

Minister for the Middle East visits the UAE and Qatar

Press release

FCDO Minister for the Middle East, North Africa and North America James Cleverly visited the UAE and Qatar in January 2022.



Minister Cleverly arrived in Doha on 30 January for a two day trip to the Gulf, stopping in Qatar and the UAE. His visit reflects the importance of the UK's relationship with the Gulf, with Qatar and the UAE being two of the UK's top partners in the region. The Foreign Secretary and Minister Cleverly met with GCC Foreign Ministers at Chevening last December and his trip builds on several agreed outcomes on topics such as the UK-GCC Free Trade Agreement, development partnerships, and shared regional security priorities including Yemen and Iran.

Minister Cleverly, met with H.E. Buthaina Al Nuaimi, Minister of Education and Higher Education, to discuss Higher Education Partnerships between Qatar and the UK. He also spoke with H.E. Hassan Al Thawadi, Mr Nasser Al Khater and H.E. Maj. Gen. Al Ansari to learn more about Qatar's preparations ahead of the World Cup tournament and to identify areas where UK can support the delivery of a safe and secure environment.

Speaking to H.E. Lolwah Al Khater, Assistant Foreign Minister, the Minister laid the groundwork for the inaugural UK-Qatar Strategic Dialogue to further cooperation on security, trade and investment. He visited the Qatar Fund for Development to discuss development priorities with H.E. Khalifa Al Kuwari.

In the UAE, Minister Cleverly met with his good friend Dr Anwar Gargash, Presidential Adviser, to drive forward discussions on the ambitious partnership for the future which was agreed by Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Boris Johnson MP and the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi H.H. Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed.

With H.E. Ahmed Al Sayegh, Minister Cleverly discussed progress on tackling illicit financial flows, before concluding his tour by meeting H.H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Co-

operation. The two discussed how the UK can continue to support the UAE's safety and security, and how UK-UAE can collaborate on third country investment.

Published 31 January 2022

Foreign Secretary ramps up UK sanctions regime to leave Kremlin nowhere to hide

Press release

The UK has announced a broadening of its sanctions regime in light of tensions on the Ukraine border.



Foreign Secretary Liz Truss is today announcing new legislation in Parliament to toughen and expand the UK's sanctions regime in response to Russia's aggression against Ukraine. These powers will go further than ever before.

Until now, the UK has only been able to sanction those linked to the destabilisation of Ukraine. The new approach will mean a much broader range of individuals and businesses can be sanctioned due to their significance to the Kremlin.

These new powers will be ready if necessary to hit the Russian state and its strategic interests where it really hurts. This legislation will mean we can act swiftly in lockstep with the US and other allies to freeze assets and ban travel.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

Whether you support Russia's aggressive actions against Ukraine, or

you're of wider significance to the Kremlin, we will have the power to sanction you.

Nothing is off the table and there will be nowhere to hide.

This will amount to the toughest sanctions regime against Russia we have had in place yet, and mark the biggest change in our approach since leaving the European Union.

The UK has been clear that the only way forward is for Russia to de-escalate, end its aggressive campaign of hybrid warfare and engage in meaningful talks.

That means honouring agreements which Russia signed up to freely, like the 1994 Budapest memorandum on Security Assurances, where it agreed to uphold Ukraine's territorial integrity.

- the UK has implemented an independent sanctions policy and powers since 31 December 2020. The [Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018 \(the Sanctions Act\)](#) provides the legal framework for the imposition of UK sanctions and the implementation of UN sanctions
- under the current sanctions regime, the [2019 Russia \(Sanctions\) \(EU Exit\) Regulations](#), the UK has only been able to sanction those linked to the destabilisation of Ukraine
- the amendments proposed to 2019 Russia (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations will broaden the scope of our designation criteria, enabling the UK to more readily designate a greater number of individuals and businesses associated with the Kremlin
- these changes will not designate or impose sanctions on any individuals or businesses automatically, but will provide the additional powers we need to be able to do so in the event of any further Russian incursion into Ukraine

Published 31 January 2022

[The Prince of Wales discusses fusion energy at UKAEA](#)

- His Royal Highness tours UK Atomic Energy Authority's world-leading fusion experiment in Oxford
- Joint European Torus (JET) is currently the largest and most powerful tokamak in the world; originally opened by Her Majesty The Queen in 1984
- Fusion promises a step-change for energy: near-limitless, low-carbon, long-term, safe and sustainable

HRH The Prince of Wales today saw first-hand how fusion energy could play a

key role in addressing climate change through a safe, sustainable and low-carbon future energy supply.

