

Embrace free trade to drive the levelling-up agenda

The UK is well-placed and ready to seize the global opportunities of future trade, International Trade Secretary Liz Truss will say today (14 Sept).

In a speech to the Policy Exchange thinktank, Truss will set out the next phase of the UK's trade strategy and explain why it is time to "move from defence to offence in trade" in order to drive a free trade revival in regions outside London and deliver the Government's levelling up agenda.

She will set out how her Department will target trade deals with the fastest-growing parts of the global economy and ramp up support for exporters to help them seize new opportunities. She will say "the status quo is not an option", and outline how her trade policy will open new trade routes beyond Europe.

The UK is already making significant headway in building more successful trade routes with the largest growing economies in the Indo-Pacific. The UK has already launched negotiations to join one of the world's largest free trade areas, the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and will shortly kickstart negotiations with India, as well as Mexico and Canada.

The scale of the future opportunities is laid bare in a new report published by the Department for International Trade – the Global Trade Outlook – which identifies two major trends that underpin the UK's strategic approach:

1) The centre of global economic gravity is moving away from Europe and towards the Indo-Pacific.

By 2030, 3 of the 4 largest economies in the world will be in the Indo-Pacific region. The region will account for 56% of global GDP growth and 44% of global import demand growth over the next thirty years.

2) Global demand for industries where Britain prospers is set to boom:

Demand for UK high-value industries such as digital and financial services will double in the next decade with demand for digital services expected to grow by 117%.

Ahead of the speech Liz Truss, International Trade Secretary, said:

In order to seize the opportunities of the future, we need to grow trade with the fastest-growing parts of the world while turbocharging digital and services commerce – which is exactly what

we're doing.

We are building a global network of next generation trade deals that are advanced in services and digital trade, and forging closer economic ties with markets in East Asia and the Asia-Pacific.

We know the demand for high-quality British goods and services exists, and is growing, therefore we need to ready British businesses for export and bolster inward investment across the country; creating new jobs, business and growth.

With just 1 in 10 British firms currently selling overseas, the International Trade Secretary wants to encourage more to export and make exporting the "norm for UK businesses".

"The path to economic revival does not lie in retreating and retrenching," she will argue, "but in free trade and free enterprise. British employers can only benefit from free trade by selling their products, innovation, capital, and ideas overseas". Recent research shows trade disproportionately benefits consumers on the lowest incomes, as tradable goods and services are disproportionately consumed by those less well-off.

DIT is stepping up its export support across the country via its UK Trade and Investment offices and new Export Support Service. It is also attracting the world's top investors, via the Office for Investment and the UK's first Global Investment Summit.

Truss believes the UK's forward-looking, liberalising trade strategy will lead to British businesses becoming high-wage, high-growth and high-productivity, which will drive the UK's future economic success in the industries and economies of tomorrow.

[Young people aged 12 to 15 to be offered a COVID-19 vaccine](#)

Press release

People aged 12 to 15 in England will be offered a first dose of a COVID-19 vaccine.



- Move follows unanimous advice to ministers from the four UK Chief Medical Officers
- Parental consent will be sought prior to vaccination

People aged 12 to 15 in England will be offered one dose of the Pfizer/BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine, following advice from the four UK Chief Medical Officers (CMOs), the Health and Social Care Secretary has announced today (Monday 13 September).

In line with the recommendation of the independent Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), the government sought the views of the four UK CMOs on the wider issues that are relevant to the health of children.

The government has accepted the advice of the four UK CMOs and the NHS is preparing to deliver a schools-based vaccination programme, which is the successful model used for vaccinations including for HPV and Diphtheria, Tetanus and Polio (DTP), supported by GPs and community pharmacies. Invitations for vaccination will begin next week.

Parental, guardian or carer consent will be sought by vaccination healthcare staff prior to vaccination in line with existing school vaccination programmes.

Healthy school-aged children aged 12 to 15 will primarily receive their COVID-19 vaccination in their school with alternative provision for those who are home schooled, in secure services or specialist mental health settings.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Sajid Javid said:

I have accepted the recommendation from the Chief Medical Officers to expand vaccination to those aged 12 to 15 – protecting young people from catching COVID-19, reducing transmission in schools and keeping pupils in the classroom.

I am very grateful for the expert advice I have received from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation and UK Chief Medical Officers.

