

Speech: United at home, stronger abroad

It is a pleasure to be with you all this afternoon in Broughton and I want to thank Airbus for their hospitality today.

This company is a great success story for Wales, for the United Kingdom and for Europe: the biggest private sector employer here in Broughton, but with two-fifths of its workers commuting each day from homes in England and part of a European enterprise now operating in five continents and employing people from 130 different nationalities. Airbus is a vivid example from the business world of how diversity in unity can make for global success.

Those same characteristics have defined the success of the United Kingdom.

The different nations that make up our country have had a long, often uneasy history. The castles just a few miles down the road from here at Chirk, Holt and Caergwle remind us of ancient quarrels.

But the shared experience and solidarity of our four nations at times of great success and grave danger alike have come to represent one of the most powerful and enduring symbols of freedom, liberty and democracy anywhere in the world and the proudest citizen of Aberdeen, Plymouth, Coleraine or Broughton can take huge pride in also being part of the United Kingdom – a union greater than the sum of its parts.

And now, as we prepare to leave the European Union, preserving and strengthening that union of the United Kingdom matters more than ever.

As we negotiate a new deep and special partnership with our friends and neighbours in Europe and forge a new role for the United Kingdom in the world, we must work for a future that fosters wealth-creation, opportunity and innovation in every part of the United Kingdom, and which strengthens the sense of security, belonging and solidarity in all communities, building a country that really does work for everyone.

The vote to leave the EU

And we as a country are at a crossroads in our history.

We face a choice: a choice that represents the difference between a prosperous, secure nation that is united at home and stronger abroad, and a poorer country that is divided at home and a weaker player on the global stage.

Now let me be clear at the outset: this choice is not about whether we leave the European Union.

As many of you here will know, I voted and campaigned hard to remain in the EU – as did many people in this country.

But I recognise as indeed do our 27 partners that people in the UK took a democratic decision to leave the EU – and that is what we must now focus our energies on delivering, seeking to minimise the risks and to seize the opportunities.

So the choice is therefore not whether we leave, but how we choose to do so.

We could leave as a nation divided; a country split; an economy disjointed – struggling to forge a unified consensus on the way ahead.

But there are opportunities too – opportunities we can seize if we come together, unite, and develop into that stronger, global Britain which we can be.

There were many different reasons why people voted to leave the European Union in 2016.

But reflecting on that campaign, I think that above all else, people throughout this country sought to regain a feeling of control, not just control over our laws, but over our lives too, and the people we elect into office.

And when you talk to people on the doorstep, it's clear that that vote expressed not just a rejection of membership of the European Union, but a demand to bring decision making and accountability closer to home, to restore a sense of belonging in communities, a feeling of connection between the elector and the elected.

So yes, we have to ensure, as we are determined to do, that Brexit means more powers going to the devolved governments and not fewer.

But I believe too that to renew that sense of connection between citizen and government, we need to press on too with our broader mission to devolve greater freedom, more power to act to cities, towns and counties in all parts of the United Kingdom. And I hope that the devolved governments will choose to take that approach too. After all, for someone in Broughton or Llandudno or Welshpool, Cardiff can seem as distant as London; from the perspective of Orkney, priorities may look very different from those of Central Scotland.

Our aim should be nothing less than to see our entire country coming together and having their voices heard. It means people here in Wales, as well as in Scotland, Northern Ireland and England – and it means our villages, towns cities and communities throughout the United Kingdom all having a voice too.

Our commitment to devolution

At the heart of the Conservative political tradition is both patriotism, loyalty to the special, shared union of the United Kingdom, but also a commitment not just to individual rights but to the vital importance of family and community, of village, town and county in enabling individual men and women to find meaning, value and fulfilment in their lives.

As Edmund Burke put it more than 200 years ago:

To be attached to the subdivision, to love the little platoon we belong to in society, is the first principle (the germ as it were) of public affections. It is the first link by which we proceed to love of our country and of mankind”.