His Royal Highness visited the UK Atomic Energy Authority's Joint European Torus (JET), the largest and most powerful operating tokamak machine in the world.

Her Majesty The Queen officially opened JET in 1984. Almost 40 years later, experts based at UKAEA's Culham Science Centre, Oxford, discussed with The Prince of Wales how fusion promises to be an important part of the low-carbon energy mix in the second half of this century, at the same time presenting a significant economic opportunity for Britain.

Professor Ian Chapman, CEO of UKAEA, said: "It was an honour to welcome His Royal Highness to our world-leading fusion energy research and development facility and showcase the ground-breaking JET machine.

"We agreed significant changes are needed to decarbonise the energy supply, and how fusion energy has huge potential to address that challenge. The Prince of Wales was very keen to understand more about how fusion can be a critical piece of the future global energy puzzle and Britain's leadership position in overcoming the great scientific and engineering challenges set before us."

Fusion, the process that powers the sun and stars, promises a near-limitless green electricity source for the long term but is one of the biggest scientific and engineering challenges of them all. The fusion reaction does not release carbon into the environment unlike the production of energy by burning coal, oil or gas.

The history of JET:

- 1975: Proposals for the JET machine were completed
- 1977: Culham in Oxfordshire was chosen as the host site for JET
- 1983: JET was turned on and achieved its first plasma before official opening by Her Majesty The Queen
- 1991: Performed the world's first deuterium-tritium experiment – the fuel mix that will be used in the first commercial fusion power plants
- 1997: A world record 22.5 megajoules of fusion energy and 16 megawatts of fusion power achieved in the first dedicated deuterium-tritium run of experiments, proving large amounts of power can be produced from fusion
- 2021: Completes a second full-power run of experiments using deuterium and tritium
- 2022: 100,000th pulse completed, with new scientific results to be released in February

JET is currently the only tokamak – a machine which confines a plasma using magnetic fields – in the world running experiments using deuterium and tritium, isotopes of hydrogen. It has been key to the development of its successor ITER, the larger and more advanced version of JET and based in France, and one of the biggest collaborative science projects in history, involving 35 nations.

ITER, which is expected to come into operation in the mid-2020s, plans to operate under similar to those conditions used by JET and will continue working towards demonstrating the scientific and technological feasibility of fusion energy.

JET's experiments are run by researchers from the EUROfusion consortium – 4,800 experts, students and staff from across Europe, co-funded by the European Commission.

New cap on legal costs to save NHS £500 million

- Government proposes new cap to ensure legal costs for lower value clinical negligence cases are proportionate and fair
- Patients will be prioritised with a new streamlined process to secure faster resolutions
- Proposals could save the NHS half a billion pounds over the next ten years

The government is launching [a consultation](#) to protect NHS funding by tackling increasing and disproportionate legal fees for lower value clinical negligence claims.

The proposals would bring legal costs more in line with the amount of compensation being awarded for lower value claims. These are typically worth between £1,001 and £25,000.

The plans would only affect the legal costs that people making claims and their lawyers can recover following a successful claim, not the amount of compensation that patients would receive.

In recent years the overall cost of clinical negligence claims has risen significantly, and the National Audit Office (NAO) has identified the legal fees of people making claims as a significant factor.

These claimant legal costs are currently more than four times higher on average than defendant legal costs for lower value claims.

One reason for this is there is currently no limit on the legal costs that can be claimed by lawyers. It means these costs are, on average double the compensation received by patients for lower value claims. In one case, lawyers claimed £72,000 in legal costs for a case in which the patient was awarded £3,000.

This takes vital funding from the NHS frontline as it continues to tackle the backlogs that have built up during the pandemic. It is estimated these

proposals could save nearly half a billion pounds over the next ten years.

Although overall clinical negligence costs have risen sharply, the National Audit Office (NAO) has recognised that this does not appear to be due to any decline in patient safety, which has been and remains a top priority for both Government and NHS.

Minister for Patient Safety Maria Caulfield said:

I'm committed to making the NHS the safest healthcare system in the world. When harm does occur, it's essential the NHS learns from what went wrong, and people who have been negligently harmed are entitled to claim compensation.

Unfortunately, we are seeing some law firms profiting at the NHS' expense through legal costs that far outweigh the actual compensation awarded to patients. This diverts resources from the NHS frontline as staff work hard to tackle the COVID-19 backlogs.

Our proposals will cap legal costs for lower value claims to ensure they are fair and proportionate, and ensure patients' claims are resolved as swiftly as possible without reducing the compensation they deserve.

