

# News story: Universities Minister calls for stronger oversight of senior pay

More robust leadership is needed to address senior pay, the Universities Minister Jo Johnson told representatives from the country's leading higher education institutions at a meeting today (Wednesday 13 November).

The Minister called on universities to deliver greater transparency and independence of remuneration committees, stricter oversight of severance pay, and the publication of the pay ratio of top to median salaries of all staff.

Minister Johnson addressed representatives from Universities UK, the Russell Group and the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) about the need for stronger public accountability, ensuring public confidence in the way universities are run. He also set out that university governance arrangements must be up-to-date and fit for purpose. The Minister welcomed UUK, CUC and Russell Group's willingness to work together to tackle this issue at pace.

Universities Minister Jo Johnson said:

It is vital that pay arrangements command public confidence and deliver value for money for students and taxpayers.

We need to see restraint that ends the upwards ratchet in pay and the use of benchmarks that are appropriate for a system in receipt of significant public funding.

The new Office for Students (OfS) will use its powers to ensure full transparency and accountability with respect to senior pay.

In January, the CUC will be publishing a new and robust Fair Remuneration Code, which Minister Johnson called for at the [Universities UK conference](#) in September 2017.

The Minister expects the following requirements to be included:

- The procedure for developing senior staff remuneration should be fully transparent.
- Vice Chancellors must not be a member of the remuneration committee that decides their own pay.
- Remuneration committees should be constituted of members who are independent of the provider.
- All providers should publish a clear and accurate pay ratio i.e. top (vice chancellor or equivalent) to median of all staff (including Academic staff, Professional Services staff and Professors).
- There should be full disclosure of all senior staff benefits, including

subsidised housing, expenses and any other non-taxable benefit.

The Minister believes that universities should start adhering to these principles of fair remuneration immediately.

From next year the new regulator, the OfS, will go further to ensure transparency and accountability from our universities, with justifications required for exceptional levels of pay above £150,000.

The Minister will be asking the OfS to write to all higher education providers to remind them of their responsibilities regarding good governance and public accountability.

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## [How DVLA helps to connect people to nature](#)



With the changing of the seasons, our natural environment outside our offices here in Swansea can look particularly striking. So it's a good time to take stock of what we do in DVLA to look after our local environment and reduce our impact on it.

### **Why we look after our environment**

This is really important to us in DVLA, and it's something we've been actively doing for a number of years. We're also bound by both legal and governmental commitments to reduce our environmental impacts and enhance the flora and fauna which exist on our estate.

These commitments are set out in our [Strategic Plan](#), [Sustainability Report](#)

and our [Biodiversity Action Plan](#). I'm head of DVLA's Sustainability Team and we're the team responsible for ensuring the commitments are carried out. It's not just a job to us though, it's a passion that goes beyond just meeting these obligations. We also want to encourage other staff to share in the joy we find in nature and educate them in the importance and value of the natural world.

Our three sites are in residential and industrial locations and are relatively small (around 40 acres in all, or roughly 40 football pitches). Within these sites we have dedicated conservation areas, ponds, grassed areas and verges that we leave untouched, as well as protected ancient hedgerows. All of these are supporting an increasing number of wildlife and plant species, including otters, bats and small blue butterflies. Last year, we counted at least 12 species that are listed in [Section 7 \(Priority Species List\)](#) of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.



### **Zero cost, maximum benefit**

This has cost us nothing to do, has had no negative impact on the effective running of the estate and is bringing pleasure and increased knowledge to many of our staff. To help us with this work we've found many experts already working in DVLA who have enthusiastically shared their knowledge and expertise.

We have a chairperson of the local ornithological society, who has undertaken bird surveys and led bird walks around the estate in their own time. We also have conservation experts who help us monitor and analyse wildlife, and advise us on how we can develop our estate's biodiversity. There's even an avid forager who has shown us how to find food in the unlikeliest of places (including rough patches of ground!)



### **The best bits...**

To me, the most wonderful thing I've seen from our work in encouraging nature to flourish is the joy that everyone gets from it. Colleagues send us lovely photos of the birds and wild flowers they've spotted on site. They also tell me how their lunchtime walks around the sites, looking at the natural environment we're helping to prosper, let them take a break from the pressures of work and recharge their batteries. This just shows the difference connecting with nature can make to us every day.

Here at DVLA we're extremely lucky to live and work in a beautiful part of the world, and we're making the most of our little bit of that. We're doing our bit to help people connect to nature, and I'd like to pass on the [United Nations environmental challenge](#) to us all: in this busy world, why not find a way to experience nature, breathe it in, and remember that by keeping our planet healthy, we keep ourselves healthy too.

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## **[Speech: MC11 Commonwealth Reception speech by the Secretary of State for International Trade](#)**

Good evening.

It is a real pleasure to see so many of my ministerial colleagues and Heads

of Delegation here tonight, hailing from all corners of the Commonwealth.

As I am sure you're all aware, London has the honour of hosting next year's Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

It will be the largest Heads of Government meeting that the United Kingdom has ever hosted – a gathering of 52 Heads of State and leaders of Government who collectively represent a large proportion of the world's population.

