

PM statement on negotiations with the EU: 16 October 2020

Good morning,

We left the EU on January 31 and delivered on the largest democratic mandate in the history of this country.

And since then we have been in a transition period obeying EU law, paying our fees – as a non-voting member – working on the future relationship we hope to enjoy with our friends and partners from January.

And from the outset we were totally clear that we wanted nothing more complicated than a Canada-style relationship, based on friendship and free trade.

To judge by the latest EU summit in Brussels that won't work for our EU partners. They want the continued ability to control our legislative freedom, our fisheries, in a way that is obviously unacceptable to an independent country.

And since we have only ten weeks until the end of the transition period on January 1, I have to make a judgment about the likely outcome and to get us all ready.

And given that they have refused to negotiate seriously for much of the last few months, and given that this summit appears explicitly to rule out a Canada-style deal, I have concluded that we should get ready for January 1 with arrangements that are more like Australia's based on simple principles of global free trade.

And we can do it, because we always knew that there would be change on January 1 whatever type of relationship we had.

And so now is the time for our businesses to get ready, and for hauliers to get ready, and for travellers to get ready.

And of course we are willing to discuss the practicalities with our friends where a lot of progress has already been made, by the way, on such issues as social security, and aviation, nuclear cooperation and so on.

But for whatever reason it is clear from the summit that after 45 years of membership they are not willing – unless there is some fundamental change of approach – to offer this country the same terms as Canada.

And so with high hearts and complete confidence we will prepare to embrace the alternative.

And we will prosper mightily as an independent free trading nation, controlling our own borders, our fisheries, and setting our own laws.

And in the meantime the government will be focussing on tackling COVID and building back better so that 2021 is a year of recovery and renewal.

Thank you very much.

Veterans' Office marks one year since establishment

To build on the OVA's work and create a regular dialogue with the sector, ministers are also launching today a new board, comprised of experienced and prominent individuals involved in veterans' issues.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Michael Gove and Veterans Minister Johnny Mercer yesterday visited Portsmouth to meet charities in the city. Aboard HMS Westminster at HMNB Portsmouth, they also met service leavers and discussed the importance of providing support for serving personnel as they transition out of the armed forces into civilian society.

The new Veterans Advisory Board will provide advice, challenge and diversity of thought to the government on veterans issues, including supporting the delivery of the Strategy for Our Veterans.

Members of the board include TV presenter Nick Knowles, the founder of the charity Recruit for Spouses Heledd Kendrick, former Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe and the current Chairman of COBSEO General Sir John McColl, and ex-Marine and sports presenter JJ Chalmers.

While in Portsmouth, the Veterans Minister also visited Queen Alexandra Hospital, a Veterans Aware Hospital. While there he met staff who provide specialist care to veterans. Veterans Aware Hospitals do a range of things to support the veterans in their community, including training relevant staff to be aware of veterans' needs and the commitments of the NHS under the Armed Forces Covenant and establishing processes to inform staff if a patient has served in the Armed Forces.

One year on from the OVA's establishment, the office has worked to drive the veterans agenda across government. Achievements in the first year include:

- A new railcard for veterans, launched this week, providing discounted travel for ex-military personnel
- Guaranteed interviews in the civil service for veterans
- Plans being brought forward for a National Insurance Holiday for employers who hire veterans
- Including a question on veterans in the 2021 census, which will provide better data on the veterans cohort
- Prioritising veterans for new homes

To help armed forces charities during the COVID pandemic, the government has also provided £6million in funding to organisations across the UK, delivering support to veterans, service personnel and their families.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Michael Gove said:

We owe a debt of gratitude to those who have served and the Office for Veterans' Affairs exists to make the case for ex-service personnel across government.

We have made huge strides on the veterans agenda since the OVA's establishment and we're determined to continue this work apace.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Johnny Mercer said:

I'm determined to make Britain the best country in the world to be a veteran.

This has been an important year for veterans, with the new railcards, guaranteed interviews in civil service and extra funding to support military charities through COVID.

We will continue to build on this work and further drive the veterans agenda across government.

