

## [News story: Welcome, Eileen Milner, ESFA's new Chief Executive](#)

I am absolutely delighted to be taking up my new role. Our remit is extensive. There are, of course, challenges and opportunities for employers, schools, training providers and academies. We are not just a funding agency – our portfolio is also about supporting citizens, schools and businesses to make informed choices about apprenticeships, skills, learning, work and careers. If we can harness the power and capability of the sector, working with our partners, we can continue to make an impact on boosting economic growth while creating opportunities for social mobility.

We stand at a crucial moment in time. Seven months into the apprenticeship levy, which has brought about much change, the sector has quickly adapted. However, I am aware there are challenges. I am keen to work with the sector as a priority to ensure continued delivery and support as we implement the apprenticeship and devolution reform requirements ahead.

There is more work to be done on understanding the needs of our providers and employers, so they understand the investment opportunities the apprenticeship levy brings and more work to be done towards the national funding formula implementation for schools. All this encompassed by the need for a relentless focus on value for money for the taxpayer.

I have already been impressed at the work, achievements and commitments of the sector, including the ambition and pride in what continues to be delivered on a daily basis. I very much look forward to meeting and working with you all in the future.

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## [Press release: Record boost to R&D and new transport fund to help build economy fit for the future](#)

As part of the Industrial Strategy's aim to improve productivity and create better and higher-paying jobs across the UK, the government will:

- Work with industry to boost spending on R&D to 2.4 per cent of GDP by 2027, which could increase public and private R&D investment by as much as £80 billion over the next 10 years. We will start by making an extra investment of £2.3 billion in 2021/22, raising total public investment in R&D to £12.5 billion that year alone.

- Launch a £1.7 billion Transforming Cities Fund that will improve transport links and promote local growth within city regions, placing cities at the heart of our industrial strategy. This includes £250 million for better transport in the West Midlands.

The Prime Minister will visit the West Midlands today with the Chancellor and Business Secretary beginning a week in which the government will set out its plan for a stronger economy and fairer society.

Writing in The Times today, the Prime Minister said:

“One of my first actions as Prime Minister was to begin the development of a modern industrial strategy that will help businesses to create high-quality, well paid jobs right across the country.

“This is a new long-term approach to shaping a stronger and fairer economy for decades to come.

“It helps young people to develop the skills they need to take up the high-paid, high-skilled jobs of the future.

“Our Industrial Strategy will propel Britain to global leadership of the industries of the future, seizing the big opportunities of our time – from Artificial Intelligence and Big Data to clean energy and self-driving vehicles.”

This investment will see public R&D spending increase as a share of GDP for each of the next five years and bring investment to levels last seen in the 1980s. It builds on the commitment made last year to raise R&D spending from £9bn in 2015/16 to £12bn in 2020/21.

Next Monday the launch of the Industrial Strategy White Paper will announce four Grand Challenges that reflect global trends that will shape our future and industries where the UK has an edge, these are artificial intelligence and the data economy; clean growth; healthy ageing; and the future of mobility.

The government will work with business, academia and civil society to build on UK strengths in these areas and ensure Britain’s economy is fit for the future. The Business Secretary will set out more detail on these Grand Challenges next week.

The Business Secretary, Greg Clark said:

“Through our Industrial Strategy we are committed to building a knowledge and innovation-led economy and this increase in R&D investment, to 2.4 per cent of GDP, is a landmark moment for the country.

“The UK is a world leader in science and innovation. By delivering this significant increase as part of our Industrial Strategy, we are building on our strengths and working with business to ensure that UK scientists and researchers continue to push the boundaries of innovation.

“We want the UK to attract, and create, the best and brightest talents, from Nobel Prize winners to ambitious graduate students, and this game-changing investment will ensure we are the home of the industries of the future and high-quality, good jobs.”

The Transforming Cities Fund will address weaknesses in city transport systems in order to raise productivity and spread prosperity. It will fund new local transport links, making it easier to travel between often more prosperous city centres and frequently struggling suburbs.

This will help make sure people across the country have better options to combine different modes of transport – supporting projects which will improve connectivity, reduce congestion and introduce new mobility services and technology.

The Secretary of State for Transport, Chris Grayling said:

“Investment in transport is crucial to a strong and resilient economy. The Transforming Cities Fund will drive productivity and growth in cities where this is most needed, connecting communities and making it quicker and easier for people to get around.

“We have already seen the impact of better integrated transport links for both passengers and the local economy in cities like Nottingham and Manchester. This new fund will enable more English cities to reap these benefits, helping to deliver the opportunities and ambition of the Industrial Strategy across the country, as well as driving forward the Northern Powerhouse and Midlands Engine.”

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## **Speech: “We will not cease in our efforts to stop the use of chemical weapons”**

Thank you Mr President.

Last month I was disappointed that a simple technical rollover of the JIM mandate was blocked by Russia. Yesterday I was deeply disappointed that, even after extensive efforts to reach an agreement, a further reasonable attempt to renew the mandate was again vetoed by Russia. That veto seriously damaged my hope that those using chemical weapons in Syria would be identified and held to account.

But now I am frankly astounded that Russia has rebuffed Japan’s perfectly sensible proposal to ask the Secretary General and the Director General of the OPCW to consider the structure and methodology of the JIM. This third

veto in a month clearly exposes, if it wasn't already obvious, Russia's determination to protect their Syrian ally, whatever the harm that causes to the ban on the use of chemical weapons, to the wider international system of rules, to Russia's own reputation.

This council set up the JIM unanimously, as the most appropriate mechanism to investigate allegations of chemical weapons use in Syria. And since its inception it has had many successes. Its experienced and expert staff have demonstrated complete impartiality. Its investigations have been professional, thorough, rigorous. It has concluded that the Syrian regime is responsible for blatant, repeated use of chemical weapons against its own people, in an increasingly reckless and deadly manner. It has also found that Daesh is responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria. The failure to renew the JIM is a failure to uncover the truth behind the conduct of all actors who use chemical weapons in Syria.