I suspect that most of us here derive our sense of who we are from many different sources – from our family, from where we live, perhaps from a sports club, choral society or community group that we support, in many cases from our religious faith, and of course from our nation.

And in the United Kingdom we know that there is no contradiction between being an ardent Welsh or Scottish patriot and being a committed supporter of the Union. If I needed any reminder of that truth, it was when the Secretary of State for Scotland was gloating to me about the rugby result on Saturday.

Looking back to the last century, I think – being honest – that my party was too slow to recognise that the increasing calls for devolution and decentralisation represented a genuine shift in public mood.

But I think if you look at our record in government in the last eight years demonstrates that we have got the message.

The two Scotland Acts, in 2012 and 2016, have made Holyrood one of the most powerful parliaments of its kind in the world.

City deals in Scotland – backed by more than £1 billion of UK Government spending – have now either been agreed or committed to for all of Scotland’s seven cities.

The Wales Act is delivering a stronger, fairer, more accountable devolution settlement for Wales.

City deals for Cardiff and Swansea and the future North Wales Growth Deal are supporting the industries and jobs of tomorrow.

The passage of English Votes for English Laws at Westminster means that MPs representing English voters rightly have the final say on issues which matter directly to them and their constituents.

We have created new combined authorities with elected mayors across England – putting power firmly in the hands of local people in the West Midlands, the West of England, Tees Valley, Cambridgeshire, Greater Manchester, Liverpool and Sheffield.

And this government will continue to strive to restore devolution in Northern Ireland, and will remain fully committed to the Belfast Agreement. We will continue to govern in the interests of all parts of the community in Northern Ireland, and to uphold the totality of relationships embodied in that agreement, both East-West and North-South. And we shall stand by the commitments in the Joint Report between the UK and the European Union that was agreed in December last year.

But while we can take pride in that record of decentralising power, we can and should go further to drive forward both the economic and the political regeneration of our country.

So we are working with local authorities to help them co-ordinate their own economic plans with our UK-wide national industrial strategy – bringing together local businesses and leaders to deliver growth, enterprise and job creation in every part of our country.

We are supporting combined authorities located around our English cities to adopt elected mayors, should they wish to do so.

We will bring forward a Borderlands Growth Deal – including all councils on both the Scottish and English sides of the border – to help secure prosperity in southern Scotland.

We will build on the future North Wales Growth Deal by also fostering opportunities between Welsh cities and the rest of the UK, for example by linking economic development opportunities in Cardiff, Newport and Bristol.

And we have committed to looking at a city deal for Belfast.

Our commitment to the union

Now at the same time, we are unapologetically committed to the constitutional integrity of the United Kingdom.

So, alongside those initiatives to bring more powers closer to the people, we are working to ensure that the institutions and the power of the United Kingdom are used in a way that benefits people in every part of our country.

For a country that not only has a shared past, but continues today to draw strengths from all parts of the union.

There are more than 31,000 UK civil servants based here in Wales, including in our new UK Government Hub in Cardiff.

Eight out of ten goods lorries leaving Wales go to the rest of the UK, highlighting the importance of our United Kingdom wide market.

Bombardier's factory in Belfast has a supply chain of 800 companies throughout the UK and Ireland, supporting thousands of high-skilled jobs.

It is from the Department for International Development's joint headquarters in East Kilbride, Scotland that the 'United Kingdom's international work to vaccinate children against killer diseases, to educate girls and to provide clean water and sanitation to people who desperately need it is being driven.

And of course our base on the Clyde, home to thousands of shipbuilding jobs, is central to the UK's defence capabilities.

Put simply: we are all more prosperous and more secure when we all work together for our common good as one United Kingdom.

Now leaving the EU presents many challenges for our centuries-old union story – and opportunities too.

And some want to use it as an excuse to loosen these ties that bind us together – even sever them completely. Such an outcome would leave every one of our four nations both weaker and poorer.

Why we need frameworks

The task before us isn't an easy one, it is complex.

