

Speech: British Ambassador's speech at The Queen's Birthday Party 2017 in Thailand

Thank you for joining us to congratulate Her Majesty the Queen on her 91st Birthday. And to celebrate the relationship between the UK and Thailand which is now entering its 5th Century.

Thank you all for coming tonight and particular thanks also to our generous Thai and British company sponsors.

We will now hear our two Anthems performed by the children of St Regents School Bangkok.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Our theme this evening is "Partnerships for a New Generation". "New Generation" being not just about youth but about a new wave of innovation, research, education, trade and investment, which will form the basis of a dynamic modern partnership between the UK and Thailand.

A partnership that already sees the UK as one of the leading European investors in Thailand with a stock of c. £9 billion. And Thai investment in the UK on the increase. That sees many famous British brands already here – and represented tonight. And many more looking to use Thailand as their springboard into the ASEAN – attracted by the ambition of Thailand 4.0.

A partnership that sees the UK committing a further £9 million under the Newton Fund – to support the continued excellence of the UK /Thailand research base and innovation ecosystem.

And a partnership that this year celebrates the 65th Anniversary of British Council in Thailand. And which will further our strong collaboration on education and culture

Tonight, we are very pleased to have a range of showcases which describe our commitment to creating "Partnerships for a New Generation" and especially the four international schools here tonight – Harrow, Shrewsbury, St Regents and St Andrews – whose students and showcases truly epitomise our theme.

Please enjoy this evening – and our fantastic jazz band, from Harrow School.

Press release: Showcasing our cool kit at London Rivers Week

On Tuesday 27 June from 12pm to 3pm at Walthamstow Marshes, near Springfield Marina, the Environment Agency will be showcasing their cool kit and little critters as part of London Rivers Week.

London Rivers Week is running again this year with Catchment Partnerships and environmental organisations such as Thames21, ZSL, London Wildlife Trust, the Environment Agency and the South East Rivers Trust, putting on public events, walks and talks at special river sites.

Amanda MacLean, Catchment Co-ordinator at the Environment Agency, said:

We are very excited to be showcasing our work at the London Rivers Week this year on the 27 June. Over the last 20 years the Environment Agency has made big steps to improve the quality of water in rivers. Please do come along to find out about the wide variety of ways in which we work to create a better place for people and the environment. We're bringing lots of our cool kit for you to see.

The Environment Agency will have demonstrations of flood risk management equipment, including their:

- weed cutting boat
- flood water pumps and aerators (in and by the river)
- incident response vehicle, and
- temporary flood barrier.

Members of the public can talk to staff and find out about the following activities:

- monitoring the health of our rivers; trays of invertebrates will be on display
- invasive species
- pollution incidents
- flood risk management; including how we work with communities to reduce flood risk, and
- general information about our other activities and work with partners such as LVRPA (Lee Valley Regional Park Authority).

Other exciting events the Environment Agency is running during London Rivers Week include:

- 4pm to 6pm Monday 26 June at Watling Park, Burnt Oak, HA8 0RF at the northern entrance off Abbots Road.
- 12pm on Tuesday 27 June at the Strand on Kew Green.

- 11:30am on Wednesday 28 June at the River Wandle, Merton High Street, Colliers Wood.

More details and a full list of events can be found on the [official website](#).

Press release: Wiltshire man handed suspended prison sentence for running illegal waste activity

Mr. Robert Cooper, 78, of Hicks Leaze Farm, Chelworth appeared at Swindon Magistrates Court on Monday 5 June 2017 for operating a regulated waste facility without the necessary environmental permit (contrary to regulations 12 (1)(a) and 38 of the Environmental Permitting Regulations 2010) at the Farm between 9 April 2014 and 10 July 2014.

The defendant had pleaded guilty at an earlier hearing on 15 May but the case was adjourned for a pre-sentence report due to the facts of the case and his previous waste offences.

Mr Cooper was given a 12 week prison sentence, suspended for 2 years and ordered to perform 200 hours of unpaid work. The court also ordered Mr Cooper to pay the Environment Agency's full costs of £13,027.35

Mr Howard McCann prosecuting, told the court how the Environment Agency started investigations following complaints from members of the public about the burning of material in December 2013, and the sheer number of lorries dumping waste on site from April 2014 onwards.

Environment Agency officers visited the site and witnessed large quantities of waste including 4 large mounds of construction and demolition (C&D) waste, the largest of which was measured at approximately 65 metres long, 7 metres high in places and between 5 to 7 metres wide. Officers estimate a total of about 8,285 cubic metres of waste on site. The farm is about the size of 9 football pitches. Mr Cooper allowed people to tip their mixed waste for up to £40 per load, treated it by sorting the materials and then burning some of it.

