

Speech: Lord Ahmad addresses 40th Session of the UN Human Rights Council

Mr President, (High Commissioner), Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen. It is, as ever, an honour to address you today.

In an ideal world, we would not need this Council. In an ideal world, states would meet the human rights obligations they have to their people. States and non-state actors would not abuse the vulnerable, persecute certain communities, or silence those who speak out. In an ideal world, those who did such despicable things would face justice. Sadly, we do not yet live in an ideal world. That is why this Council is so important, and why the UK is and will continue to be one of its most steadfast supporters.

We support the Council's work because, in addition to the obvious moral argument for standing up for the oppressed, we also believe that States that respect human rights create the conditions for societies that are more secure, more prosperous and better equipped to meet the needs of their people.

Yet the challenges the Council faces are many and complex. If it is to rise to those challenges we must work together to strengthen it. Its success depends on all of us. We must ensure that the Council is not only more vocal and more ambitious, but also more proactive. We must not only tackle the most pressing human rights issues of today, but also work to prevent those of tomorrow.

My government is determined to do just that, and this year we are focusing particular attention on three human rights issues: freedom of the media, freedom of religion, and preventing sexual violence in conflict.

Mr President, media freedom plays an essential role in protecting all other human rights and freedoms. A free media helps people form their own opinions, and it holds governments and corporations to account. It is a vital foundation for any healthy democracy. That is why journalists should be free to do their jobs without fearing for their safety. Yet in many parts of the world, the statistics tell another story. Indeed, according to Reporters Without Borders, 2018 was the most dangerous year on record to be a journalist. 80 were murdered, 348 imprisoned and a further 60 taken hostage.

That is why, this year, the UK has launched a campaign to champion media freedom. We want the world to know that journalism is not a crime. On the contrary, media freedom is an essential element of the human right of freedom of expression.

Our campaign will advocate for the benefits of a free media; it will generate international support for the protection of journalists; and it will press for legislation to protect media freedom, not constrain it. The centrepiece of this campaign will be an ambitious international conference in London on

10 and 11 July. We will bring together journalists, civil society and governments from around the world to highlight the urgency of the issue, mobilise a global consensus and share best practice.

On behalf of our co-hosts, the Government of Canada, and ourselves, I would like to take this opportunity to invite all Foreign Ministers from this Council to attend. We look forward to working with you to champion this vital human right.

The UK's second major human rights focus this year is Freedom of Religion or Belief. We have long worked to defend and promote the rights of those of all faiths, and none, and we continue to do so. We are deeply concerned about the persecution of Uighur Muslims in Xinjiang, the prosecutions of Baha'i in Yemen, and we echo the concerns expressed by the High Commissioner recently about the criminalisation of Jehovah's Witnesses in Russia. We hope to see Iraq doing more to protect its minority communities and promote community cohesion.

We recognise that Christian communities worldwide have faced particularly aggressive persecution in recent years. That is why we have launched an independent review into this specific issue, to ensure that we are doing as much as we can to respond. Just last week during a visit to Pakistan I heard from Ahmadi Muslims, Hindus and Christians about the discrimination they face on a daily basis. While we remain concerned about restrictions on freedom of religion and belief in Pakistan, I was encouraged by the Government's plans.

Our third major human rights focus this year will be preventing sexual violence in conflict. This is an issue on which the UK has shown global leadership and in which we have seen significant progress, but there is still more to do. In November this year, five years on from our Global Summit in 2014, we will be hosting a major follow-up event to galvanise the international community into further action. I hope you will join us.

Mr President, in addition to these three key focus areas, the United Kingdom remains deeply concerned about the serious human rights situation in a number of countries.

In Syria, human rights are still being systematically violated on a daily basis. Thousands of peaceful activists are still in regime detention, exposed to appalling abuse torture, sexual violence and execution. And when I was in Iraq last year I heard first-hand from Syrian women that they had suffered harrowing sexual violence. This Council must do all it can to ensure that those responsible for these crimes are held accountable.