How do we allow greater control across England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland over the things that affect them separately – while preserving the things that affect us all collectively as we return powers from Brussels to the United Kingdom.

How do we ensure that a new wave of devolution delivers for the people of Scotland, Wales, England and Northern Ireland – but at the same time protects the essence of our union?

For a start, we have all – the UK government and the devolved governments together – agreed that we will need to have frameworks that break down which powers should sit where once they have returned from Brussels.

And that is a sensible and constructive approach – because these powers are not all the same.

Some are very obviously for the devolved governments and parliaments to exercise, and don't need any involvement on a UK-wide basis.

For example, the devolved governments are best placed to manage the safety and quality of the water they drink, as well as looking after and caring for their natural environment.

At the same time, there are other powers that are yes for the devolved governments to shape according to their own needs or ambitions and where they don't need legislation to underpin how what they do relates to the other nations of the UK, but where it would still be in everybody's interests to agree a looser form of cooperation – such as Memoranda of Understanding – between the devolved and UK governments.

For instance, we will need to continue to work together on important domestic policy areas, for example by ensuring that a vital organ donated by someone in one part of the UK can be used to treat a patient in another part of the United Kingdom.

Now those powers should rightly be devolved, not centralised – and that is the offer we have put forward on the table.

But on the other hand, some powers are clearly related to the UK as a whole and will need to continue to apply in the same way across all four nations in order to protect consumers and businesses who buy and sell across the UK, in all parts of what we might call the United Kingdom's common market. That

market is one of the fundamental expressions of the constitutional integrity that underpins our existence as a union.

The Government will protect that vital common market of the UK. And by retaining UK frameworks where necessary we will retain our ability not only to act in the national interest when we need to, but to do so with a unity of purpose that places the prosperity and security of all of our citizens, no matter where they're from or where they were born, to the fore.

For example, at present EU law means that our farmers and other food producers only need to comply with one set of package labelling and hygiene rules.

Four different sets of rules in different parts of the UK would only make it more difficult and more expensive for a cheesemaker in Monmouthshire to sell to customers in Bristol or for a cattle farmer in Aberdeenshire to sell their beef in Berwick-upon-Tweed.

Now these are everyday issues affecting how people live their life – they are issues that people in the UK expect us to get on and agree in the clear interests of families and businesses in every part of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland alike.

So that is exactly what the UK government stands ready, waiting and willing to do.

They are the steps that will ensure the United Kingdom's market continues to work as it always has done:

- to ensure that the factory in Paisley can continue to sell freely to Preston;
- that the family firm in Swansea can continue to buy supplies from Swindon;
- and customers in Londonderry can still place their order in Leeds, without any extra red tape or expense.

And I want to say one thing further. The Prime Minister has been clear throughout the negotiations with the European Union that we want to preserve the standards that protect employment and workers rights, to deliver consumer protection, and safeguard the environment.

And that means keeping these high standards across the whole of the United Kingdom, and for our part as the United Kingdom government, we are committed to working in partnership with the devolved governments to ensure those standards are universal in all four parts of our country.

Clause Eleven

Now, it is fair to say that the road to agreeing how we go forward together has not always been a smooth and straight one.

I, along with my predecessors in the Cabinet Office and the Secretaries of State for Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, have engaged closely with the devolved governments in order to understand their concerns and to respond to them.

Those concerns have been expressed clearly – and often forthrightly – throughout those conversations!

But we have continued to talk – both at political and official level – and, even more importantly, we have continued to listen.

The Prime Minister's first visit after entering Downing Street was to Edinburgh.

Two of my first phone calls upon moving across to the Cabinet Office last month were to the Deputy First Minister of Scotland and the First Minister of Wales.

I met them both in person during my first weeks in this role, in Cardiff and in Edinburgh – to underline my personal commitment to engaging constructively and striking the agreement that is in all our interests.

