceflight technologies. Grant recipients can then use this research to develop an individual business case for offering horizontal launch services from the UK

in the early 2020s, better positioning themselves to engage with potential suppliers and investors.

Aviation Minister Baroness Vere said:

The UK's spaceflight expertise means we are ready to thrive in the new space age, encouraging innovation and creating jobs.

This fund provides a chance for UK spaceports to take the initiative and become global leaders in this field.

As part of its £50 million spaceflight programme, in July 2018 Government announced support for the establishment of a vertical spaceport in Scotland. This additional funding opportunity will support the development of horizontal spaceports in the UK, further growing the market for both small satellite launch and sub-orbital flights.

Claire Barcham, Director of Commercial Space at the UK Space Agency, said:

The UK Space Agency is helping prospective spaceports seize the commercial opportunities offered by the increasing demands for launch. We are working closely with the industry to ensure the UK becomes a global leader in providing access to space for small satellites and sub orbital vehicles.

Individual applicants will be able to apply for up to £500,000 of funding and can find out more details on the UK Space Agency website.

The UK Space Agency is driving the growth of the space sector as part of the Government's Industrial Strategy and continues to be a leading member of European Space Agency, which is independent of the EU. The UK is also playing a major role in space exploration and science, with a British built rover going to Mars in 2020.

The demanding environment of space means that investments in the sector generate new knowledge and innovations that extend far beyond the space industry. For example, satellites provide services that enable a wide range of economic activities, supporting industries worth £300 billion to the UK.

Earlier this year, the UK Space Agency revealed that every £1 of public spending generates up to £4 in value for the recipients in the space industry, with additional benefits to the UK economy.

---

# Speech: CBI Annual Dinner Speech 2019: Philip Hammond Speech

Thank you, John, for that introduction.

It is a pleasure to be here once again in the old Whitbread building.

And if the CBI is trying to make a cheap point by literally organising your annual piss up in a brewery, I am going to pretend I haven't noticed it!

Actually, this building has a fascinating history.

For more than a hundred years, the Speaker of the House of Commons' carriage was kept here.

If you haven't seen it, it is a spectacularly grand, gilded and polished affair – I am talking about the coach, not the Speaker.

This was a working brewery until 1976. The year before I started my first job, and a time when the UK economy was fast-approaching its post-industrial revolution nadir...

## **[POLITICAL CONTENT REMOVED]**

Visibly falling behind the other Members of the EEC, which we had just joined.

And with our politics polarising to reflect the radically different solutions of left and right to the nation's challenges.

We have come a long way since then.

Our economy is transformed. Our manufacturing sector once again boasts global champions;

British design and innovation, derided back then, is now respected throughout the world;

Our services sector has been liberated from stifling regulation and short-sighted protectionism to soar ahead as a powerhouse of the new economy;

And the UK has become a magnet for investment, for entrepreneurship and for talent from across the globe.

Our recovery from the fiscal consequences of the financial crisis a decade ago has reached a turning point: our deficit is now lower than it was before the crisis and our national debt is falling sustainably for the first time in a generation.

Meanwhile, the UK has grown continuously for nine straight years, and despite

domestic uncertainty and a slowing world economy, the OBR is forecasting growth for the next five as well.

Judged against our peers, the UK economy is robust: Since 2010, we have grown as fast as Germany, and faster than France, Italy and Japan.

On jobs, we have a remarkable story to tell, with the employment rate at a record high and unemployment at its lowest rate since 1975.

Over 3 ½ million net new jobs since 2010. And of the nearly half a million net additional people in work over the last year, virtually all are in full time jobs.

And there's good news on pay, too – with the OBR forecasting wages to rise by 3% or more in each of the next five years...

...while inflation is forecast to remain at, or very close to, the target of 2% throughout the forecast period.

This robust economic and fiscal performance is the result of nearly a decade of hard work by the British people, and of a clear economic strategy by the government.

My predecessor's number one focus was, quite rightly, on fixing the public finances, inheriting, as he did, a record peacetime fiscal deficit.