In Burma too, there must be genuine accountability for the crimes committed against the Rohingya and other ethnic groups by members of the Burmese military, crimes highlighted by the Fact Finding Mission.

It is to this Council's great credit that it recognised the gravity of the issue and established a mechanism to collect and preserve evidence for future prosecutions. I am proud of the role the UK played in securing that mandate. It is now essential that the mechanism gets the tools and access it needs to

carry out its vital work and that the Burmese government cooperates with it fully.

In North Korea, despite some welcome signs on the political track, there has been no improvement in the human rights situation. North Korea is still top of both the Global Slavery Index and the Open Doors World Watch List of countries where Christians face the most severe persecution. People are not free to practice religion. Their freedom of expression is severely restricted and they cannot access the world's media. I once again call on the North Korean authorities to work with the Council and other human rights actors to end widespread human rights violations.

In South Sudan, the human rights situation remains dire, and is exacerbated by persistent conflict and a worsening humanitarian situation. The UK welcomes the peace agreement, but we will continue to press, at the highest levels, for all parties to implement fully the commitments they have made to protect the rights and freedoms of the people of South Sudan.

Elsewhere, we remain concerned about instability and insecurity in Libya that is exacerbating the poor human rights situation. In Iran human rights defenders are still being harassed and arbitrarily detained, and detainees are denied the right to fair trials.

In Iraq, their next National Action Plan must properly address the impact of Daesh on women and children. And in Cameroon the cycle of violence in Anglophone regions must end.

Finally, to end on a more positive note, we welcome the decision of the Government of Sri Lanka to return more land to its people, and to establish an Office for Reparations and we encourage them to implement in full the commitments made to this Council to secure long-term reconciliation.

Mr President, to conclude: The UK remains committed to strengthening human rights, both at home and abroad. We remain committed to justice, accountability, and the rules based international system. And we remain committed to this Council. That is why we are seeking re-election next year, for the 2021-2023 term. And it is why we will continue to speak up for the oppressed and the persecuted... to champion freedom of the media, freedom of religion or belief and an end to sexual violence....

And it is why we will continue to stand up for human rights, for freedom and for justice – for everyone, everywhere.

Thank you Mr President.

News story: CIPFA to remain as Charities SORP secretariat

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, CIPFA, will continue to provide secretariat support for the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP), working in partnership with the SORP-making body.

The organisation will also provide support for the drafting of the statement's future updates for at least another three years.

The Charities SORP is the set of rules which governs charity accounting for charitable companies and larger charities (charities with an income over £250,000).

Representatives from the three charity regulators in the UK make up the SORP-making body that develops this charity accounting framework.

CIPFA has been providing this service since 2014 with an initial three year contract extended for a further year whilst the contract was retendered.

Following an open tender process in 2018, the SORP-making body agreed to award the contract to CIPFA for an initial term of three years from December 2018 with an option to extend for up to two more years.

CIPFA were also awarded a related subcontract to provide a printing, publication, and distribution service for the SORP as part of an integrated service.

Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator's (OSCR), Laura Anderson, on behalf of the joint-chairs of the SORP committee, said:

We are delighted to continue our partnership with CIPFA and very much look forward to the work we will carry out in developing the SORP to ensure it serves the charity sector well.

This is a very positive continuation of our work with CIPFA and something that we are all very excited about – we are looking forward to the challenges ahead.

Don Peebles, Head of Policy & Technical, CIPFA, said:

This renewed partnership provides an opportunity for CIPFA to use its expertise in providing advice and guidance on accounting best practice in the charity sector.

We look forward to continuing to support the development of the

next version of the SORP, as well as other changes on the horizon for the newly extended SORP-making body.

For media enquiries contact the CIPFA press office on telephone number: 020 7543 5830 or email: Letreis.lawrence@cipfa.org.