The work of the OVA includes:

- Pulling together all functions of government, and better coordinating charity sector provision, in order to ensure this nation's life-long duty to those who have served
- Ensuring that every single veteran and their family knows where to turn to access support when required
- Helping to generate a 'single view of the veteran' by making better use of data to understand veterans' needs and where gaps in provision exist
- *Improving the perception of veterans

Veterans Advisory Board members

- Andrew Anderson – Andrew Anderson is an entrepreneur and business leader with over 30 years' experience in the software and AI industry, alongwith serving for 7 years with the Parachute Regiment.
- JJ Chalmers – JJ Chalmers served with the Royal Marine, in both the Regular and Reserve Forces. He was medically discharged in 2016 after sustaining injuries in a IED blast in Afghanistan, on Herrick 14. After years of rehabilitation, JJ went on to medal in the 2014 Invictus Games. As a spokesperson for this inaugural Games JJ got an insight into TV during the publicity rounds. Seeking a new and thrilling adventure led JJ to embark on a broadcasting career.
- Gary Ghale – Gary Ghale is the Head of Gurkha Welfare (UK) and head the

Gurkha Welfare Advice Centre in the Gurkha Welfare Trust in Salisbury.. We work closely with other Service charities, Government departments and other organisations to meet the welfare needs of Gurkha veterans in the UK. Gary served in the Brigade of Gurkhas and the wider British army for 25 years and left the army as a captain.

- Heledd Kendrick – Heledd Kendrick is the founder and CEO of Recruit for Spouses, (CiC) which solely exists to help the partners of our Armed Forces into work.
- Nick Knowles – Nick Knowles is one of the UK's highest rated TV presenters and an RTS award-winning writer. Over the past twelve years he has hosted BBC1 prime time Saturday night quiz shows Break the Safe, Secret Fortune and Who Dares Wins, and he is the presenter of BBC1's most watched and longest running prime time factual series DIY SOS – The Big Build, which celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2019.
- Leon Lloyd – Leon had a successful rugby career representing Leicester Tigers and Gloucester which culminated in winning 6 Premiership titles, 2 Domestic Cups and back to back Heineken Cup trophies. Leon also represented the Barbarians on 5 international tours and has proudly represented England at every age group level making his full international debut against South Africa in 2000. Leon has published several academic articles on the subject of career transition and has also written a book, entitled Life after sport, on how he dealt with finishing his rugby career. He leads the charity Switch the Play, which works with elite athletes transitioning to their second career and it also working with members of the armed forces, helping them to prepare for transition.
- Martin Lucas – Martin Lucas is the CEO of Gap in the Matrix, a Psychological Engineering firm. His career has seen him found three businesses (Sales Psychology, Consulting, he built a Social Network), he has sat on the board of Charities (Addiction, Trauma), won awards for Leadership and received a commendation from The Home Secretary for the first Charity event at Westminster Abbey.
- Air Vice-Marshal The Hon David Murray CVO OBE – AVM David Murray served in the RAF for over 33 years. His final RAF role was in MOD as the Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Personnel), responsible for UK government liaison with military charities and veterans' organisations, including bringing the Armed Forces Covenant into law in 2011.
- Nicky Murdoch MBE – Nicky Murdoch joined the Army in 1980 where she served in a variety of appointments as diverse as specialist intelligence in Northern Ireland to military music. On leaving the Army she became the Chief Executive of the St John and Red Cross Defence Medical Welfare Service.
- Peter Mountford FCA – Peter is a successful Chairman, Financier, and Entrepreneur. He has been on the Board of many businesses, is a specialist in strategic advice, and has floated 3 of the most successful companies on Aim. Peter is the Chairman of The Veterans' Foundation, a charity formed to establish a nationwide source of funding to help Armed Forces veterans in need mainly through smaller military charities.
- Dr Vanessa Moulton, CPsychol, AFBPsS – Dr Vanessa Moulton is a Chartered Counselling Psychologist. Her background incorporates a military mental health specialism which includes working at the MoD's Rehabilitation

Centre 'Headley Court' during the peak of the Afghanistan conflict, and heading up the Psychological Wellbeing Department at 'Help For Heroes'. She also worked at 'Combat Stress' on the inaugural PTSD high intensity programme.