But when I became Chancellor in 2016 I recognised that, as well as getting Britain's debt down, our continued success as a nation depends on investing in our future, supporting our public services, and keeping taxes low to attract talent and investment.

This 'balanced approach' is now delivering, with the highest sustained levels of public capital investment in 40 years...

...a Modern Industrial Strategy to respond to the long-term challenge of low productivity;

Income tax cuts for more than 30 million people;

...and over £150 billion of new spending commitments since 2016, including a £34bn a year increase for the NHS...

...the single largest cash commitment ever made by a peacetime British Government...

...but all of it anchored in a framework of fiscal responsibility, with our deficit now just 1.2% and our national debt falling sustainably for the first time in a generation.

## **[POLITICAL CONTENT REMOVED]**

Because we must not undo a decade of hard work by the British people by making unfunded commitments that would send our national debt soaring; leave

the economy vulnerable to future shocks; burden future generations; and waste billions on interest payments.

## **[POLITICAL CONTENT REMOVED]**

So our economy and our public finances are in far better shape than they were 40 years ago.

Wages and living standards are dramatically improved since then. And yet, there are worrying echoes of the 1970's in the re-polarisation of the political debate today.  
Populism is on the rise.

Globalisation – which has transformed the lives of hundreds of millions across the planet, and driven rising living standards here in the UK, has become something of a dirty word;

Free trade is under attack from all sides and the multilateral institutions which have upheld the post-war international system are challenged as never before;

Trade tensions and the rise of protectionism are now a real threat to world trade and economic growth.

On the left and right of politics, at home and abroad, the allure of superficially easy answers to complex problems – the political equivalent of the “free lunch” – fills the vacuum created by frustration with the politics of the centre ground.

And Brexit continues to wrap our economy in a cloud of uncertainty – with the continued possibility of a “No Deal” exit remaining a real threat to our future prosperity.

So I want to say a few words tonight about how we can meet this growing challenge.

But it is worth noting that doing so today will be more complicated than it was in the 1970s.

Because underpinning, and to some extent driving, the political malaise in Britain – and in many other developed economies, are four major, unavoidable, structural changes that are shaping the context for this debate:

1. The inexorable shift of economic power from the West towards the Emerging Economies of Asia, and its inevitable long-term consequence for the balance of strategic power as well.
2. The need for rapid de-carbonisation of our economy, with huge implications for the allocation of capital and the sustainability of current business models;

3. The ageing of our populations and the implications for our economies, for migration policy and for intergenerational equity;
4. And finally, the unparalleled scale of the technological revolution on which we are embarked – a revolution that will profoundly change our lives, our jobs, our economy and our politics.

And all of these will be happening at once; all imposing huge demands for resources and attention – both in terms of political bandwidth and in terms of business management-time.

So the background is challenging, to put it mildly. And against that background, we face real and present dangers to our economic well-being from populists of left and right.

### **[POLITICAL CONTENT REMOVED]**

But the truth is that a gap has opened up – in Britain and in other developed countries – between the theory of how a market economy and free trade creates and distributes wealth, and the reality experienced by many ordinary people...

...creating a dissatisfaction that is fertile ground for populism to grow in.

And since populism cannot be defeated by confronting one set of simplistic, undeliverable solutions with another...

...we have to be prepared to eschew simple answers...

...and make again the complex, and to some, counter-intuitive, case for well-regulated open markets, free and fair trade, fiscal discipline and market economics;

Explaining how, as we tackle the great challenges of our economy in the 21st century – ageing, technology, climate change and productivity...

...the mechanisms of the market and the benefits of openness will allow us to create enduring, sustainable solutions.

Solutions that deliver real results, not empty promises.

But defending the market economy means demonstrating how, specifically, it can meet the challenges that matter most to a generation who may be pre-disposed to believe that it cannot.

And it means showing by doing, not by telling.

