

# UK and Lithuania commit to closer collaboration to tackle malign regimes

## News story

The governments of the UK and Lithuania have signed a Joint Declaration in London on 100 years of bilateral relations.



- Foreign Secretary Liz Truss and Lithuanian Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis sign Joint Declaration to boost defence and security collaboration
- as NATO members, the UK and Lithuania vow to continue to work together in condemnation of Russia's illegal invasion and in support of Ukraine
- meeting in London comes on 100th anniversary of bilateral relations.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss and her Lithuanian counterpart Gabrielius Landsbergis today (23 May) agreed to greater security and economic cooperation between their 2 countries – in the face of growing aggression from malign regimes.

Their signing of a Joint Declaration marks 100 years of bilateral relations between the two nations and helps further the UK's global network of liberty.

The Declaration will build on the current defence cooperation the countries share as NATO allies and will increase resistance to threats, including from Russia and China.

The Foreign Secretary highlighted Lithuania in a landmark speech at Mansion House last month as a country which China had tried to bully economically. Today she praised Lithuania for standing up to this coercion.

Lithuania is also a front-line state in the fight against Putin's appalling barbarism in Ukraine.

Speaking at the signing of the Joint Declaration, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

The UK and Lithuania are two countries which believe in freedom and sovereignty, and who stand up to authoritarian regimes in Europe and across the world. We stand together with Ukraine in the face of Russia's illegal, barbaric war.

I have immense admiration and respect for Lithuania and I am delighted that today we are deepening our defence and security relationship, and forging greater opportunities for trade and investment through this Joint Declaration.

Both the UK and Lithuania have shown huge support for their Ukrainian ally in its brave fight for freedom.

The [UK has inflicted tough and far-reaching sanctions on Russia](#). This, coupled with Lithuania's decision to cut off all Russian oil and gas, are helping to cripple Putin's war machine.

The Declaration signed today also seeks to build closer trade opportunities, counter organised crime, tackle climate change and promote people-to-people links between the UK and Lithuania.

Published 23 May 2022

---

## [English 'fundamental' to pupils' educational success](#)

News story

Ofsted has published the latest in a series of reviews into different subjects across the curriculum. Today's review looks at English.



This review explores a wide and diverse range of research relating to English, to identify factors that can contribute to high-quality curriculums,

pedagogy, assessment and schools' systems for managing the subject. Ofsted's education inspection framework (EIF) and the research underpinning it are the lenses through which we have considered, framed and presented the research literature.

English is a complex subject that combines the disciplines of English language and literature. Studying English is vital to understanding the rest of the curriculum, as well as for educational success beyond school. But more than this, English allows pupils to explore the power and beauty of literature and language.

Today's review highlights teaching approaches that could raise the attainment of pupils in English, starting from early years education. A core theme of the review is the importance of progression in reading. It notes that reading a broad range of increasingly complex and whole texts gradually increases pupils' 'readiness' for the ambitious literature that is the end point of the national curriculum.

The review discusses how curriculum content and sequencing, as well as subject-specific pedagogy, best enable pupils to achieve the national curriculum aims for English. It identifies themes that contribute to an effective education in English, including:

- strong foundational knowledge for reading, writing and spoken language as essential aspects of the early years curriculum
- developing vocabulary is fundamental to pupils' progress and narrows the word gap between pupils who are word-rich and word-poor
- an effective reading curriculum ensures that pupils read large amounts of text and focuses on providing pupils with the knowledge they need for comprehension
- a reading curriculum incorporating carefully chosen texts of increasing challenge
- the English curriculum for novices, who are likely to learn more effectively through direct instruction, is structured differently in many aspects from the curriculum for experts

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman said:

More than any other subject, English – and especially reading – is fundamental to pupils' educational success. But English is so much more than the gateway to success in other subjects. Through studying literature, pupils' eyes are opened to the human experience; they explore meaning and ambiguity as well as the beauty and power of language.

We hope that this review helps teachers and school leaders raise the quality of education in English and inspire a love of literature and language in all young people.

---

# Call for evidence: An inspection of the immigration system as it relates to the agricultural sector

## News story

The Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration invites anyone with knowledge and experience of the interaction between the UK immigration system and the agricultural sector to submit evidence to inform an inspection in this area.