- General Sir John McColl KCB CBE DSO – General Sir John McColl KCB CBE DSO is the Chairman of Cobseo, the Confederation of Service Charities. Before joining Cobseo, General Sir John McColl was a career Army Officer with an infantry background. He has served in Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Afghanistan and Iraq. His final serving appointment was as Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe which he relinquished in March 2011.
- Professor Sir Simon Wessely – Professor Sir Simon Wessely is Professor of Psychological Medicine and Regius Professor of Psychiatry at King's College London and a Consultant Liaison Psychiatrist at King's College and the Maudsley Hospitals.

[New UK Government Covid testing site opens in Dundee](#)

The UK Government has today [Friday 16 October], opened a new walk-through coronavirus testing centre in Dundee. Located in the Park Place car park in the city centre, the site is easily accessible for people without a car.

The new facility is being provided by the UK Government as part of a UK-wide drive to continue to improve the accessibility of coronavirus testing for local communities. It is operated by Mitie on behalf of the UK Government.

The Dundee site is the first self-cleaning facility in Scotland. This involves decontaminating each testing cubicle with dry mist between each use – helping to speed up the cleaning process and increase the testing capacity.

The test centre is part of the largest network of diagnostic testing facilities created in British history. In Scotland, this comprises of six drive-through sites, eight walk-through sites, 21 mobile units, plus the Glasgow Lighthouse Lab which is working round the clock to process samples.

In Scotland, the UK Government is providing all COVID testing and test processing outside of the NHS. Around two-thirds of all daily tests are provided by the UK Government, in support of Scotland's health services.

Tests must be booked in advance at www.nhsinform.scot/test-and-protect or by calling 0800 028 2816. People should only book a test if they have coronavirus symptoms: a high temperature, a new and continuous cough, or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste.

Health Minister Lord Bethell said:

We continue to expand UK Government testing to make sure that everyone with symptoms can get a test, with our new walk-in sites making it even easier no matter where you live.

This new site forms part of our UK testing network, which has the capacity to test more than a million people a week and is growing all the time.

If you have symptoms of coronavirus, I urge you to book a test today, and follow the advice of contact tracers if you are contacted to protect others around you and stop the spread of the virus.

This is a UK-wide effort and we are proud to be working with a number of partners to turn this ambition into a reality and roll out additional capacity to where it is needed.

Baroness Dido Harding, Interim Executive Chair of the National Institute for Health Protection, said:

The UK Government's new walk-through sites offer communities better access to coronavirus testing, so everyone with symptoms can get a test. This new site is part of our ongoing work to expand testing across the UK to deliver 500,000 tests a day by the end of October.

Please book a test if you have coronavirus symptoms: a new continuous cough, a high temperature and a loss or change in sense of smell or taste.

Everybody should continue to think: 'hands, face, space', and follow the advice of contact tracers if you are contacted – this is the only way we can return to a more normal way of life.

UK Government Minister for Scotland, Iain Stewart, said:

The UK Government is helping all parts of the UK fight the coronavirus pandemic

Testing is vital, helping to manage local outbreaks and protecting people's livelihoods. The UK Government is providing the bulk of Covid testing in Scotland, and this new walk-through centre is just the latest in our extensive testing network.

We are pleased to be working with local and commercial partners. These sites are not possible without the hard work of many people. I would like to thank everyone involved for their incredible efforts for the good of the country at this difficult time.

Simon Venn, Mitie Chief Government & Strategy Officer, said:

Our priority during the pandemic is to support the nation's efforts to fight COVID-19 and help keep the country running. Testing is a critical part of the UK's strategy to combat coronavirus and we're proud to support the UK Government with this vital task.

A big thank you to all the NHS staff, Mitie employees and other frontline heroes in Dundee, who are working tirelessly to keep us all safe.

[£3 billion affordable housing guarantee scheme to be operated by Ara Venn](#)

Housing Minister Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP has today (16 October 2020) announced that ARA Venn will manage the government's new £3 billion Affordable Homes Guarantee Scheme (AHGS 2020).

Today, contracts were signed for investment management firm ARA Venn to deliver the £3 billion scheme that will provide cost-effective long-term loans to registered providers of affordable homes.