It means delivering rising real wages and living standards year after year;

Building the homes that the next generation needs – at prices they can afford;

Supporting people of all ages to embrace technology change through retraining

and re-skilling, so that technology means higher living standards, not higher unemployment;

It means closing the gap between our regions through sustained investment in infrastructure, including strategic projects like HS2;

Demonstrating that higher productivity can provide the answer to the challenge of an ageing population;

And harnessing market-based solutions to show that de-carbonisation and rising living standards can go hand-in-hand.

In short, it means validating the open, free-trading market economy system as "fit-for-purpose" for the challenges that we face in the 21st Century

That's necessary to re-build confidence in the politics of the Centre ground..

...and it's necessary to "re-licence" business to play the vital role that it must in our society.

And it can only be done by Government and Business working together to deliver prosperity and opportunity in every part of Britain.

The immediate priority must, of course, be delivering a solution to the Brexit impasse. And we made a great step forward today.

Because the Government's, and Parliament's seeming inability to do so is undermining confidence in our political system..

...and because continued uncertainty is now having a real and damaging impact on our economy.

When I accepted this invitation to speak, back in January, I planned to speak about Britain's future in the context of a Brexit deal that had been done!

And I didn't even focus on the juxtaposition

### **[POLITICAL CONTENT REMOVED]**

If we are to have any hope of re-uniting our country and repairing our politics after the divisions of the last three years, we cannot have half the country feeling they have completely won and the other half, that they have completely lost.

Britain needs a Brexit that feels like a compromise; a Brexit that delights no-one, but one that everyone, or nearly everyone, can live with.

And in a Parliamentary democracy, which this country is, the only sustainable Brexit solution is one that can command a majority in the Parliament.

So the right way forward is to build on what we have learned of the concerns and aspirations on the Labour side...

...and add it to what we already know of the concerns and aspirations of our

colleagues on the Government side, and others across the House who are open to a negotiated exit...

...to craft a compromise that can deliver Brexit and settle this question, once and for all, in a Withdrawal Agreement Bill that will represent a bold, new proposal addressed to MPs on all sides of the House of Commons.

### **[POLITICAL CONTENT REMOVED]**

...and promote instead a clear plan to build on the strengths of the British economy as we tackle the challenges and harness the opportunities of the future...

...working in a partnership with business...

...using the authority of Government to set the direction of travel...

...but with the private sector as the front-line agent of change – mobilising private capital and harnessing the power of the market to ensure effective delivery.

Working together to raise productivity as the only sustainable path – not only to higher wages and rising personal living standards...

...but also to delivering our social objectives, and our strategic goals, such as decarbonisation.

That means capital investment, both public and private, in infrastructure and technology...

...and it also means a partnership to deliver the home-grown skills and training that Britain needs to prosper...

...and a genuine collaboration to ensure a future immigration regime that supports the needs of business and the economy without unnecessary bureaucracy.

That's why we embarked on an unprecedented year-long consultation on the post-Brexit migration regime: we said we want to hear the views of business, and I am sure you are not going to disappoint us!

There is no doubt that we are facing an unprecedented period of challenge in our public life.

Uncertainty over Brexit.

Anxiety over our economic model.

Anger about our politics.

All set against the backdrop of a long, and sometimes apparently conflicting list of urgent imperatives:

Decarbonising our economy; rescuing our environment; housing our population;



adopting new technology; increasing our productivity, and adapting to demographic change.

No wonder the British people are concerned, and it would be an insult to ignore them.

The populists do not have the answers – but they are pretty good at identifying the grievances.

To trump them, we need an optimistic vision for the future – but one that is grounded in reality...

...with solutions that work with the grain of our society and harness the power of markets, the energy of business and the resource of private capital...

...to deliver answers to these multiple, simultaneous, challenges.

And to allow us to harvest the tremendous opportunities that lie within them.

Solutions that address the future...

...not hark back to the past;

That promote unity, not further division;

That deliver real change, not simply rhetorical shift;

And that speak to our ambition for a country whose best years, we firmly believe, lie ahead of it.

Thank you.