

G7 Trade Ministers' Meeting – Chair's Statement

Today, the G7 Trade Ministers held their first meeting under the inaugural G7 Trade Track. Trade Ministers underlined the vital role global trade has played in tackling the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic, welcomed the contribution trade can make to a strong economic recovery, and emphasised the need to build back better. They reaffirmed the importance of the rules-based multilateral trading system and welcomed Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, the new WTO Director-General, to their meeting.

The G7 Trade Track has a bold purpose – to make the case globally for free and fair trade. G7 Trade Ministers are convinced that when the world's leading democratic trading nations unite behind a shared agenda to make the global trading system fairer, more sustainable, and responsive to the needs of our citizens, this is an agenda that partners across the world will be ready to share in and help shape.

Free and Fair Trade

G7 Trade Ministers support a global trading system that is free and fair and works for all countries and peoples. This year represents a clear inflection point for the world and the global economic architecture. G7 Trade Ministers recognised the importance of providing the leadership needed to respond to the challenges faced by the multilateral trading system. Trade Ministers expressed their determination to provide the sustained effort and momentum necessary to ensure progress is made in the reform of the WTO to help secure shared prosperity for all. Therefore, G7 Trade Ministers will use this year's G7 to advance the agenda of the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference and provide vital political momentum to the WTO reform debate. Trade Ministers will explore reforms that can enhance the WTO as a forum for negotiations, recognising the positive role that the plurilateral initiatives have played in engaging a broad spectrum of WTO members. G7 Trade Ministers also acknowledge that important work on transparency, special and differential treatment, and dispute settlement needs to be undertaken in the WTO.

The multilateral trading system can be a force for good. It has increased competition and economic growth, helped raise living standards, and lifted millions out of poverty. It must serve the needs of all its members and provide the basis for free and fair trade. G7 Trade Ministers recognised that global trade should work for democratic and open-market systems and that these should not be undermined by unfair trade.

Yet, not all of our citizens have felt the benefits of trade. Moreover, practices that distort markets and competition lead to decreased efficiency and reduced perceptions of fairness and trust in the system. Echoing the G7 Leaders' Statement at Charlevoix in 2018, G7 Trade Ministers recalled the importance of fostering a truly level playing field. Trade Ministers will discuss the impact market-distorting practices, such as harmful industrial

subsidies, including those causing excess capacity in some sectors, are having on our economies and chart a way to address these collectively.

Modernising Trade

G7 Trade Ministers believe that the multilateral trading system is in need of reform to reflect changes in the global economy and environment. As the world transitions to net zero, Trade Ministers acknowledged the risk of carbon leakage to the environment and the potential ways of mitigating this. Acknowledging the role of trade in tackling the accelerating climate and biodiversity crisis, Trade Ministers recognised that 2021 will be a crucial year to drive international efforts to address climate change and protect nature, including at the UNFCCC COP26. Trade Ministers will therefore deepen discussions on the nexus between trade and climate and the environment with a focus on identifying opportunities for collaboration and facilitating sustainable supply chains. Additionally, G7 members are committed to reaching a meaningful conclusion in the WTO negotiations of fisheries subsidies – which have a clear impact on sustainability.

Stressing that trade has to be at the service of citizens, G7 Trade Ministers underlined the importance of advancing women's economic empowerment through trade, particularly to support the Covid-19 recovery. They shared the view that greater representation of women in trade as leaders, business owners, and fairly compensated workers will ultimately deliver more and better jobs and more growth in our economies. G7 Members will promote deepened studies and more cross-cutting analyses on trade policy and gender equality by international organisations, such as SheTrades Outlook. Recognising the progress that is being made on trade and gender equality at the WTO, Trade Ministers intend to use their next discussions to explore new opportunities to improve the evidence base to support women in trade and discuss their priorities in this area for the next WTO Ministerial Conference.

G7 Trade Ministers also agreed to further consider the ways in which trade policy can develop to support trade in health products, and increased supply chain resilience, as we work to build back better from Covid-19. The scale and pace of the spread of the virus, and an uneven global recovery, are challenging all our economies. G7 Members also encourage cooperation among governments, manufacturers, and other industry players to identify policies which support ramped-up production and distribution of vaccines.

Digital Trade

G7 Trade Ministers recognised the importance of digital trade to growth, innovation, productivity, and prosperity. They recalled the immense opportunities that it offers to our people and our businesses, and they underlined the central role that it can play in the economic recovery from the pandemic. G7 Members are united in their support for open digital markets and their opposition to digital protectionism. As a group of market-based economies governed by the rule of law, they believe that digital markets should be competitive, transparent, and accessible to international trade and investment. They agree on the importance of data free flow with trust, safeguards for consumers and businesses, and digital trading systems that

allow goods and services to move seamlessly across borders. G7 Trade Ministers resolve to promote digital trade worldwide and to pursue global governance that is fair and inclusive. They agreed to further develop a set of high-level principles during this Presidency that will guide the G7 approach to digital trade.