The Independent Chief Inspector is interested in assessing the extent to which the Home Office's immigration functions support the agricultural sector. To that end, it is expected that this inspection will adopt a broad perspective on the interaction between the UK's immigration system and the agricultural sector, examining such areas as:

- the efficiency and effectiveness of the [Seasonal Agricultural Worker Pilot](#)
- the extent and quality of communication and engagement between the Home Office and the agricultural sector
- the current suitability of the Home Office's licencing system for visa sponsorship
- the effectiveness of the Home Office's compliance requirements on sponsors, including how these safeguard employees from exploitation

This call for evidence will remain open until 20 June 2022.

The Independent Chief Inspector would be pleased to hear both what is working well and what could be improved. Information received in response to this call for evidence will play an important part in defining the scope and focus of the inspection. Submissions touching on any and all areas of interest to the sector, including those that may not be mentioned above, are therefore welcome.

The information you submit may be quoted in the final inspection report, but it is the ICIBI's practice not to name sources and to anonymise as much as possible any examples or case studies.

#### Data Protection

In accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) we need your permission to process and retain the information you submit. By clicking [here](#) a consent statement will automatically be added to your email.

Alternatively, or if you are using a non-compatible email client, then please send your submission to [agriculture@icibi.gov.uk](mailto:agriculture@icibi.gov.uk), with 'Agricultural sector call for evidence' in the subject line and the following consent statement in the body of your email: "I consent to the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration retaining and processing the information and data in this email."

Published 23 May 2022

---

## [Influencers invited into National Highways control rooms as part of new safety campaign](#)

Sarah Alexander, who uses a wheelchair, and Deaf YouTubers and best friends Jazzy Whipps and Benny Ngo were given an insight into how National Highways keep the roads network moving and about driving on motorways.

They were invited to the National Traffic Operations Centre and West Midlands Regional Control Centres which are both in Birmingham.

During the visit they discovered how staff deal with calls from motorists and the systems in place to make it easier for disabled drivers to get in touch such as being able to text National Highways if unable to use roadside telephones. Also the interpreting service SignLive for British Sign Language users.

The group watched traffic officers monitoring the network, working with police partners and dealing with ongoing incidents. Traffic officer Nigel Lea also demonstrated some of the kit carried in his vehicle and talked about dealing with incidents on motorways including stranded motorists.

The influencers are sharing useful information from the day with their many followers. The visit was part of the National Highways campaign, Driving on Motorways, which aims to ensure drivers know how motorways work and what to

do in the event of a breakdown.

National Highways Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager Julian Horsler said:

We are committed to ensuring that disabled drivers can travel safely on our roads and are very grateful to Sarah, Jazzy and Benny for taking the time to visit us and for sharing important information with their followers.

We want to make sure all drivers feel safe on our roads and know what to do if something goes wrong. Therefore it is important that we reach out to all groups of road users and use every platform available to us to do so.

Benny, Sarah and Jazzy at the National Traffic Operations Centre

After the visit, Sarah posted:

I visited National Highways in Birmingham to learn all about their #DrivingOnMotorways campaign, and as someone that loves to drive I was super excited to go behind the scenes and find out what they do at their operations centres.

Not only do they monitor the motorways in England but they are on hand 24/7 to answer calls to help you plan your journey, inform you of any traffic delays, let you know if there are roadworks, and more. You can also call them if you need assistance, if there's debris on the road or if you need to inform them about an issue on the motorway.

National Highways are taking advice and listening to disabled drivers, with 1.9 million drivers having a medical condition registered with the DVLA. They're working on various support tools to help us when we need assistance so if you have any ideas get in touch!

Road safety is incredibly important and the #DrivingOnMotorways hub has so much info on keeping you and everyone else safe on the road, so check that out here! I learnt so much, and had a really fun and informative day.

Benny and Jazzy also shared videos and advice from the visit which they described as a 'good day learning about lots of things to keep us safe on the road.'

Jazzy commented:

I don't have to be stressed when having a breakdown as National Highways provides accessibility for deaf people now.

As part of the Driving on Motorways campaign, TV presenters Suzi Perry and Ortis Deley have produced practical videos and clips about using motorways.

Footage shows the pair driving on sections of smart motorway, discussing the differences from conventional motorways and explaining how technology is used to keep traffic moving and motorists as safe as possible.

The clips will be posted on the Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn channels of National Highways and advice displayed at motorway services as part of the campaign which runs until the end of the month.

But the video can be viewed any time on the [Driving on Motorways](#) section of the National Highways website which also offers useful advice and information.