The new Affordable Homes Guarantee Scheme will help to finance affordable homes across England, including for social rent, affordable rent and shared ownership.

The funding will provide low-cost, flexible loans that will support Registered Providers to deliver their development plans and deliver new affordable homes. The scheme will be complementary to the new Affordable Homes Programme.

Today we have also published [the scheme rules](#), helping Registered Providers to plan ahead and prepare their applications for the support.

The scheme will be formally opened for applications in the coming weeks, with the first loans to be delivered next year. We will publish these details in due course.

Housing Minister Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP said:

Ensuring everyone has the opportunity to access a secure, affordable home is central to the mission of this government and our £3 billion Affordable Homes Guarantee scheme will play a vital part in achieving this.

ARA Venn's wealth of investment expertise will prove invaluable to delivering another 17,000 much-needed new affordable homes to families across the country.

Richard Green, Partner, Portfolio Manager of AHGS20 at ARA Venn said:

We are delighted to have been appointed as the manager of the new Affordable Housing Guarantee Scheme. The scheme will offer registered providers very attractively priced long-term loans to support the vital housing that they provide.

We look forward to establishing the scheme as a key partner to support the vision and ambition of the social housing industry. The ARA Group has a strong commitment to Environmental, Social, Governance (ESG), firmly believing in long term responsible investment and delivering a positive social impact from this scheme is a reflection of that.

Today's announcement follows the launch last month of the new £11.5 billion Affordable Homes Programme, which will be delivered over 5 years from 2021 to 2026, providing up to 180,000 new homes across the country, should economic conditions allow.

More than 1.5 million new homes have been delivered since 2010, including more than 460,000 affordable homes. More than 644,000 households have been helped to purchase a home since spring 2010 through government schemes including Shared Ownership, Help to Buy Equity Loans, Help to Buy ISAs and Right to Buy.

About ARA Venn

ARA Venn (the trading name of Venn Partners LLP) ("the firm") is an investment manager in European real estate private debt.

The firm specialises in creating products that provide investors with compelling returns, whilst remaining competitive, efficient and transparent for the borrower.

[ARA Venn](#) serves the investment needs of a diverse range of government entities, global institutions and private investors.

Applications to the scheme must be:

- from Registered Providers of affordable housing
- to support the delivery of social rent, affordable rent and affordable home ownership
- to support new-build affordable homes

Statement of the United Kingdom on the Launch of the UNTOC Review Mechanism

World news story

Delivered at the 10th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC)



Thank you Mr President for giving me the floor,

On behalf of the United Kingdom, I would like to start by expressing our sincere gratitude and deep appreciation for your efforts to convene the 10th Session of the Conference of Parties, during the international, COVID-19 pandemic. It is testament to technology that still we've been able to enhance international goals to combat transnational organised crime and launch the UNTOC Review Mechanism.

We are proud that we, as States Parties to the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime and its Protocols on Trafficking in Persons, Smuggling of Migrants and Illicit Trafficking in Firearms were able to adopt, in 2018, through consensus, and after almost a decade of negotiation; Resolution 9/1 on the Establishment of the Mechanism for the Review of the Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto.

We are also proud that States Parties were able to agree to launch the Mechanism this week and commend the efforts of the Italian delegation to table the resolution at the 10th Session of the Conference of Parties. We are proud to have added our name to the list of co-sponsors.

The Review Mechanism will not only allow States Parties to demonstrate best practice in the tangible implementation of their international obligations but facilitate peer-to-peer assistance; identify future capacity needs; and demonstrate where there are existing gaps within the Convention. It will also provide an essential platform to demonstrate best practice in the promotion

of public-private partnerships and the development of national responses to combat crime, in collaboration with survivors, victims and first-responders. We remain committed to working with those countries, which will review the United Kingdom, to ensure that the views and contributions of our civil society are accurately reflected.

We underscore that the review mechanism will be funded entirely within the existing regular budget and that 'where necessary, additional costs shall be funded from extra-budgetary resources.' The United Kingdom is aware of the UNODC's Global Programme aimed at assisting States to mitigate and overcome gaps and challenges identified in the implementation of the Review Mechanism. We look forward to closely working with you to exploring ways to support this across the next decade.

Thank you Mr President.

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