While they have always acknowledged that the Government has said we want to see many of the powers from Brussels go straight to the devolved governments, there has been a question throughout about what our starting point should be.

Should those powers sit at a UK-wide level while we agree the future frameworks?

Or should they sit at a devolved level while we then agree the future frameworks?

The Government has listened to the different points of view – from the Scottish and Welsh Governments, from Welsh and Scottish colleagues in both Houses of Parliament at Westminster and to views expressed in the devolved parliaments.

And just last week, we held constructive discussions in London where we put forward a considerable offer. A commitment that the vast majority of powers returning from Brussels will start off in Edinburgh, Cardiff and Belfast – and not in Whitehall.

And let me be in no doubt: this would mean a very big change to the EU Withdrawal Bill that is before Parliament and a significant step forward in these negotiations.

It would put on the face of the Bill what we have always said was our intention: wide-ranging devolution not just away from Brussels, but from

Westminster too.

And if accepted, this offer puts beyond doubt our commitment to a smooth and orderly departure from the European Union, in a way that doesn't just respect the devolution settlements, but strengthens and enhances them.

So our proposal is to amend the Bill before Parliament to make clear that while frameworks are being agreed, the presumption would now be that powers returning from the EU should sit at a devolved level.

Westminster would only be involved where, to protect the UK common market or to meet our international obligations, we needed a pause – I stress pause – to give the governments time to design and put in place a UK-wide framework.

As I have said before, we expect to be able to secure agreement with the devolved governments about what frameworks should – or should not – apply to each power.

And where powers do need to be returned to a UK-wide framework, we will maintain the ability for the UK Parliament to legislate to do so.

Just as the current provisions within the EU Withdrawal Bill on releasing powers to devolved governments are intended to be by consensus and agreement with the devolved governments themselves, so we should expect this new, inverted power to operate in the same way – by consensus and by agreement.

Nor would this proposed arrangement prevent the devolved governments from doing anything that is already within their competence.

At the same time, our proposal offers an important protection too. It would ensure that, if there were not to be an agreement – and not having an agreement on a framework would put at risk the smooth and orderly exit that we all need – the UK Parliament could protect the essential interests of businesses and consumers in every part of the Kingdom.

A deal is there to be done.

So I am clear that it is in the interests of all parts of the United Kingdom to agree a way forward that:

- fully respects the devolved settlements.
- preserves the integrity of the United Kingdom market.
- and maintains the UK's ability to secure an agreement with the European Union on our future partnership.

Our new proposal is a reflection of the seriousness of our desire to strike agreements with the devolved governments.

Our seriousness about delivering more powers to Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, while at the same time ensuring there are no new barriers for people across the nations of the United Kingdom.

So families can continue to buy and sell freely, so businesses won't face extra bureaucracy and higher costs, so people face minimal disruption to their everyday lives, and maximum certainty that things can carry on as normal, as we look ahead to the future.

So I hope that the talks that are now continuing between the UK and devolved governments will lead in coming weeks to an agreement that can be taken forward in the EU Withdrawal Bill and which we can all welcome as being to our mutual benefit.

Seizing the opportunities

And so as we look to the future, this is the balance that, working together, we can strike a strong and fair devolution settlement for our devolved partners, with powers sitting at the most appropriate level and common UK frameworks where necessary, with our constitutional integrity intact.

By making that kind of agreement, we can truly become that United Kingdom we need to be here at home – and that greater, stronger United Kingdom abroad.

For that is the task we now face. Building a global Britain that is fit for the future, equipped not only to tackle head on future global challenges, but confidently seize the new opportunities available to us as well and so when we do speak and act on the world stage we do so with one authoritative voice, which reflects and represents the interests of all four nations. A country that has the strength and flexibility needed to survive, and indeed thrive on the international stage.

And with our considerable existing strengths, I am confident this future can be a secure and prosperous one:

We are the sixth largest economy in the world, a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, the biggest European defence spender in NATO, with significant military capabilities and a proven readiness to deploy them in defence of our interests. A key player in a highly developed set of security relationships such as Five Eyes.