It is, of course, a gathering like no other.

The Commonwealth is a truly global organisation, encompassing states and citizens from every corner of the earth.

Yet unlike other multinational organisations brought together through practicality, the Commonwealth States share bonds of history, culture, family, and in some cases language.

The shared values and beliefs that these ties engender form the basis of relations that can often seem as social as they are diplomatic.

Although, England's recent performance against Australia in the Ashes may test this last point somewhat.

The upshot is a vast amount of goodwill, a willingness to see our Commonwealth cousins succeed, and a genuine desire to work together to face the challenges of the future.

And of course, as we meet at the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference, we can all acknowledge that trade, and protecting the commercial freedoms that we have all enjoyed, is among the greatest of those challenges.

Indeed, our own Prime Minister, Theresa May, has identified trade liberalisation as one of her top priorities for next year's summit.

Accompanying the leaders who will assemble in London will be thousands of businesses from all over the Commonwealth.

They will come to build networks, forge partnerships, and expand their operations to partners across the Commonwealth.

Intra-Commonwealth trade is currently estimated at \$687 billion, an impressive figure. But the United Kingdom believes that there remains a vast amount of untapped commercial potential between our nations. Clearly, these businesses agree.

The Heads of Government meeting is our chance to redefine the trading relationship of the Commonwealth. For all our current successes, the Commonwealth is an underutilised economic resource. I have already touched on the particularly close relationship that our nations enjoy.

Such familiarity can clearly be the foundation of closer economic partnerships, as existing networks of friendship and family form the basis of

new commercial opportunities.

And, as the United Kingdom negotiates its exit from the European Union, we have the opportunity to re-invigorate our Commonwealth partnerships, and usher in a new era where expertise, talent, goods, and capital can move unhindered between our nations in a way that they have not for a generation or more.

Too many commentators, some in Britain and some beyond, have an extremely negative view of Brexit, unable to see renewed opportunities including those that the UK can bring as an independent member of the World Trade Organization.

To those who take the gloomy view let me say this, Brexit is not a time bomb to be diffused but the opportunity for a bold and confident future mandated by the British public in a referendum. We should see it as a blueprint for an optimistic and outward looking future.

When our Prime Minister outlines her vision of Global Britain it doesn't mean that we will be ignoring our European partners but rather we will be giving renewed attention to the opportunities we share with friends and allies alike beyond the boundaries of Europe.

For example there are those who claim that London may lose its pre-eminence as the world's premier financial centre. I believe nothing could be further from the truth. The depth of professional infrastructure in financial services that London possesses cannot be easily replicated elsewhere nor can its regulatory system or international reputation.

Working alongside the UK, I believe that the Commonwealth has the potential, and the responsibility, to take a leading role in the defence of global commercial freedoms.

In an era when free trade is increasingly threatened by the siren call of protectionism, we have the opportunity to lead by example and reject insularity in favour of economic openness and cooperation.

I firmly believe that the strength of the Commonwealth lies in its diversity. Our members range from some of the largest and most populous countries on earth, to the smallest. Such variety presents disparate challenges, but also a wide range of experience.

Likewise, the different levels of economic development of our members should not be seen as detrimental. Instead, it is an opportunity for development – a chance to bring on our fellow members as new trading partners, and unleash their economic potential.

The UK believes that free and open trade is the greatest catalyst for poverty elimination and lasting economic development. That's why the UK has been a proud supporter of the WTO's work to support less developed countries to help their own businesses seize the economic opportunities that global trade brings.

Here at MC11, I was delighted to announce £18 million from the UK for WTO programmes to help less developed countries produce products fit for export and access untapped new markets which have the potential to create thousands of jobs and transform developing economies.

Development in the modern era must be about developing economic and commercial capacity – nurturing new industries in less developed countries in order to spread stability, prosperity and opportunity.

The Commonwealth of Nations, with all of our rich experience and expertise, can lead the world in developing this new approach. Development will no longer be about givers and receivers, but a partnership of equals, working together to realise our economic potential.

It is the United Kingdom's ambition to become the leading global champion of free trade, using our economic and diplomatic influence to defend commercial freedoms. As we gather at MC11, we acknowledge that the first line of defence is the rules-based international trading system embodied by the WTO.

This was, of course, reiterated by the Statement on the multilateral trading system issued by Malta on behalf of the Commonwealth, where we reiterated our collective commitment to the WTO and its aims, and expressed our determination to work with all states to promote and defend the multilateral trading system.

Drafting this statement is just one aspect of the leadership that Malta have shown since hosting the last Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 2015, and I would like to pay tribute to all the work that the Maltese have done on behalf of the Commonwealth of Nations. For the United Kingdom, it is clear that our own ambitions cannot be realised without the support of our Commonwealth partners.

In areas like E-commerce we have the opportunity to work together here in Buenos Aires and in the future. As I said in our national statement this morning; E-commerce and digital trade offer enormous opportunities for countries large and small, developed and developing – an empowering tool for women and SMEs in particular.

The Commonwealth's common values and unshakable bonds will be an invaluable asset, as we prove to the world that trade promotes unity more than it sows division.

