

Debbie Abrahams responds to Government's 'Fuller Working Lives' strategy

Debbie Abrahams MP, Labour's Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary, commenting on the Government's 'Fuller Working Lives' strategy, said:

"It's right that the Government is taking steps to boost employment for older people.

"However, more than half a million workers aged over 50 rely on in-work support – and that support is at risk of being rolled back through Universal Credit.

"That's why Labour is calling on the Tories to reverse cuts to Universal Credit, which could see some older workers worse off by £2,600 a year."

Exchange Rate of Foreign Currency Relating To Imported and Export Goods Notified

In exercise of the powers conferred by section 14 of the Customs Act, 1962 (52 of 1962), and in supersession of the notification of the Central Board of Excise and Customs No.5/2017-CUSTOMS (N.T.), dated 19th January, 2017, except as respects things done or omitted to be done before such supersession,

News story: UK scales up humanitarian relief efforts in Somalia

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Millions of people are living in desperate conditions in Somalia as extreme

drought is threatening the lives and stability of a country vital to regional and UK security.

Ms Patel led a roundtable with humanitarian partners during her visit, to hear about the drought situation on the ground, how they are responding to it, and to discuss how the UK and international community can work together to save lives and prevent a catastrophic famine.

The 2015/16 El Nino is one of the strongest on record and has severely impacted Africa. In Somalia, conditions are worsening with daily reports of rivers drying up, crops failing, and people and livestock dying. As many as 3.9 million people need urgent assistance and 320,000 children are severely malnourished.

In the face of these famine-like conditions Ms Patel announced a UK package of support, which will provide:

- food for 60,000 people;
- urgent nutrition support for 240,000 children and pregnant women;
- safe water for 180,000 people;
- access to health service for 75,000 people; and
- vaccinations for 3 million animals.

Priti Patel said:

Millions of people are living in desperate conditions as extreme drought threatens the lives and stability of a country vital to regional and UK security.

I urge our international partners to join forces with Global Britain and provide immediate support for the relief effort.

Building a secure, stable and prosperous Somalia is a top priority for the UK and while great progress has been made, significant challenges remain. Together in partnership we can meet those challenges.

Ms Patel also sought the humanitarian partners' commitment to the London Somalia Conference objectives and to agree to work together to ensure it will address the drought response and deliver the international support needed to resolve Somalia's protracted crises.

The UK is playing a leading role in the wider international response to the ongoing drought in East Africa – where people desperately need the UK's support.

After visiting Somalia, Ms Patel attended a humanitarian panel discussion in Ethiopia with the UN Secretary General, Antonio Guterres, and the Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister, Demeke Mekonnen.

Ms Patel highlighted that humanitarian reform is one of the top priorities

for the UK and that she is committed to making the international system more effective at responding to global challenges that pose risks to both Africa and the UK. This is to ensure support is maximised to those affected by crisis and guaranteeing value for money.

The International Development Secretary also emphasised her concerns for people suffering from the Horn of Africa drought in Somalia, Ethiopia and Kenya and urged humanitarian partners to accelerate joint efforts for an early response that will save lives.

Ms Patel outlined that increased UK support is helping 800,000 people in Ethiopia including:

- emergency nutrition treatment for 25,000 malnourished children;
- clean water for 100,000 people; and
- vaccination and treatment for 600,000 cattle.

News story: Sir Mark Walport will lead UK Research and Innovation

In this role Sir Mark will lead the establishment of UKRI and ensure it plays a central role at the heart of the Industrial Strategy.

Subject to the passage of the [Higher Education and Research Bill](#) through parliament, UKRI will be established as a single, strategic body that will bring together the 7 Research Councils, Innovate UK and the research and knowledge exchange functions of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE).

The Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation Jo Johnson said:

I am delighted that Mark has agreed to take on this pivotal role. With his experience of running a large scale research organisation, collaboration with businesses in all sectors and his work at the heart of government, Mark is uniquely placed to lead the establishment of UKRI and ensure the organisation becomes a major voice for UK research and innovation.

Following his appointment Mark will now work closely with the UKRI Chair Sir John Kingman and the research and innovation communities across the UK to shape the new organisation over the coming months, delivering on the Industrial Strategy proposals for investing in science, research and innovation in the UK.

UKRI Chief Executive Designate Prof Sir Mark Walport said:

I am honoured to be appointed as the first Chief Executive of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). My ambition is to make UKRI the world's leading research and innovation public funding agency.

I look forward to working closely with the Research Councils, Innovate UK and Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) as we work together to create UKRI. I also look forward to working closely with all of our research and innovation communities to provide a strong and coherent voice for UK science and innovation.

UKRI Non-Executive Chair Sir John Kingman said:

I have worked closely with Mark over many years; he is a superb scientific leader who believes passionately in the potential for great science and innovation to make a profound difference to society and to the economy. He is the ideal first leader for UKRI.

Science, research and innovation are key strengths of the UK; vital underpinning elements of our economy and national wellbeing. The UK research and innovation system is world-leading, but there is an opportunity to make it even more effective.

The purpose of Part 3 of the Higher Education and Research Bill is to put in place the legal powers and safeguards that will enable government to protect the UK's status as a full-spectrum scientific power in the future. The proposals before parliament are to create UKRI, a strong, agile and joined up funder of research and innovation for the UK.

Through UKRI, we are implementing the recommendations of Nobel Prize winning scientist Sir Paul Nurse, who the government asked to lead a review of the UK's research landscape. In his report, published in November 2015, Sir Paul called on government to "support the Research Councils to collectively make up more than the sum of their parts", and develop a "smoother pathway to more applied research".

Subject to the passage of the Higher Education and Research Bill through parliament, UKRI will include the 7 Research Councils, Innovate UK and the research and knowledge exchange functions of HEFCE. This will create a single strategic research and innovation funding body, which will build on and protect the strengths and values of the current system.

UKRI will deliver a strengthened strategic approach to future challenges and a maximisation of the value and benefit from government's investment of over £6 billion per annum in research and innovation. It will provide a greater focus on cross-cutting issues that are outside the core remits of the current funding bodies, such as multi- and inter-disciplinary research, enabling the

system to respond rapidly and effectively to current and future challenges. It will be a strengthened, unified voice for the UK's research and innovation funding system, facilitating the dialogue with government and partners on the global stage. Furthermore, it will create a smoother pathway for innovation, enabling improved collaboration between businesses and researchers and better alignment of research outputs with business needs.

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Detail on UKRI

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- [Letter from Sir Mark Walport to partner organisations.](#) (PDF, 79.7KB, 2 pages)