Our country has:

One of the best diplomatic services in the world and one of its biggest aid and development programmes.

We have world leading universities that attract the best talent from around the globe; more Nobel Laureates than any country bar the United States; a globally competitive economy, with some of the most exciting burgeoning industries such as digital and fintec; a language that is the language of the world, and, thanks to institutions like the BBC and the NHS, the greatest soft power of any nation on the planet.

But just imagine if we spoke with four conflicting voices: each would be weaker, fainter and misheard as our global competitors shouted louder with a strong, single voice, and a divided country at home would be weaker, less secure, and less prosperous overseas.

The unity that exists between our four nations gives us a scale of ambition none of the four of us could possess alone.

We need to use our collective economic clout and the experience and reach of our diplomatic network in the United Kingdom to sell Scotch whisky and engineering expertise, Welsh cheeses and mini-computers, buses and linens from Northern Ireland right around the world.

And maintaining the common market of the United Kingdom will give us the heft to lead the charge for common regulatory standards at a global level. Having the right framework in place at home means we can be at the forefront of developing the new regulatory environment we need for the exciting technologies of tomorrow.

And what we want is innovators and producers right across Scotland, Wales, England and Northern Ireland to be able to get ahead of the curve and edge ahead of their global competitors.

And it's also by sticking together that we'll be able to provide global leadership, discharging our international obligations, standing up for human rights, democratic values and the rule of law and defending the rules-based international order that is so vital to our security and our prosperity together.

Conclusion

It would be easy to loosen the bonds that connect us.

But with a strong, fair devolution settlement that ensures powers and decision-making are exerted as close to people as is practical, I believe a sense of trust can be restored between the people of the United Kingdom and those they choose to govern on their behalf.

And with common frameworks in place that maintain the integrity of our union, we can ensure that we continue to speak with that powerful voice globally.

Each of those two principles strengthens the other.

So let us seize the moment and focus on that prize that is on offer:

a union greater than the sum of its parts; a country that remains a strong, global leader; a United Kingdom at home, and an active, force for good in the world.

Thank you very much indeed.

News story: Over 300 new houses unveiled for troops and their families

The homes have been designed with families in mind. The spacious three and four bedroom homes are built around large green spaces and areas for children to play.

Defence Minister Guto Bebb had a chance to speak with families who live on the new estate to hear their experiences of living in these new homes.

Guto Bebb, Minister for Defence Procurement:

The Defence Estate is where our serving personnel live, work and train. It's not just a place to live, but a community and it is essential that our Armed Forces families can feel at home wherever they are posted.

That is why I am proud to support this new development of first class homes for those who sacrifice the most for our nation.

The completion of these homes caps off a successful period for the Army Basing Programme. Alongside this development, over £1 billion has been invested in Salisbury Plain to accommodate the 4,000 troops and their families returning from Germany by 2019. The MOD will provide over 1,300 new homes, 2,600 bed spaces for single soldiers and nearly 250 other buildings such as offices, garages, workshops and mess facilities.

The developments across Salisbury Plain area under the Army Basing Programme will provide an economic boost to the local economy while providing quality facilities for our armed forces to enable military capability.

Maj Gen Richard Wardlaw OBE, Director Basing and Infrastructure said:

This investment shows our commitment in providing modern first class accommodation for our Service personnel and their families. I hope all living on the Ashdown Estate enjoy their new homes and also benefit from the investment 'behind the wire' providing new working and training facilities.

Press release: £40 million fund to transform UK's coastal communities opens for applications

Multi-million pound funding to transform the UK's coastal communities through investment in jobs, skills and local businesses opened for bids today (26 February 2018) announced Coastal Communities Minister, Jake Berry.

500 new businesses supporting 5,500+ plus jobs have been created thanks to the government's [Coastal Communities Fund](#).