Digital trade remains an important area for the creation of new rules at the WTO. The rules governing digital trade should be responsive to innovation and emerging technologies, so that businesses, consumers, and workers can harness their full potential. G7 Trade Ministers committed to redoubling their efforts to advance the Joint Statement Initiative on E-commerce at the World Trade Organization. They aim to achieve substantial progress by the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference.

G7 Trade Ministers look forward to strengthening their dialogue and further advancing a shared agenda at their next meeting in May.

[Government launches review into sexual abuse in schools](#)

A new helpline to support potential victims of sexual harassment and abuse in education settings has been announced today by Education Secretary Gavin Williamson.

The dedicated number, run by the NSPCC, will go live tomorrow to provide both children and adults who are victims of sexual abuse in schools with the appropriate support and advice. This includes how to contact the police and report crimes if they wish. The helpline will also provide support to parents and professionals too.

The government has also asked Ofsted to undertake an immediate review of safeguarding policies in state and independent schools. The review will look at the extent and the severity of the issue and ensure schools have appropriate processes in place to allow pupils to report concerns freely, knowing these will be taken seriously and dealt with swiftly and appropriately.

It will make sure there is sufficient guidance on how schools should deal with sexual harassment and violence allegations, and whether the current inspection regimes in both state and private schools are strong enough to address concerns and promote the welfare of children.

Ofsted will work with representatives from social care, police, victim support groups, school and college leaders and the Independent Schools Council. The review will conclude by end of May 2021 and will seek to establish where safeguarding arrangements and processes are good and have

worked well and where improvements are needed.

Both the helpline and review come after numerous anonymous testimonials of sexual harassment and abuse were submitted to the website Everyone's Invited.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Sexual abuse in any form is abhorrent and it is vital that these allegations are dealt with properly. While the majority of schools take their safeguarding responsibilities extremely seriously, I am determined to make sure the right resources and processes are in place across the education system to support any victims of abuse to come forward.

This Government is committed to ensuring victims feel supported to refer the most serious allegations to the police via the helpline, safe in the knowledge that everything possible will be done to bring offenders to justice.

No child or young person should have to experience abuse. But if something isn't right, they should speak to someone they trust to raise concerns, whether that's family, a friend, teacher or social worker, helpline or the police.

Ofsted Chief Inspector Amanda Spielman said:

Like everyone else, I have been deeply troubled by accounts of the sexual abuse and harassment young people have suffered at school and in the community. So I welcome the Secretary of State's announcement and the opportunity for Ofsted to lead this review.

Schools have a crucial role to play in teaching young people about sexual consent and respect for women and girls. They must also be places where all children feel safe, and where they are able to report any incidents of abuse or harassment and be confident that what they say will be acted upon.

We will set out the terms of the review shortly.

Today's announcement follows the publication of the Government's Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy in January. The Strategy will galvanise a whole-system response that brings together agencies, sectors and society to tackle child sexual abuse, as well as a focus on prevention and early intervention, to help protect children and empower professionals, parents and carers to keep them safe.

It will also help victims and survivors of child sexual abuse to rebuild their lives by boosting investment in specialist sexual violence support services delivered by the voluntary sector, as well as support victims and

survivors through the court process with the new and revised Victim's Code and consultation on a Victims' Law.

Where schools are failing to meet strict safeguarding standards, the Department for Education will not hesitate to take action. Ofsted and the Independent Schools Inspectorate will inspect any schools where there are concerns and ensure they either improve their practices or are forced to close.

All schools are also now required to provide relationships and sex and education to all secondary pupils and relationships education to all primary age pupils. Important issues such as personal privacy, respect and consent to ensure that more young people have a better understanding of how to behave towards their peers, are part of our guidance to ensure more young people have a better understanding of how to behave towards their peers, including online. Many schools do a great job day in and day out of working within a complex modern society but the new Relationship, Sex and Health Education curriculum will help them navigate some of the more difficult issues.

The dedicated NSPCC helpline number is 0800 136 663, which will be live from tomorrow (Thursday 1 April).

[Robin Simcox appointed as Interim Lead of Commission for Countering Extremism](#)

News story

Director of Counter Extremism Group think-tank, Robin Simcox, has been appointed as Interim Lead Commissioner of the Commission for Countering Extremism.



His appointment for 6 months initially will involve working across government and with external partners to advise on how to tackle extremism in all its forms, including on the future role of the commission and on how government

could further harness innovative thinking within the academic and think-tank sector on tackling extremism.