Notes to editors

- The SORP-making body is comprised of representatives from Charity Commission for England and Wales, the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) and the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. The Charities Regulator in the Republic of Ireland has an option to become part of the SORP-making body in the future.
 - CIPFA, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, is the professional body for people in public finance. CIPFA shows the way in public finance globally, standing up for sound public financial management and good governance around the world as the leading commentator on managing and accounting for public money.
 - The Secretariat provides the technical drafting services to the SORP-making body, including handling consultations, servicing the advisory charities SORP-committee and developing consultation responses on behalf of the SORP-making body.
 - The Charities SORP Committee is a sector-based expert committee that advises the joint SORP-making body in its development of the SORP. The Committee includes charity finance directors, charity auditors as well as members reflecting broader charity sector and academic interests.
 - A governance review of the constitution and composition of the Charities SORP committee and the SORP making process was initiated in 2018.
 - For more information about the SORP, the SORP-making body and advisory SORP Committee refer to the dedicated website www.charitySORP.org.
 - The invitation to tender can be viewed in [full online](#). The tender process was opened on 11 July 2018 and CIPFA were informed of their success on 8 October 2018.
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[News story: Charity Commission and partners launch fraud resilience survey](#)

Fraud is a growing problem for charities, costing hundreds of millions, potentially billions, of pounds each year. Roughly 70% of all fraud is now committed online, meaning a charity's valuable funds, operations, data and reputation can be at risk from a wide range of fraud and cyber-crime. It's never been more important to understand fraud risk and to boost your charity's cyber security.

Today, in partnership with the Fraud Advisory Panel, we have launched a survey, aimed at helping us get a better understanding both of charities' resilience to fraud and their levels of cyber security. We are emailing 15,000 charities directly, inviting them to complete a questionnaire.

If you are one of the charities contacted, please do try to complete the survey as honestly as possible. We estimate it should only take around 15 minutes to do. If you are not contacted by us, there's no need to take any action now.

All answers will be treated in the strictest confidence and will not be disclosed or shared with persons or organisations outside of the Commission.

Alan Bryce, Head of Development and Operational Intelligence at the Charity Commission said:

This is a really important project that should significantly improve our understanding of what's happening across the charity sector and shape our regulatory engagement, helping to build a stronger counter-fraud culture for the future. I urge those charities contacted to get actively involved and complete the questionnaire – your answers really will make a difference.

The survey will run for four weeks, and the Commission intends to publish the findings of the research later this year.

[News story: Better, faster, more](#)

personalised asthma treatment

Although 5.4 million people in the UK are affected by asthma, diagnosing the condition is difficult. Current testing often leads to misdiagnosis and diagnosing pre-school children is particularly challenging.

In a series of 3-year projects in Manchester, Edinburgh and Portsmouth, collaborations between academics and innovative businesses will lead to vastly improved treatment options.

Improving asthma services

With each project set to receive more than £200,000, it is expected that patients will see an improvement in services thanks to new diagnostic testing that better predicts response to treatment.

The projects will also provide doctors with improved decision support systems, reducing workload for GPs and leading to more personalised treatment.

The 3 collaborative projects are:

University of Manchester and Owlstone Medical

This partnership will develop new tests for diagnosis. It will look at the small airways in the lungs to assess treatment response. The aim is to reduce the number of people that are wrongly diagnosed and are taking unnecessary medication.

University of Edinburgh and Tactuum

This project will design a new clinical decision support system to help medical professionals diagnose asthma. Assessments of the patient will improve with the intention that it will lead to more personalised treatment plans.

Queen Alexandra Hospital, Portsmouth & Cambridge and Respiratory Innovations

In order to speed up the journey to diagnosis – and reduce costs in doing so – this project will test a new device that measures gases in exhaled breath to quickly diagnose asthma.

Partnership to improve health and wellbeing

The funding will tackle a serious health challenge and aims to improve the lives of the millions of people in the UK with asthma.

The partnership between [Asthma UK](#) – the leading UK asthma research charity – and Innovate UK will see academic researchers and innovative businesses

partner together to meet the goals of the charity. It also supports the UK's economy and development in the medical field.