The opening of the next £40 million round of applications was announced by Coastal Communities Minister, Jake Berry, while visiting Barrow-in-Furness to see first hand how the fund has delivered major economic benefits for the Cumbrian town and wider coastal area.

Coastal Communities Minister, Jake Berry, said:

I'm delighted to announce that applications are now open for the next round of the Coastal Communities Fund.

Coastal Communities up and down the country from Barrow-in-Furness to Brighton have been boosted by this funding which has spurred inward investment, sustainable growth, new jobs and exciting economic opportunities for local businesses.

By 2020, we'll have invested nearly a quarter of a billion pounds in our seaside areas, providing thousands of jobs, training places and opportunities along the Great British Coast.

The Coastal Communities Fund (CCF) supports the economic transformation of UK coastal communities by giving funding to create sustainable economic growth and jobs.

Since 2012, the government's CCF has awarded grants to 295 projects across the UK, totalling over £174 million. Analysis shows this has been money well spent, with every £1 invested having the potential to create an up to £8 boost to our coastal economies. Successful projects have included:

- Cornwall council receiving a £1.95 million grant in 2014 to repair and re-launch the Grade II Listed Art Deco 'Jubilee Pool' in Penzance to create an all year round visitor attraction sustaining existing jobs and creating new positions (including much needed apprenticeships in an area with higher than average youth unemployment).

- In January 2015, Blackpool city council received a £2 million CCF grant towards the “Lightpool” project to deliver a radical transformation of the iconic Blackpool Illuminations, creating a compelling new visitor experience and a major boost to the local economy. The project is forecast to have increased visitor numbers by 2.6 million.
- The Tate St Ives was awarded a £3.87 million grant in 2015 to refurbish and extend the Tate Gallery in St Ives. The new facilities include a new apse gallery connecting the existing gallery to the new extension; a new suite of learning and event spaces; increased capacity for visitors in the reception, cloakrooms, café, new exhibition space, staff accommodation and training space.
- Amble – the seafood town – Northumberland. Northumberland county council was awarded a £1.8 million CCF grant in 2014 to improve the economy of Amble through infrastructure works to transform the town into a visitor destination promoting seafood, attracting new visitors and creating jobs. The project has provided two new restaurants, improved facilities incorporating a Harbour Village with retail space, and enhanced access along the shore.

Barrow-in-Furness has also benefitted from multiple rounds of coastal communities funding which has completely revolutionised business support in the coastal area from north of Millom across the Furness peninsula to Grange.

This has included:

- £900,000 in CCF round 1 (2012) being granted to Furness Enterprise Limited to create an innovation network which seamlessly connects local businesses with each other to streamline their supply chains. The funds also supported marketing of key sites, formation of 70 new start-up businesses and help to SMEs in providing training opportunities for unemployed residents to gain the skills they need to find a permanent job.
- £865,000 in CCF round 3 (2015) to Furness Enterprise Limited to accelerate regeneration in Barrow and the surrounding areas by strengthening supply chains and transforming skills as well as attracting inward investment and helping to provide specialist businesses support to local companies to up-skill and grow.
- A pilot scale internship scheme placing young people in high tech firms. This led to the OGDEN Trust agreeing to fund 60 placements from 2018 to 2020.
- Participation in the Manufacturing Forum and revolutionary proposals for a pan-Northern supply chain initiative connecting Northern businesses with manufacturers and service providers
- A new Furness Energy Forum bringing local businesses together to capitalise on energy supplier opportunities
- £444,000 in CCF round 4 (2017) to Barrow and Furness Coastal Communities Team to transform visitor facilities on Walney Island and convert an old,

derelect built into a community run visitor hub.

Prospective applicants for round 5 of the Coastal Communities Fund can access the full guidance to submitting their application on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Funding for round 5 will cover the period 2019-20 to 2020-21 with funds becoming available from April 2019.

We are also looking to fund a small number of revenue projects which are 'ready to go' and can be fast tracked. Successful fast-track projects will be announced in summer 2018 and we will expect them to be able to start quickly.