Mr Cooper charged people between £10 (green waste) and £40 per 20-tonne load (C&D waste). Given the main waste mounds discovered by officers, they calculated that Mr Cooper could have made more than £23,000 from his illegal activities. The court found that Mr Cooper's actions were deliberate and that the environmental harm was localised due to the presence of plasterboard, chemical drums and leachate seen on site. The justices also found that the offending was repeated and for financial gain. The court gave Mr Cooper credit for his early guilty plea and co-operation with the Environment Agency

throughout its investigation.

Checks with the Environment Agency's public register confirmed that he did not have a permit for the site, and although he did have 6 waste exemptions, none of these would have allowed him to carry out the types of activities seen by officers.

All waste activities are regulated by the Environment Agency. Whenever waste is stored or treated, the operator is required to hold an environmental permit or register for an exemption, which is reserved for low-risk waste activities only.

During site visits, Environment Agency officers observed the burning of waste with discarded empty containers labelled as "dangerous to the environment". One officer experienced a strong acrid smell which made him feel so unwell that he had to use a protective dust mask. The officers saw what appeared to be leachate puddles in and around the burning waste and plasterboard, which cannot be disposed of to landfill with other biodegradable waste as it can produce toxic hydrogen sulphide gas.

Steve Clare of the Environment Agency said:

It is very disappointing that Mr Cooper continued to allow the operation of an illegal site despite his previous convictions.

The net is closing in on people who think they can make easy money undercutting legitimate waste businesses by putting the local environment at risk. We are constantly gathering information on illegal waste sites, criminal activities and environmental crime in Wiltshire and across the south east.

We are taking a zero tolerance approach against offenders. In cases like this where individuals consistently operate illegally, we have absolutely no hesitation in prosecuting them, as we want to make sure that waste crime doesn't pay.

This extends to landowners, and their agents, who fail to take steps to prevent such offences once they are made aware of them.

For all media enquiries, please call 0800 141 2743.

Press release: PM call with Israeli **PM: 20 June 2017**

The Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called the Prime Minister

yesterday to offer his condolences over the recent tragic events in London.

They agreed the UK and Israel would continue working closely together to counter terrorism and extremism in all its guises.

They agreed the relationship between the UK and Israel would continue to go from strength to strength.

The Prime Minister reaffirmed the UK's commitment to a two-state solution enabling an Israel free from terrorism and a viable Palestinian state. The Prime Minister noted that settlement-building was an impediment to the progress of peace talks.

Press release: Top 50 UK employers for social mobility

The top 50 UK employers who have taken the most action to improve social mobility in the workplace are announced today (Wednesday 21 June) in what is believed to be the world's first ever social mobility employer index.

The index is a joint initiative between the Social Mobility Foundation and the Social Mobility Commission, in partnership with the City of London Corporation. It ranks Britain's employers for the first time on the actions they are taking to ensure they are open to accessing and progressing talent from all backgrounds and it showcases progress towards improving social mobility.

The aim of the index is to encourage firms to share their initiatives and progress in becoming more inclusive employers and to reveal which sectors and companies are taking the issue of social mobility most seriously.

The top 10 firms named in the index top 50 are:

- Grant Thornton UK LLP
- KPMG UK LLP
- Skanska UK PLC
- Standard Life
- Deloitte UK
- JP Morgan
- PwC
- Berwin Leighton Paisner LLP
- WM Morrisons Supermarkets Plc
- Enterprise Rent-A-Car

Research has consistently shown that people from more affluent backgrounds take a disproportionate number of the best jobs and that employers tend to

disproportionately employ graduates who went to private schools and elite universities.

Nearly 100 employers from 17 sectors, who collectively employ just under 1 million people, submitted entries about their practices and procedures in areas such as work with young people, recruitment, selection and progression.

The final rankings (listed below) were decided by a panel of experts and all firms will receive a report with recommendations for areas for improvement.

Key findings include:

- Firms are now increasingly asking both new and current employees about their social background. Four in 10 ask the type of school attended (41%); a quarter ask if an employee received free school meals (26%); 39% ask if employees were the first in their family to go to university; around 1 in 10 ask about parental occupation (7%) and the postcode where an employee grew up (11%)
- Just under 1 in 5 of these firms (17%) now set social mobility targets as part of their business strategy
- The firms collectively scored the highest on their work with young people, providing outreach activities for over 663,000 young people, nearly 10,000 work experience placements and over 5,000 mentors. But they score lowest on helping people from lower socio-economic backgrounds to progress in the workplace
- Nearly three-quarters of the organisations (72%) are offering apprenticeships, but 77% are at levels 2 and 4 (GCSE or A level equivalent) which have been shown to offer lower returns for the apprentices
- 96% of firms say they accept degrees from any university, but 61% of successful applicants attended one of the country's most selective 24 universities (despite making up just 42% of the applications)
- The top 11 UK universities are visited by employers more than all the other UK universities combined and these 11 are all in the 20% of universities with the lowest percentage of state school students in the country
- Oxford and Cambridge are visited more than 118 other institutions combined. Some firms still take 100% of their recruits from the most selective universities.