Dr Kath Mackay, Interim Director Ageing Society, Health & Nutrition at Innovate UK said:

Many of us either are or know asthma sufferers, so are only too aware of the pressing need for better diagnosis and improved, personalised treatments.

By choosing to work in partnership with leading charities such as Asthma UK, we can connect businesses to the resources that the charities may have. This can be access to patients, new ideas and the ability to generate real world evidence.

Dr Erika Kennington, Head of Research at Asthma UK, added:

Diagnosing asthma can be extremely difficult and this is mainly because there is a lack of definitive diagnostic tools.

We look forward to seeing the outcomes of these research projects and hope that improved and faster diagnosis could mean people with asthma can then get faster access to treatments and care.

Speech: Social care commentary: using models of practice successfully

As more local authorities (LAs) are starting to use a model of social work practice, we are often asked about what is most likely to lead to success and what can improve the children and families' experiences? In this commentary, we reflect on our experience and findings from inspection over the last year.

When we talk about 'models of practice', we mean a particular way of, or approach to, working with children and families. It is values-based and, when successful, transformative. The accumulated challenges that our children and families face need systemic responses (the response is focused on how children and family relationships and their social context shape their experiences and thinking). The models we choose must reflect and respond to these challenges. They must provide the knowledge, tools and skills to enable great social work practice with children and families to thrive. It is critical that any model of practice used ensures a continuous focus on children's experiences and progress.

New ways of working can really support a profession that is striving to improve. What we shouldn't do though, is forget the basics. We have seen significant investment and innovation as models of practice have developed. When it's done carefully and well, innovation moves social work forward and that leads to better decision-making and more impactful direct work with children and families.

I want to build on a [previous blog about models of practice](#), repeat some of the key messages and answer some questions to support you to deliver these models:

- what works best in implementing a model of practice?
- what are the ingredients that make a model effective?
- does Ofsted have a preferred model of practice?

Social work practice continues to evolve. We are all still learning what works.

I want to begin by highlighting again some of the important elements of leadership that are essential for success. There needs to be a clear operating model that sets out:

- the local authority's vision and values
- the LA's philosophy of social work
- the structure of teams
- how cases move through the system
- how social work practice will be carried out
- the provision of help, protection and care for children
- what the thresholds are
- what services are expected to do and monitoring services for their quality and effectiveness

What works best in implementing a model of practice?

As highlighted in ['A preferred model of practice'](#), we've found significant variation in how well some models are implemented. It is critical that, whatever model is chosen, there is a clear implementation programme that makes the most of its benefits.

The name of the model does not tell you what it is or what it does – the same named model can be implemented quite differently in different places. It is important that you know what you are trying to achieve and what success looks like. The same approach is not necessarily right for every local area.

A whole-system approach

Through our inspections, we have seen that a carefully implemented whole-system approach is critical to success. If a model has just been tagged onto the existing system or 'dragged and dropped' from elsewhere, this can lead to tools not being used effectively or being used mechanistically. It can also

mean a less coherent experience for children and their families and the opportunity to impact positively on practice can be missed. At worst, it can impact negatively on the progress, experience and even on the safety of children.

We are finding that when models have been well implemented strategically and operationally over time, they permeate the culture and thinking of social workers and leaders.

A whole-system approach means that, at each part of the child's journey through the system, the principles of the approach have been embedded in the way professionals work with children and their families.

For example, in Hillingdon the dedicated and knowledgeable leadership team models a child-centred approach to all strategic and operational interventions for children. This is replicated throughout the staff group. Their consistent use of the 'analysis of risk' model is effective in identifying areas of risk and strength for children.

In North Yorkshire over a sustained period, leaders have built on an established philosophy of practice, which is clearly understood both across the service and by partners. At the heart of this approach is a belief that stable relationships with workers, who know their children and families extremely well, is the key to creating and sustaining positive change.