Press release: Technology is helping to transform the way the UK delivers aid abroad

Entrepreneurs will explore how to use mobile technology, such as smartphones that give access to affordable and safe energy, to help tackle humanitarian challenges around the world, the International Development Secretary announced ahead of Mobile World Congress this week.

DFID is joining forces with leading mobile technology trade body the GSMA to launch Mobile for Humanitarian Innovation, a programme bringing the mobile industry and humanitarian community together to improve how we prepare and respond to emergency situations.

Speaking ahead of the congress in Barcelona, Ms Mordaunt said:

Technology and innovation have a huge role to play in improving the lives of millions of people in the developing world.

I want to harness the UK's renowned entrepreneurial spirit and use new technology to deliver smart solutions around the world on everything from health care to natural disasters. DFID's partnership with the GSMA is an exciting joint push to use mobile technology to boost our global humanitarian efforts.

Access to mobile networks can transform the way humanitarian help is delivered through access to information, services and connection to families. The GSMA have estimated that by 2025 there will be nine billion mobile connections globally, with 75 per cent coming through on smartphones.

Mobile for Humanitarian will find new ways of helping developing countries around the world on areas including mobile money, mobile-enabled energy,

climate resilience and food security.

Director General of the GSMA Mats Granryd said:

The GSMA is pleased to further its partnership with DFID to accelerate the delivery and impact of sustainable digital humanitarian assistance.

The scale and reach of mobile networks make them uniquely placed to help meet the challenges faced by humanitarian responders and affected populations. Together with DFID, we will build bridges between the mobile industry, other private sector partners and the humanitarian community to catalyse innovation and demonstrate the impact of digital humanitarian assistance.

Five ways technology and innovation funded by UK aid are improving people's lives around the world:

1. Rural Connectivity Project in Tanzania

A total of 1.6 billion people globally do not have access to 3G connectivity. The GSMA and DFID have worked with local network operators and government to facilitate a rural roaming agreement in Africa. The pilot in Tanzania explored how to reach unconnected citizens living in rural areas. Due to this partnership, and the new towers that were built, 70,000 people in Tanzania now have access to mobile internet, bringing education, health and financial services to previously unconnected communities.

2. 3D printing emergency supplies in Nepal

With support from DFID, Field Ready, a not-for-profit organisation which uses technology and design to transform the way humanitarian aid is delivered, is trialling 3D printing of life-saving and life-improving medical and other supplies in the field – such as umbilical cord clamps, wrist braces and water pipe components – so that vital equipment can be manufactured on demand, where and when it is needed. DFID funding has allowed them to test this approach in Haiti and Nepal, and they have also expanded their work to Syria and the recent response to Hurricanes Irma and Maria in the Caribbean.

3. Mobile technology helping women access essential maternal healthcare.

Tanzania remains one of the most dangerous places in the world to give birth and to be born, according to the high maternal, infant and childhood death rates. UK aid is funding a programme forging stronger links between the mobile and healthcare industries. Healthy Pregnancy, Healthy Baby is a free text message service in Swahili for pregnant women, mothers with newborns up to 16 weeks old, as well as supporters of pregnant women and new mothers. Subscribers register for the text messaging service by indicating the woman's current week or month of pregnancy, or the age of the newborn baby. The messages cover a broad range of topics from prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV/AIDS, family planning, malaria prevention and postpartum

care. As of November last year, it has reached over 1.8 million users.

4. Mobile phones improving access to clean energy

Mobile-enabled solar technology is helping to keep families safe in Uganda. Many homes use kerosene for lighting, an unsafe and unhealthy way of using energy. The lack of clean affordable power limits development. UK aid has funded the development of a ready-pay power system which can be paid in instalments using mobile phones. The system uses solar power to charge mobile phones and power lights, radio and TV. 95 per cent of those lacking energy in their homes are covered by mobile access which means this solution helps them to unlock energy on a daily, weekly or monthly basis.