Our outstanding NHS stands ready to move forward with rolling out the vaccine to this group with the same sense of urgency we've had at every point in our vaccination programme.

Over four in five adults across the UK have received both COVID-19 vaccine doses, with over half of all 16 and 17 year olds coming forward for their first jab.

Published 13 September 2021

[Defence Secretary announces launch of National Shipbuilding Office](#)

Marking the start of London's International Shipping Week, the founding of the new National Shipbuilding Office is a significant milestone in the UK's shipbuilding renaissance.

The Office will be responsible for driving forward one of the Prime Minister's key domestic priorities across government, working in close collaboration with the sector industrial partners and supply chain.

Rear Admiral Rex Cox has been appointed as the Chief Executive of the new organisation. With over 30 years-experience in the Royal Navy, Rear Admiral Cox worked as the Defence policy advisor for Her Majesty's Treasury from 2015 to 2018 and most recently served as the Head of Capability Planning in the Finance and Military Capability directorate of the MOD.

Shipbuilding Tsar and Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

The creation of the National Shipbuilding Office and the appointment of Rear Admiral Rex Cox marks a further demonstration of this Government's ambition to supercharge the UK's shipbuilding industry across all four corners of the UK.

The newly formed Office will be the strategic centre that drives transformative change across the shipbuilding industry and wider maritime sector and supply chains.

The shipbuilding industry is integral to the future of Defence and the Royal Navy, as outlined in the recent Defence Command Paper. The MoD is investing £1.7 billion in the sector, which is further enhanced by the £24 billion increase in Defence spending over the next four years, as announced by the Prime Minister last November.

The shipbuilding sector contributes a huge amount to the UK and in 2020 the ship and boat building, repair and maintenance services contributed £2.4

billion to the UK economy supporting around 44,000 jobs. There were 1,665 registered business in this industry, 99% of which were Small and Medium Enterprises.

Defence continues to support the Shipbuilding sector with contracts placed for five Type 31 frigates in 2019. The UK's Type 26 design is being exported to both Canada and Australia, creating and sustaining 5,000 jobs in the UK and around £6 billion of potential export contracts to benefit UK suppliers. The UK government also commissioned the RRS Sir David Attenborough, built in the UK by Cammell Laird, as one of the world's most advanced research vessels.

Newly appointed National Shipbuilding Office Chief Executive Officer Rear Admiral Rex Cox said:

I am delighted to have been appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer for the National Shipbuilding Office.

The Office has a mandate to drive transformative change across the UK's shipbuilding enterprise, creating a strategic focus across Government to champion our shipbuilding ambitions and the amazing talent across our maritime sector.

The National Shipbuilding Office will report directly to the Shipbuilding Tsar and will oversee all of the UK government's interests in UK shipbuilding, from coordinating the long-term pipeline of government vessels to ensuring skills priorities are aligned across the enterprise.

The launch of the National Shipbuilding Office is central to the National Shipbuilding Strategy Refresh which is due to be published later this year. The Refresh will encapsulate the broader shipbuilding enterprise, not just the naval sector. It will look at themes such as skills, exports, and technology, particularly the opportunities associated with clean maritime technology. The National Shipbuilding Office is central to this ambitious strategy and will take ownership of driving its delivery.

[Liz Truss's meeting with Indian commerce minister Piyush Goyal](#)

News story

A readout of the meeting between International Trade Secretary Liz Truss and

India's Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal



International Trade Secretary Liz Truss spoke to India's Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal today (Monday 13th September) to discuss the scope and ambition for a UK-India free trade agreement following the close of the Department for International Trade's public consultation last month

They discussed the findings from the consultation and agreed the steps to get ready to launch negotiations later this year – including the start of a series of trade working groups from September. These discussions between the UK and Indian Governments will help both sides better understand each other's position on potential chapter areas in any trade deal including tariffs, standards, IP and data regulation.

They also discussed the newly established Enhanced Trade Partnership, and confirmed their commitment to timely implementation of the market access package.

The International Trade Secretary reaffirmed her ambition to negotiate a trade agreement that delivers results for the British people and businesses including those in digital and data, tech and food and drink. Both ministers agreed that continuing to engage with the business community was vital throughout the forthcoming negotiations.