That includes what to do in the event of a breakdown which is to 'go left'. Drivers should leave at the next junction or service area if possible but if not, move left onto the hard shoulder or nearest emergency area.

Everyone should get out of the vehicle if possible and it is safe to do so via the passenger door. They should then get over the safety barrier on to the verge and keep clear of the vehicle and moving traffic.

If the vehicle stops unexpectedly and it isn't safe to get out, keep seatbelts and hazard lights on and call 999 immediately.

Many breakdowns can be avoided by carrying out basic vehicle checks before setting off and ensuring that the vehicle has enough fuel for the journey.

## **General enquiries**

Members of the public should contact the National Highways customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

## **Media enquiries**

Journalists should contact the National Highways press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

---

# **[Public urged to help bees, butterflies](#)**

## and other pollinators

The public are being encouraged to count bees, butterflies and other pollinators as part of the latest drive to protect and increase these vital species launched today (Monday 23 May).

The free [‘FIT Count’](#) phone app – supported by Defra – will help track pollinator numbers and movements, providing crucial data that can be used to support pollinators in our natural environment. It could reveal previously unknown colonies of pollinators, where numbers are diminishing, or how populations are shifting in response to climate change.

It is part of a survey being co-ordinated by the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology. Their Flower-Insect Timed Count (FIT Count) survey asks people to spend 10 minutes a day collecting data on the number of insects that visit particular patches of flowers, including dandelion, buttercup and lavender.

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow made the call to action at this year’s Chelsea Flower Show, alongside the launch of the government’s new Pollinator Action Plan (PAP), which sets out how government, beekeepers, conservation groups, farmers, researches, industry and the public can work together to help pollinators in England thrive. This will build on the progress of our world-leading Pollinator Monitoring Scheme (PoMS) established through the National Pollinator Strategy launched in 2014.

Pollinators are an essential part of our environment and play a crucial role in food production – they contribute the equivalent of more than £500 million a year to UK agriculture and food production, by improving crop quality and quantity – and are also vital to our wider, natural ecosystems.

Today’s announcement is part of the government’s drive to improve nature recovery and reverse declines in species, such as pollinators. The Pollinator Action Plan will support this, and support the delivery of the commitments in the Environment Act 2021, which requires legally-binding targets to be set to halt the decline in species abundance by 2030.

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow said:

We all want to see an abundance of butterflies and bees in our gardens, parks and countryside. We are encouraging people to give just 10 minutes of their time to count the pollinating insects they see using this app to help us track their numbers and movements, and support our efforts to reverse the decline of these vital species.

I am very excited to be launching the latest Pollinator Action Plan at this year’s Chelsea Flower Show, where the essential role of bees and pollinators are rightfully taking centre stage. It sets out a range of actions over the next few years to support these species, and is part of our wider drive to improve nature recovery



and increase biodiversity through our world-leading Environment Act, and through a range of our new farming policies too, where restoring nature will complement food production.

The Pollinator Action Plan will focus a number of key areas, including:

- strengthening the evidence base to improve our understanding of trends and impacts on pollination;
- managing our land more effectively to encourage better connected habitat and recovered species;
- sustaining pollinator health of managed and wild populations' by supporting beekeepers and bee farmers, ensuring there is surveillance of diseases and invasive species, as well as research and advice; and
- engaging the public through Bees' Needs events, alongside celebrating successes and promoting a wide range of training.

Dr Claire Carvell, UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology (UKCEH), said:

FIT Counts are a great way for people to connect with nature. We would like to thank the hundreds of volunteers who have submitted more than 8,000 counts to the UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme so far.

This data is helping us build a unique picture of the changing patterns of pollinator visits to flowers across the gardens and countryside of the UK.

Dr Chris Hartfield, Senior Regulatory Affairs Adviser, NFU Plant Health Unit, said:

The NFU has been involved with the National Pollinator Strategy since its inception and the strength of the strategy has always been how it has followed the science and evidence, and as part of this approach has established the world-leading pollinator monitoring scheme 'PoMS'.

We look forward to continuing to help steer the work under the new Pollinator Action Plan.

Five simple actions everyone can take to help pollinators and make sure their populations are sustained include:

- Grow more flowers, shrubs and trees
- Let your garden grow wild
- Cut your grass less often
- Don't disturb insect nest and hibernation spots
- Think carefully about whether to use pesticides