LAs stressed how important it was to 'co-produce' the plan to implement a chosen model of practice. Co-production means the plan is developed with, and therefore owned by, all partners, social workers, managers, families and young people. Planning also needs to be long-term and actions measurable.

A clear ethos

The Children Act sets out the main ethos for working with children and their families. A model of practice is most effective when the LA's own ethos is clear and underpins the approach.

For example, in Bexley, the ethos behind the well-embedded social work methodology is that children should grow up in their own families and other family networks when it is safe for them to do so. Family-based relationship work starts with the whole-family network and is supported and underpinned by a clear operating model.

Developing a confident and committed workforce

LAs need to provide the whole social care workforce with the language, knowledge, tools and skills to deliver any model they have chosen. A model won't work unless there is ongoing training and support for all staff. Managers have a crucial role. They need to believe in and 'own' the model. That way, they can embed the model through all learning activities, supervision and management oversight. This will support staff in being both confident and skilled in delivering the model of practice. I cannot overstate the role of effective management oversight and supervision in ensuring that a

model of practice makes a positive difference to the quality of practice.

A well-articulated approach to social work can also support good morale and help with staff retention and recruitment.

In Calderdale, social workers, aided by their practice managers and Calderdale Therapeutic Team (CTS), are helped to reflect on their practice and its impact and to identify ways to further help children, using an embedded and systemic social work model. Social workers told inspectors that they feel safe and enabled “to make a real difference in children’s lives”.

Models that set out clear expectations

Every practitioner needs to understand what is expected of them. At both an individual and organisational level, everyone needs to understand what success looks like.

A consistent approach means applying the same operating model at all levels, with the same principles and philosophy behind it. However, consistency does not mean rigidity. The best models are adaptable and flexible so that practitioners can modify them for specific situations. Models should support social workers to do the right thing and not become a mechanistic way of responding to families.

Building on solid foundations

When the conditions for social work to flourish are not present, then it is likely the model won’t work. Implementing a model is not a ‘quick win’.

Models need to be built on some solid foundations, as highlighted in [our blog](#):

- a stable workforce
- manageable caseloads
- effective management oversight and frequent supervision
- highly visible leaders and managers
- a strong culture of learning
- good qualitative assurance, performance monitoring and performance management arrangements
- mature partnerships with other agencies

Retaining focus on core social work tasks

When implementing a model, there is a risk that it may inadvertently lead to a loss of focus on some of the basics. For example, previously we have seen an LA implement a model of working in ‘pods’ (small groups of social workers who work closely together with a ‘practice lead’, who has a close working knowledge and oversight of their work). This led to good reflective discussion and assessment. However, with the shift to this new way of working, professionals lost their usual level of focus on timely decision-making, leading to delays for children. The best social work practice is founded on both values and professional standards, which are applied with

discipline.

Monitoring the impact of the model

There will always be unintended consequences of implementing a model that need to be responded to quickly. It is critical that:

- the impact of the model is very closely monitored
- a robust quality assurance and performance management system is in place
- where necessary, remedial action is taken promptly

The best places evaluate their model over the longer term, being clear about how far success criteria have been met. They involve their practitioners well in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the model.

What are the ingredients that make a model effective?

So, are there certain ingredients across different models of practice that enable them to be effective? I think there are, and I want to begin highlighting these.

A family-focused approach

Models that tend to make the biggest positive difference to the progress and experiences of children take a whole-family, holistic approach. They address key needs and risks while identifying and using strengths.

For example, practitioners in Bexley use a family-based relationship model involving the entire network of family and friends. This approach is underpinned by the belief that families have strengths and can identify solutions to their difficulties using their relationships with workers who know their children well. But, as with anything, there is a balance. A focus on the family must not lose a focus on the child.

Valuing stable relationships

Most models focus on the importance of stable relationships with social workers. They see this as a critical element of achieving sustainable, positive change for children and their families.