Mr Simcox's appointment follows the end of Sara Khan's 3 year tenure leading the Commission. The former Lead Commissioner has been appointed by the Prime Minister as Independent Advisor on Social Cohesion and Resilience at the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government. The [Home Secretary today wrote to Sara Khan](#) to express her thanks for her contribution as Lead Commissioner of the Commission for Countering Extremism.

Prior to founding the UK-based Counter Extremism Group, Mr Simcox previously served as a research fellow at the renowned Heritage Foundation in Washington D.C. A leading expert in the field of extremism, he has testified before US Congress on multiple occasions on issues related to Islamist terrorism.

Robin Simcox said:

It's a great honour to be appointed the Interim Lead Commissioner for Countering Extremism. I look forward to building upon the valuable work already undertaken by Sara Khan and her team.

Extremism is a scourge that has the potential to impact us all. There can be no place for it in the UK.

I hope to be able to translate my experience in the counter-extremism field into recommendations that can help the government make headway on this key issue.

Minster for Countering Extremism, Baroness Williams said:

The government remains committed to tackling extremism and disrupting those who seek to sow hatred and division in our communities and radicalise others.

The important work of the Commission for Countering Extremism will continue, and I'm delighted Robin Simcox will bring his expertise and innovative thinking to this role.

I'd also like to thank Sara Khan for her dedication as Commissioner over the past 3 years and the significant contribution she has made to the government's approach to tackling extremism.

Published 31 March 2021

[Home Secretary's letter to the outgoing Lead Commissioner for Countering Extremism](#)

We use some essential cookies to make this website work.

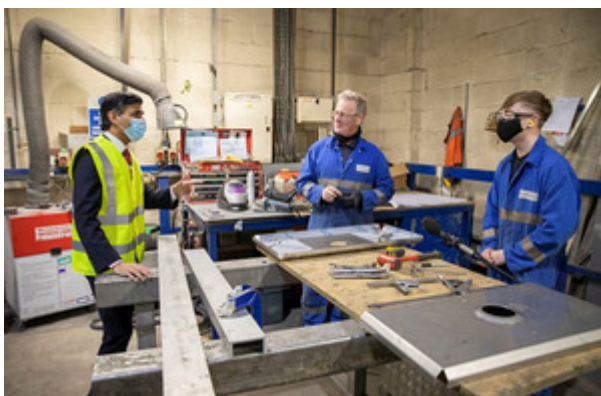
We'd like to set additional cookies to understand how you use GOV.UK, remember your settings and improve government services.

We also use cookies set by other sites to help us deliver content from their services.

[Chancellor visits engineering firm to launch super-deduction](#)

News story

The Chancellor of the Exchequer visited a local engineering firm in Grimsby today (31 March) to mark the start of the biggest 2-year business tax cut in modern British history.



- Chancellor visits Blackrow Engineering in Grimsby to mark start of super-deduction – the biggest 2-year business tax cut in modern British history
- policy will unlock £20 billion a year in investment, according to the OBR

- super-deduction allows companies to cut their tax bill by up to 25p for every £1 they invest

Rishi Sunak visited staff at Blackrow Engineering ahead of the launch of the super-deduction – which will encourage businesses to invest and grow, supporting jobs and opportunities across the UK.

The new tax break comes into effect tomorrow and will allow companies to deduct 130% of the cost of any qualifying investment from their taxable profits – meaning for every £1 they invest they can reduce their tax bill by up to 25p.

On the visit, the Chancellor was welcomed by Neil Ellis, CEO of Blackrow Engineering, and went on a tour of the factory meeting apprentices. The Chancellor also used some of the company's machinery himself, putting the finishing touches on a 'Plan for Jobs' metal plaque.

Blackrow Engineering, which designs, produces and installs manufacturing equipment, is planning to take advantage of the super-deduction. The company has also taken advantage of the VAT deferral scheme, a Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan and the furlough scheme.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said:

The super-deduction is the biggest two-year business tax cut in modern British history – driving our economy by helping businesses to invest, grow and support our Plan for Jobs.

I urge firms across the UK to invest in our recovery by taking advantage of this great opportunity.

Neil Ellis, CEO of Blackrow Engineering, said:

We were delighted to host the Chancellor today to our workshops and to talk to him about our company.

Government initiatives including the furlough scheme and business loans have enabled us to come through this crisis. And we're hoping that the super-deduction being introduced now will help us power our way out of it.

Any qualifying investment which businesses make from tomorrow will qualify for the super-deduction.

The policy will unlock £20 billion a year in investment, according to the independent Office for Budget Responsibility.

Blackrow Engineering was started in 1979 by three partners in a small garage in Grimsby.

Further information

Published 31 March 2021