Next year's Heads of Government meeting in London is our chance to showcase the Commonwealth's ability to lead the response to global economic challenges, influencing global trade policy and setting an ambitious pace for the delivery of multilateral agreements.

Above all, we can show that, although we may be an organisation founded upon history, we have the dynamism, and the influence, to shape a global economic future.

Thank you.

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## Press release: Secretary Of State Appoints Ofcom Chair

Lord Terence Burns has been appointed by the Secretary of State as the new Chair of the Ofcom Board, for four years from 1 January 2018.

The term of the outgoing chair, Dame Patricia Hodgson, ends on 31 December 2017.

Culture Secretary Karen Bradley said:

I would like to thank Dame Patricia Hodgson for her many years of service and welcome Lord Burns as the new Ofcom Chair. The UK has a thriving telecommunications industry and a dynamic media landscape, and Lord Burns' roles at Channel 4 and in government means he brings with him a wealth of expertise and experience to this vital role.

Lord Burns said:

I am very pleased to have the opportunity to take on this role at an important time for Ofcom. The UK communications sector provides essential services to everyone in the UK and is critical to the future success of the economy.

Lord Burns is Senior Adviser to Banco Santander and a non-executive member of the Office for Budget Responsibility. He is also a member of the House of Lords Economic Affairs Select Committee and Chairman of the Lord Speaker's Committee on the Size of the House.

He was Chief Economic Advisor to the Treasury and Head of the Government Economic Service from 1980 to 1991 and Permanent Secretary to the Treasury from 1991 until 1998.

Previous appointments include Chairman of Santander UK plc, Channel 4 Television Corporation; Marks and Spencer plc, Welsh Water, the National Lottery Commission and The Royal Academy of Music.

From 2004 to 2006 he was Independent Adviser to the Secretary of State on the BBC Charter Review.

### **Notes to Editors**

- This appointment has been made in accordance with the Cabinet Office's



Governance Code on Public Appointments

- The Chair of Ofcom is appointed by the Secretary of State. Remuneration for this role is £120,000 for up to three days a week. The term of appointments will last for four years
  - In accordance with the Governance Code on Public Appointments, any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years must be declared. This is defined as including holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation, or candidature for election. Lord Burns has declared no such political activity
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## [Press release: Highways England calling on public to help shape new M42 junction](#)

Highways England plans to improve traffic flows at an important junction for the millions of people that travel to Birmingham International Airport every year and also surrounding venues such as the National Exhibition Centre.

The project, due to start in 2020, will see the creation of a new 2.4km dual carriageway link road – aligned to the west of Bickenhill – between the A45 Clock Interchange and a new junction on the M42 south of junction 6 located north of Solihull Road.

We are inviting everyone to have their say on the details at a public consultation running from 9 January 2018 until 19 February 2018 on the preferred route for M42 junction 6.

Highways England senior project manager, Jonathan Pizzey, said

We want to make sure that local people and other stakeholders have a say in the project.

We'll be taking all comments into consideration as we complete the design, prior to making a planning application later in 2018. All comments will be considered, and we will provide a report identifying how they have influenced the design.

As part of the scheme there are also plans to improve traffic flow at the M42 junction 6 roundabout – a well-known bottleneck – by providing dedicated left turn links between the M42 and A45 at the NEC and the north east side of the roundabout. This will benefit motorists by reducing congestion and improving journey times around the junction, as well as access to and from the motorway.

We will continue to work closely with all stakeholders through the detailed design and statutory process to ensure their views and ideas are incorporated into the design where appropriate.

Construction is expected to start in 2020 and completion is due in 2023; subject to DC0 approval in 2019.

Location	Date	Time
The Arden Hotel: Coventry Road, Bickenhill, B92 0EH	Tuesday 9 January 2018	1pm to 8pm
St Peter's Church Hall: Church Lane, Bickenhill, B92 0DN	Thursday 11 January 2018	12pm to 8pm
Catherine de Barnes Village Hall: Hampton Lane, B91 2TJ	Saturday 13 January 2018	10am to 4pm
Marston Green Parish Hall: 38 Elmdon Road, Marston Green, B37 7BT	Wednesday 17 January 2018	12pm to 8pm
Fentham Hall: Marsh Lane, Hampton-in-Arden, B92 0AH	Friday 19 January 2018	12pm to 8pm
Warwickshire Gaelic Athletic Association: The Clubhouse, Catherine de Barnes Lane, Bickenhill, B92 0DB	Saturday 27 January 2018	10am to 4pm
The Core: Touchwood, Homer Road, Solihull, B91 3RG	Wednesday 31 January 2018	10am to 5:45pm (A selection of presentation boards will remain at The Core until 19 February 2018)

For a copy of the preferred route announcement leaflet and more information about the scheme, visit the [M42 junction 6 Improvement](#) website.

Members of the public can also contact the project team by emailing [m42junction6@highwaysengland.co.uk](mailto:m42junction6@highwaysengland.co.uk) or by calling Highways England Customer Contact Centre on 0300 123 5000.