As I said yesterday, those of us who are committed to upholding the international system will not cease in our efforts to stop the use of chemical weapons, and to identify and hold to account those who use these vile weapons. We will keep going. Not only to bring justice to those who have suffered from the use of these despicable weapons but also to deter those who might think of doing so in future.

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## **Press release: UK stands by Caribbean and Overseas Territories**

On her first overseas visit International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt has reaffirmed that the UK stands by those Overseas Territories and independent Commonwealth Caribbean countries devastated by the recent hurricanes and seen how British aid is helping to rebuild people's lives.

The International Development Secretary accompanied His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales during a visit to the British Virgin Islands and Dominica, where she thanked British humanitarian heroes and the military for working tirelessly on the relief efforts on the worst-hit islands. She also visited Antigua and Barbuda.

The Secretary of State set out a new £15 million package for Dominica (£12m) and Antigua and Barbuda (£3m) to help recovery and long-term reconstruction on the islands. This is in addition to a further £15m recently allocated to the affected Overseas Territories.

Speaking during the visit, Ms Mordaunt, said:

We can be proud that in their time of crisis the UK stepped up to

provide the vital immediate relief that was fundamental in getting these islands back on their feet.

The UK aid mission was huge, covering small islands stretching more than 1,000 miles apart, where buildings, airports and infrastructure had been razed to the ground. I want to pay tribute to the governments of the Overseas Territories, our humanitarian staff and to the military effort, which has been absolutely essential in delivering relief.

Now as we move on from the immediate response phase, on to the long-term future of the islands, Britain will continue to stand by people whose lives were devastated. We are also talking to the international private sector who can support the reconstruction efforts to make sure the islands can build back, and better.

The support package, which brings the total UK contribution to £92m, will include £10m to help Dominica to rebuild critical infrastructure damaged during the hurricanes. In Dominica 97% of the water system was destroyed. This is one example of where UK funding could help rebuild so Dominica is better able to withstand future natural disasters.

The UK contribution to Dominica also includes an additional £2m for early recovery, building on the £5m committed in September, which will support:

- Repairs to homes and roofs, through the International Organization for Migration, to provide hundreds of households with urgent shelter;
- Debris clearance through the UN Development Programme and the National Employment Programme to help establish healthy and safe living conditions in communities, to enable agricultural land to be put to use once again, and to support restoration of economic activity and livelihoods;
- Cash assistance through the World Food Programme, helping those worst affected to meet their needs flexibly and to revitalise the local economy.

For Antigua and Barbuda, the UK stands ready to assist with a £3m fund which will be deployed once the priorities for reconstruction on Barbuda are agreed with the local government.

For the Overseas Territories of Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands and Turks and Caicos, the £15m being announced today is delivering accelerated power reconnection and support to prisons, repairs to air and sea ports and support for policing. This is short-term funding to aid the territories' early steps to recovery.

The UK Government continues to work with the governments of the Overseas Territories as they develop their longer-term recovery plans.

At the World Bank meetings last month the UK announced a private sector task force will mobilise business to play a prominent role in the reconstruction in the Overseas Territories. The task force will identify and drive forward

practical ways of increasing flows of private sector financial support to reconstruction in the region.

### **Notes to editors:**

- The International Development Secretary will arrive into Antigua on Friday 17 November where she will visit the shelters where people evacuated from Barbuda are staying. The next day she will travel to the British Virgin Islands where she will meet volunteers for the Red Cross who played a huge role in rescues and aid distribution. That evening she will attend a reception where she will thank the military who have helped restore critical infrastructure on the islands, including power and water plants. On Sunday she will travel to Dominica to see the impact of the UK's response. She will meet farmers to discuss efforts to rebuild the island's agriculture and will travel to Pointe Michel, to meet residents and see the destruction Hurricane Maria caused. She will also have a chance to thank the humanitarian staff who have been coordinating the UK's response.
- Hurricane Irma (category 5) hit the British Virgin Islands, Turks and Caicos and Antigua and Barbuda at the beginning of September. It was closely followed by Hurricane Maria which affected Dominica, leaving 98% of buildings damaged and thousands without power. It was the first category five hurricane to hit the island in living memory, affecting almost the entire 70,000 population.
- The support announced is on top of £62m the government has committed so far to the hurricane response. The UK is also matching public donations to the British Red Cross Appeal up to £3m.

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## **[Press release: Foreign Secretary in Ireland for high-level talks](#)**

The Foreign Secretary met his Irish counterpart for talks today during an official visit to Ireland.

Boris Johnson and Simon Coveney discussed the strong, unique and enduring relationship between the UK and Ireland, as well as key foreign policy issues such as Africa and the Middle East, and the protection of human rights.

The Ministers also discussed the UK's exit from the European Union, and our aims for the future relationship.

The Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

There are no closer friends than the UK and Ireland. Our two

nations share a special, unique and enduring bond, which will not change when the UK leaves the European Union.

I am proud to have visited Dublin today to play my part, as the British Foreign Secretary, in that bond, celebrating the contribution British and Irish people make to each other's nations.

The Foreign Secretary also met Fianna Fáil leader Micheál Martin TD, and visited the National Gallery of Ireland where he saw the Sir William Orpen exhibition of First World War paintings.

The final stop on the visit was to Dublin's Trinity College, where the Foreign Secretary attended an event at the Science Gallery showcasing Science Week. He met members of the Irish science and innovation community and young scientists. The Foreign Secretary heard about the deep ties and collaboration between Irish and British academics and scientific institutions.

### **Further information**