Findings from the Department for International Trade's consultation will be published before the start of negotiations as part of a wider package outlining a strategic rationale for the FTA, including the UK's negotiating objectives and economic analysis of a potential deal.

Published 13 September 2021

[Funding boost for councils as new](#)

Afghan resettlement plans set out

Councils who support people through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) or Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) scheme will receive £20,520 per person, over 3 years, for resettlement and integration costs. This is based on the previous Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, but over 3 rather than 5 years, with more money provided in the crucial early period to help people settle and become part of their new communities.

Local councils and health partners who resettle families will also receive up to £4,500 per child for education, £850 to cover English language provision for adults requiring this support and £2,600 to cover healthcare.

A further £20 million of flexible funding will be made available to support local authorities with higher cost bases with any additional costs in the provision of services. In addition, the previously announced Afghan Housing Costs Fund will increase from £5 million to £17 million and run for 2 extra years to help local authorities provide housing and give certainty that funding will be available in the future.

In a letter to all local authorities in England, Wales and Scotland and to Northern Ireland Executive representatives, the Home Secretary and Communities Secretary have asked more local authorities to now step up and offer places for people coming from Afghanistan. The funding offer is for councils across the UK.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

The UK is a proud democratic country, so it is unimaginable for many of us to live in fear of being ourselves or not having access to even the most basic rights. That is why we are providing a safe haven in the UK for people at risk, including women and girls and minority groups, so they can rebuild their lives safely in the UK.

The funding we've announced will help new arrivals to integrate into British society, while giving councils offering support the certainty they need.

Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick said:

I am incredibly impressed by the positive response we've received from councils so far, with a large number already pledging their support.

However, we urgently need more offers of accommodation to welcome Afghan families who have remained firm allies of the UK, working with our troops and our country so bravely in recent years.

With this extra funding in place, I'm asking all councils who have not yet come forward to contact us with a firm offer of support to help these families secure the best possible start to their new lives.

Under the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme, the government has committed to resettling up to 20,000 Afghans, of which 5,000 will be resettled in the scheme's first year. This is in addition to the ARAP scheme, which has already resettled thousands of Afghans who have worked with the UK government, and their families.

Today's [policy statement](#) sets out that the ACRS will prioritise those who have assisted the UK efforts in Afghanistan and stood up for the values we share such as democracy, women's rights, freedom of speech and the rule of law, as well as other vulnerable people, including women, girls and members of minority groups at risk (including ethnic and religious minorities and LGBT).

Some of those who arrived in the UK under the Op PITTING evacuation programme, which included individuals who were considered to be at particular risk, will be resettled under the ACRS. People who were notified by the government that they had been called forward or specifically authorised for evacuation, but were not able to board flights, will also be offered a place if they subsequently come to the UK.

Further to this, to help identify those most at risk and vulnerable, the government is working closely with the UN's Refugee Agency, UNHCR, to identify and resettle refugees who have fled Afghanistan based on their protection and humanitarian need.

The government is also working with international partners and NGOs in the region to implement a referral process for people inside Afghanistan, where safe passage can be arranged, and for those that have recently fled to other countries in the region.

Other details released today include:

- while it is expected the vast majority of people resettled under the Scheme will be Afghan, nationals of other countries, for example in mixed nationality families, will be eligible
- spouses, partners and dependent children under 18 years of eligible individuals will be eligible for the route. Other family members may be resettled in exceptional circumstances
- unaccompanied children will be accepted where resettlement in the UK is in their best interest, for example if they cannot be reunited with family in the region

Afghan Resettlement Minister Victoria Atkins said:

I'm proud of the mammoth effort taking place across the whole of the UK to welcome people from Afghanistan. Our resettlement scheme

will help to build a bright future for thousands of people who have helped us.

As part of ongoing, government-wide efforts to help Afghan arrivals to rebuild their lives, the Department for Work and Pensions is launching surgeries across the country, run by experienced work coaches with translators, to help those arriving with any questions they may have about employment or benefits. These surgeries, combined with access to benefits, will allow new arrivals to receive individual tailored support to help them become self-sufficient more quickly and find work as they get settled in the UK.

The government is also legislating this week to take forward our 'Operation Warm Welcome' commitments. This includes ensuring that all those arriving in both schemes are eligible for social housing and homelessness support after arriving and will be able to claim benefits such as Universal Credit from day one. This is matched by the immediate right to work upon entry.