For example, in East Sussex the model of 'connected practice' (a methodology that supports practitioners to create change through meaningful and helpful relationships with children and families) has been comprehensively rolled out and is fully embedded. It is now resulting in helpful, enduring and trusting relationships between practitioners, children and their families, sometimes over many years.

In Kensington and Chelsea, the social work model is a strength. It means children and families receive consistent, stable social work support for as long as they need. Children's services staff are trained as systemic

practitioners. The social work model ensures that children and families experience minimal changes of social worker, even though their service needs may change, so that the relationship can remain stable.

Leeds has established a well-understood practice model that promotes child-centred work and productive working relationships between workers and families. Everyone is clear about what successful outcomes look like. The LA uses a restorative approach, which promotes working 'with' a family rather than doing work 'to' them. This includes early help. For example, the Restorative Early Support (RES) teams work intensively with families, setting clear goals that are reviewed weekly. Families 'own' the plan promoting sustainable change.

Relationship-based practice is a clear feature of all work in Leeds. Children are allocated a social worker in a timely way and, whenever possible, they remain with the same social worker. This helps build trusting relationships and reduces the number of professionals in the family's life.

A shared model across agencies

Models of practice can be particularly effective when used across agencies.

Our report ['Growing up neglected'](#) (a joint targeted area inspections (JTAI) overview report of the 'deep dive' theme 'older children living with neglect') found that some local areas took a strategic multi-agency approach. This ensured that staff across agencies had the support, training and tools needed to tackle neglect of older children. These areas had a more consistent and considered way of working that was having a positive impact on many children.

Islington and its partner agencies are embedding a model of trauma-informed practice. This is driving a cultural shift across the partnership. Their model promotes developing a skilful and confident workforce that builds good relationships with children and their families and keeps children at the centre of interventions. Professionals have commented to inspectors that this training has transformed the culture in schools, for example by providing a safe space for children to disclose abuse and by helping teachers to be professionally curious.

Focus on strengths and balance with risks

Any model should have a focus on families' strengths and their capacity to change but must also clearly identify the risks. The implementation needs to ensure that the model guards against over-optimism and against assessment and intervention becoming too adult-focused.

For example, in North Yorkshire the vast majority of assessments are of a high quality. Professionals use a well-embedded model of practice to explore strengths and areas of concern within a family.

Essex uses the 'relationship strengths-based' practice model, which is fully embedded and well understood by staff and partner agencies. This model helps

professionals to understand children's lived experiences and to develop effective and sustainable solutions. Staff have a clear understanding of the model and build strong relationships, getting to know children and families. They use a family's strengths to help identify strategies for them to achieve and sustain positive changes and improve outcomes for their children.

Purposeful direct work

The best LAs see purposeful direct work with children and families as a fundamental part of their practice model.

For example, in East Sussex, creative and purposeful direct work with children is widespread. Professionals use a range of direct work tools, as well as a neglect toolkit, to enable effective communication and participation with families. Their work is all underpinned by the well-embedded 'connected practice' model. The strength of these relationships and the care that children and young people receive substantially enrich and improve their lives.

In North Yorkshire, professionals use purposeful, sensitive and imaginative direct work to gather the wishes and feelings of children and to understand their needs. There is a clear and well-embedded practice methodology that is well understood. This guides the work of all practitioners, both within children's social care and the wider multi-agency partnership.

Summary

Ofsted does not have a preferred model

I want to reiterate that Ofsted has no preferred model of practice. We do not endorse one over another. What we look for, as in all areas of inspection, is the impact that the model has on children's progress and experiences. Embedding a new model is a challenging process. It is not a quick fix!

A whole-system approach to implementation will give the model the best opportunity to improve practice. It is critical that there is an unrelenting focus on the basics of social work practice, alongside good support for staff and strong management oversight. What success looks like needs to be clearly defined. The impact on children's experiences and progress needs to be evaluated through a robust quality-assurance process.

I will continue to return to this important issue because it's clear from our inspections to date that models of practice implemented well can have a positive impact on the lives of children and their families.