The government is also consulting on a new streamlined process to ensure claims are processed more quickly, ensuring faster resolution and reducing the need to go to court. This includes assigning claims to two tracks according to their complexity and including two resolution stages within the process to encourage agreement and minimise delay, cost and distress, including a stocktake meeting between parties and a neutral evaluation by a barrister.

The proposals follow Sir Rupert Jackson's (then Lord Justice Jackson's) 2017 recommendation that the Civil Justice Council (CJC) develop a bespoke, streamlined system of fixed recoverable costs. Their report was published in October 2019.

Today's [consultation](#) is closely aligned to the CJC's recommendations and takes into account the responses to DHSC's previous 2017 consultation.

The overall cost of clinical negligence in England rose from £582 million in 2006/7 to £2.2 billion in 2020/21, representing a significant burden on the NHS. For all claims, legal costs have increased more than fourfold to £433 million since 2006/7.

The government has committed to address these unsustainable costs and is working closely with the NHS on proposals.

Alongside this effort, the government and NHS continue to undertake world-leading work to improve patient safety, for example:

- The first National Patient Safety Strategy for the NHS was published in July 2019 and updated in February 2021, to address the learning from the COVID-19 pandemic, and to act to reduce patient safety inequalities.
 - The government is investing £9.4 million to pilot interventions aimed at reducing brain injuries during birth, which account for around half the costs of clinical negligence, although these claims would not be impacted by the proposals being announced today.
 - The NHS is investing an additional £95 million in maternity services to recruit 1,200 midwives and 100 consultant obstetricians. The fund will support training, and development programmes, improve culture and leadership, and strengthen assurance and monitoring on maternity safety issues so that we identify and learn from problems earlier.
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Dstl careers: Phillipa, senior principal statistician

I always wanted to be scientist. I was aware of great mathematicians such as Alan Turing and of Margaret Hamilton, who did all the coding for the Apollo space program – it was ground-breaking and inspiring. Dr Hamilton was a woman and she was leading the way in her own right. I remember seeing that unusual picture of her among all these men. Just like the conference picture of Marie Curie among the likes of Einstein and Heisenberg.

Working patents

I have three patents – which is really unusual for a mathematician! One is for work on the pre-treatment of sepsis – which is for the artificial neural network. It's a complex signature; the human body and its immune system is complicated. It's not as simple to predict as just one marker will go up and one will down. We needed to map the markers. I work on a number of projects across the lab. My meta-analysis on viral vs bacterial discrimination led to decisions on when it's a good idea to give out antibiotics or not. We need that for the war-fighter for a more targeted treatment. I'm particularly proud of that as it was a consortium of industry, academia and Dstl. No blood work, it's a purely maths project.

I am a technical lead in a project called Vulnerabilities, which looks to harden and defend autonomous military systems for deployment. The range of work a statistician and mathematician can do within an S&T organisation is wide and varied. Every piece of work having impact and contributing to UK Defence, it's what keeps

me at Dstl. It's what motivates me.

Speaking from a maths conference in San Diego, Phillippa added:

I really enjoy my position as a senior mathematician. The benefit of being a senior mathematician is that you help provide and identify opportunities for others and inspire them. I've had to fight for some of my opportunities. Putting yourself forward – it's kind of a philosophy of 'don't ask, don't get'. I still think: What if I've been too pushy? As women, it's ingrained from a young age. We have a lot of anxiety about being at the front of the stage. As a girl in this world, you have to be confident in yourself and do not let anxiety cripple you; easier said than done.

I'm the lead for the gender equality network so I care very much about promoting equality for men and women in science and in our organisation in general. As a female mathematician, I'm still often the only girl in the room. I didn't always notice it when I was younger. Often I am pushed into the background but I think that's because maths is seen as something that everyone should be able to do, rather than a discipline in its own right. I'm now in the Cyber Defence Group – the group are an amazing support and I'm comfortable in that environment. In an organisation like Dstl, everyone brings something to the party, everyone has something to offer.

Maths as a career

First and foremost, remember that maths takes you everywhere. There isn't an area of maths and society that maths doesn't touch. It's a key to many doors. From GCSE, get your A-level maths under your belt. There are lots of routes into it. Find a degree that works for you – whether that's applied maths or pure maths. I would always recommend people doing a masters, as it gives you an element of freedom and research in maths.

Mathematicians are very much in demand in data, computer science, the financial sector, the world is open to you. I've been to Florida to see the F-35 jets, I've been to the Pentagon. The things I've seen because I chose a career in statistics are amazing and I feel very privileged and very lucky.

Recognition for Phillippa

Since this article was first published, Phillippa has been [recognised with an OBE](#) in the 2021 New Year Honours. She also won [Woman of the Year](#) at the 2019 Women in Defence awards.