5. PayGo energy

Many households in Kenya cannot afford gas to cook because it comes in large, expensive canisters. The alternative, firewood, causes health issues from inhaling smoke. With the support of UK aid, PayGo has developed a meter that goes on top of a gas canister and, using mobile payment technology mPesa, users are supplied with a standard size canister and are able to buy small units of gas as and when they need it. The start-up business is based in Nairobi.

Notes to editors:

The GSMA represents the interests of mobile operators worldwide, uniting nearly 800 operators with more than 300 companies in the broader mobile ecosystem, including handset and device makers, software companies, equipment providers and internet companies, as well as organisations in adjacent industry sectors. The GSMA also produces industry-leading events such as Mobile World Congress, Mobile World Congress Shanghai, Mobile World Congress Americas and the Mobile 360 Series of conferences.

News story: Education Secretary celebrates students in the North-East

An inspirational pupil from the North-East has been awarded a prize for his success at school and contribution to the wider community by the Education Secretary Damian Hinds today (Monday 26 February).

An outstanding pupil who volunteers at a disability centre and helps pupils who speak English as an additional language has been awarded the Lord Glenamara Memorial Prize by Education Secretary Damian Hinds today (26 February).

Mohammed Dagher, student from Heaton Manor School in Newcastle-upon-Tyne,

received the Lord Glenamara Memorial Prize at a special event in London. He was recognised for his outstanding academic achievements and impressive voluntary work including providing one-to-one support and guidance to younger students who speak English as an additional language, producing an anti-bullying video and volunteering at a disability centre.

The annual prize – which is now in its sixth year – recognises sixth form students from the North-East who have excelled in their studies while making contributions to their school or wider community.

Academic standards are rising in England, with over 48,000 more pupils in the North-East in schools rated good or outstanding than in 2010 and 87 per cent of North-East schools given this rating at their last inspection.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

Congratulations to Mohammed and all this year's nominees. It is fantastic to see so many bright young people celebrated not only for their academic achievements but also for the work they are doing with their local community.

The Lord Glenamara Memorial Prize was created in memory of former MP for Newcastle Central, Ted Short. The winner and nine runners-up had the opportunity to tour the London School of Economics (LSE) campus, and met with the Education Secretary and Permanent Secretary of the Department for Education, Jonathan Slater.

2018 award winner Mohammed Dagher said:

To be even nominated for this highly regarded award was a blessing, but to come out as a winner is something I will be forever grateful for.

I'd like to thank my sixth form tutor and the sixth form team for having the faith in me by nominating me, and also my teachers, family and friends for keeping me motivated in order to aspire to achieve high results.

I hope to inspire younger students to contribute to their society, whilst also maintaining excellent grades. This in itself will be a great achievement for me.

Following the award, Mohammed will be undertaking a two day work experience programme at the Department for Education's offices in London.

The government has made clear its commitment to support schools and pupils in the north through the Northern Powerhouse Schools Strategy, a £70 million fund to improve education.

Notes to editors:

The runners-up in alphabetical order:

1. Mohammed Baroudi, John Spence Community High School
2. Emily Brown, Conyers School
3. Kate Cowan, Carmel College
4. Niamh Hughes, St Thomas More Roman Catholic Academy
5. Devika Jayan, St Anthony's Girls' Catholic Academy
6. Sarah Knight, St Anthony's Girls' Catholic Academy
7. Emily McKerill, St Wilfrid's R.C. College
8. Emmet O'Leary, St Robert of Newminster Catholic School and Sixth Form College
9. Ellie Rylance, Grindon Hall Christian School

About the Lord Glenamara Prize

The prize is open to school pupils in years 11 and 12 across the North East of England who have shown:

- strong academic performance across a range of subjects; and
- a civic contribution, particularly volunteering personal time for activities such as:
 - mentoring younger pupils
 - helping with extracurricular events
 - working with a youth group or a charity outside school hours
 - an interest in government, education, history or public service.