David Johnston, Chief Executive of the Social Mobility Foundation, said:

All the top 50 firms in the Social Mobility Employer Index should be applauded for the progress they are making towards ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to get in and get on – regardless of their background.

While no one firm has cracked the issue and there is still progress to be made, they should be congratulated both for having prioritised social mobility and for being prepared to have their processes and practices independently scrutinised.

The Rt Hon Alan Milburn, chair of the Social Mobility Commission, added:

Improving the UK's dismal social mobility record requires new action by employers and not just governments. It is very welcome that more employers are changing their workforce strategies to ensure they don't lose out on talented people from less privileged backgrounds. The top 50 are paving the way and I thank them for their efforts. Where they are leading, I hope others will follow.

The annual publication of this index aims to shine a light on how and where progress is being made. Employers that have employees at all levels from a rich variety of social backgrounds are better placed to meet the demands and uncertainties of today's world. Social mobility is good for employers. And employers can make a major contribution to creating a more mobile society.

Catherine McGuinness, Policy Chairman for the City of London Corporation said:

These firms have shown real ambition in their approach to tackling social mobility. They are leading the way in removing the barriers which are holding back the best and brightest candidates in our society. Statistics show that people from more prosperous backgrounds, who attend private schools and elite universities, often take a disproportionate number of the best jobs.

But more companies are making progress on social mobility, casting the net wider in the search for talent and recognising that a level playing field is in the best interests for all businesses. The index is an effective incentive to UK businesses to demonstrate the progress they are making in this vital area.

The top 50 Social Mobility Employer Index rankings by sector

Ranking	Company	Sector
1	Grant Thornton UK LLP	Professional services
2	KPMG UK LLP	Professional services
3	Skanska UK PLC	Engineering or industrial
4	Standard Life	Investment bank or fund management
5	Deloitte UK	Professional services
6	JP Morgan	Banking or financial services
7	PwC	Professional services
8	Berwin Leighton Paisner LLP	Law
9	WM Morrisons Supermarkets Plc	Retail
10	Enterprise Rent-A-Car	Retail
11	Baker McKenzie	Law
12	Civil Service Fast Stream and Early Talent	Civil Service
13	Fujitsu	IT and telecommunications
14	Ministry of Justice	Public sector
15	Pinsent Masons LLP	Law
16	EY	Professional services
17	Burges Salmon	Law
18	Aspire Housing	Housing, skills and employment and regeneration
19	Clifford Chance	Law
20	Linklaters LLP	Law
21	Rolls Royce Plc	Engineering or industrial
22	Lloyds Banking Group	Banking or financial services
23	EDF Energy	Energy, utility or water
24	O2	IT and telecommunications
25	Herbert Smith Freehills	Law
26	Hogan Lovells International LLP	Law
27	Simmons & Simmons	Law
28	BBC	Public sector
29	Eversheds Sutherland LLP	Law
30	Aberdeen Asset Management	Banking or financial services
31	Barts Health NHS Trust	Public sector
32	Freeths LLP	Law
33	Barclays Bank Plc	Banking or financial services
34	National Grid Plc	Energy, utility or water
35	The Honourable Society of the Inner Temple	Law
36	M&G Investments	Investment bank or fund management
37	HM Revenue & Customs	Public sector
38	Severn Trent	Energy, utility or water
39	Brodies LLP	Law
40	HM Treasury	Public sector
41	Bank of England	Banking or financial services

Ranking	Company	Sector
42	CH2M	Engineering or industrial
43	HFW	Law
44	Ministry of Defence	Public sector
45	Schroders	Investment bank or fund management
46	DLA Piper	Law
47	FDM Group	IT and telecommunications
48	Charles Russell Speechlys	Law
49	Department for Education	Civil Service
50	Stephenson Harwood	Law

1. The Social Mobility Employer Index was developed in consultation with, and following feedback from social mobility experts and major employers. Employers entering the index did so free of charge and voluntarily. To enter, they had to answer questions about actions they are taking in at least one of the following sections:

- working with young people – well-evaluated programmes that reach beyond the doorstep of the office to all of the country's talent, and which provide routes into the employer/profession for those that have the interest and aptitude
- routes into work – well-structured, non-graduate routes that provide genuine parity of esteem and comparable progression to graduate ones
- attraction – innovative ways of reaching beyond graduates of the usual 5 to 10 universities many top employers focus their efforts on
- recruitment and selection – evidence that the employer removes hurdles that will disproportionately affect those from lower socio-economic groups and is moving to a system that judges potential rather than past academic performance or polish
- data collection – rigorous analysis of the profile of the workforce and of measures taken to improve its diversity
- progression – effective strategies that help those from lower socio-economic groups get on rather than just get in
- internal/external advocacy – action to get more of their staff involved in efforts to improve social mobility and to get suppliers/peer firms to also take action

2. The submissions were marked using a strict mark scheme and the list of scores was then benchmarked both within the same sector and across different employment sectors. In targeting sectors that have sometimes been identified as needing to improve their socio-economic diversity, the index recognises that process often has to be introduced before progress can be made and does not punish employers for starting from a low base, but rather rewards them for taking significant action to improve this. The top 50 are thus those taking the most action on social mobility and not the 50 that are already the most representative of the country at large.

3. Employers had the option to enter anonymously to receive feedback on their strategies; if they finished in the top 50 they then had the choice of whether to remain anonymous. Two employers did so and this meant those underneath them moved up the published ranking.
4. Both the development of the index and the benchmarking was supported by an advisory group whose membership has representatives from the Association of Graduate Recruiters, the Bridge Group, Royal Holloway University, Stonewall and the Social Mobility Commission.
5. For further information about the index, please visit:
<http://www.socialmobility.org.uk>.

The Social Mobility Foundation

1. The Social Mobility Foundation (SMF) is a charity which aims to make practical improvement in social mobility for young people from low-income backgrounds.
2. It runs free of charge programmes of mentoring, internships, university application support (including trips to universities and help with personal statements, aptitude tests and interviews) and career and skills workshops to support young people through their sixth form and university years.
3. Currently taking on a new cohort of over 1,400 young people every year, the SMF has offices in Birmingham, Glasgow, London, Manchester and Newcastle and runs residential programmes for young people from the Isle of Wight to the Western Isles of Scotland across 11 career sectors (accountancy, architecture, banking and finance, biology and chemistry, business, engineering and physics, law, media and communications, medicine, politics and technology).

The Social Mobility Commission

1. The Social Mobility Commission is an advisory, non-departmental public body established under the Life Chances Act 2010 as modified by the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016. It has a duty to assess progress in improving social mobility in the United Kingdom and to promote social mobility in England. It currently consists of 4 commissioners and is supported by a small secretariat.
2. The commission board currently comprises:
 - Alan Milburn (chair)
 - Baroness Gillian Shephard (deputy chair)
 - Paul Gregg, Professor of Economic and Social Policy, University of Bath

- David Johnston, Chief Executive of the Social Mobility Foundation
- 3. The functions of the commission include:
 - monitoring progress on improving social mobility
 - providing published advice to ministers on matters relating to social mobility
 - undertaking social mobility advocacy

The City of London Corporation

1. The City of London Corporation supports and promotes the City as a world leading financial and business hub. It is dedicated to a thriving global City supporting a strong and diverse London within a prospering nation.
2. It boosts young people's skills and employability through its partnership with City institutions to tackle youth unemployment including through apprenticeships, mentoring, paid work placements schemes and responsible procurement.
3. The City Corporation has created 'The City's business' – a guide which highlights the vital role that City firms can play in reducing youth unemployment in London, and it has pledged to employ 100 apprentices by the end of 2017 to 2018.
4. The City of London Business Traineeship programme, run of behalf of the City of London Corporation, helps state school students from the City's neighbouring boroughs to develop the skills needed for a successful career.
5. Through the award-winning programme, students can access 6- to 13-week paid internships at some of the City's most prestigious businesses and institutes. Since the programme launched in 1994, over 1,500 young people have benefited from paid internships with more than 100 of the Square Mile's top employers providing placements.
6. The City Corporation provides state education through its sponsorship of academies across Hackney, Islington and Southwark, where 77% of students achieved 5A* to C grades in subjects including English and mathematics.
7. It supports London's communities through responsible business, charitable giving, improving the capital's air quality, providing education and skills for young people and delivering affordable housing across seven London boroughs – and it is building another 3,700 homes across London by 2025.
8. The City Corporation encourages businesses to support their communities, their workforce and the environment through the Lord Mayor's Dragon

Awards, the Sustainable City Awards and Heart of the City.

9. City Bridge Trust, the City of London Corporation's charitable funder, is London's biggest independent grant giver, making grants of £20 million a year to tackle disadvantage across the capital. The trust has awarded around 7,600 grants totalling over £350 million since it first began in 1995. It helps achieve the corporation's aim of changing the lives of hundreds of thousands of Londoners.

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