

PM to chair new Cabinet Committee on Climate Change

The Prime Minister is announcing today, Thursday 17 October, that he will chair a new Cabinet Committee on Climate Change. This will drive further action across government to protect our environment, reduce emissions and improve air quality.

The first government committee of its kind, it will bring together ministers responsible for domestic and international climate change policy and provide a forum to hold departments to account for their actions to combat climate change.

This will ensure that the action we take here in the UK to deliver on our net zero commitment and our wider international effort to tackle climate change properly support and reinforce each other.

Getting to net zero emissions by 2050 will require profound change across government, and across society, and the Committee will play an essential role in co-ordinating this strategy.

The Committee will also oversee the UK's preparations to host the UN's major climate summit COP26, in November 2020.

The Committee will include representation from the departments responsible for taking this agenda forward including the Foreign Secretary, the Chancellor, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, the Business Secretary, the Environment Secretary, the Transport Secretary, the International Development Secretary and the Housing Secretary.

The Prime Minister said:

I want us to become the cleanest, greenest society on earth, and inspire countries around the world to follow our lead so that our children can breathe clean air and benefit from the wonderful flora and fauna of this earth. We know that people across the UK are passionate about protecting our planet, and we need to continue building on the excellent progress this government has made in tackling climate change and improving our environment.

That's why I'm announcing today that I will personally chair a new cross-government Committee on Climate Change, bringing together my ministers to galvanise action to tackle the great environmental challenges we face.

Safeguarding in the aid sector: Written Ministerial Statement

This week marks one year on since the UK Department for International Development hosted the 2018 [Safeguarding Summit, Putting People First: tackling sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in the aid sector](#).

In early 2018 the aid sector's failure over many years to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH) came into sharp relief.

The shocking stories that emerged exposed how aid workers had been allowed to get away with sexual misconduct. Their actions undermined trust in the whole sector and all the positive work that it does.

So from February 2018 DFID set out to work with others to change the way the aid sector tackles SEAH, from root to branch.

The October 2018 summit in London was an important milestone. More than 500 organisations came together to make commitments for change. This included 22 donors – who provide 90% of global ODA. We committed to global standards on prevention and improved processes covering ethical behaviour, robust recruitment and complaints processes.

These were not empty promises. Work is ongoing to put victims and survivors first and drive real culture change across the aid sector. This includes:

DFID's £10 million project with INTERPOL to help stop perpetrators of SEAH moving around the aid sector by strengthening criminal record checks and information sharing between countries. Regional hubs are being set up and priority countries have been identified.

The Misconduct Disclosure Scheme, which means employers can share data on conduct and disciplinary records related to sexual misconduct with greater confidence. It is still early days, but the over 1,500 requests for information since January have prevented the hiring of at least 10 individuals.

Awarding the contract this month for DFID's £10 million Resource and Support Hub to provide guidance, support and training to NGOs and others and access to independent investigators for smaller charities.

Today, DFID is publishing [three reports showing some of the progress made](#) and the challenges remaining.

The first has updates from each of the eight groups which made commitments at the summit: donors, UK NGOs, private sector suppliers, the United Nations, International Financial Institutions, CDC, research funders, and Gavi and the Global Fund. Initiatives include new tools and guidance for NGOs; mechanisms

to collaborate and learn lessons among private sector suppliers; a new reporting tool for United Nations staff; the development of a Good Guidance Note by International Financial Institutions and CDC; an evidence review of safeguarding challenges by research funders; and the rollout of new training by Gavi and the Global Fund.

The second covers how donors are meeting their commitments. This includes the adoption of a new OECD Development Assistance Committee recommendation on ending SEAH in the aid sector; work to align donor SEAH clauses in funding agreements with multilateral agencies; and collective leverage to drive change across the UN. Donors are continuing to strengthen accountability, build more robust systems and drive culture change across the whole international system.

The third gives more details about what DFID has done. We have been clear that any sexual misconduct is totally unacceptable. But we know that sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in the aid sector still happens far too often.

The international work led by DFID over the last year has generated good momentum and is starting to deliver results. But we must collectively keep working until every individual feels able to speak up and challenge abuses of power wherever they occur.

We must continue to do all we reasonably can to make zero tolerance a reality, by which we mean responding appropriately to every single report or case.

We must prevent SEAH from happening, listen to those affected, respond appropriately when allegations are made, and learn from every single case.

This is just the beginning of a long-term process.

I will build on the work of my predecessors to maintain momentum, to ensure the failings of the past do not happen again and to deliver better results for the people we serve.

If we do not get things right on safeguarding, and ensure the protection of the most vulnerable, then we fail in our ultimate goal to support the world's poorest and jeopardise all the positive work aid does.

The commitments made at the London summit are having a positive impact. But more is required by every organisation and every programme if we are going to stop sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in the aid sector. Something which we must achieve.

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[Health and wellbeing amongst staff](#)

It's a pleasure to be here.

My team have been really excited about the work that has been going on, which I will come onto in a minute.

I follow 2 fantastic speeches. Firstly, the former minister [Sarah Newton], who I am just a mere replacement for, with a show of brilliance. And I am really grateful for the huge amount of work that she is continuing to do, particularly in getting cross-party support in this incredibly important area.

Secondly, a brilliant speech about the shining best practice of John Lewis and the work they've done; and I am full of admiration for John Lewis. Not just because I spent most of my wedding anniversary on Sunday in the Cheltenham store.

My 10 week old baby Margot insisted on being carried the entire time because she loved all the layouts and the colours.

That aside, what has been set out about investing in staff, supporting staff, making sure those staff feel valued and can be productive and can stay in the workplace is a huge step forward. The key message here is that it is a win-win.

It's not just good for the staff, though it is obviously good for the staff.

It is good for business, it is good for the government and this is a really important area of work for the government.

We have commitments to get more people with disabilities and long term health conditions into the workplace. And we have managed to get 404,000 more disabled people into work in the last 2 years alone – over a million more in the last 6 years – supported by schemes such as disability confident, access to work, more personalised, tailored support through Universal Credit and sharing best practices with businesses.

But that's only half the challenge. The other half is making sure that people do not crash out of work. We lose an estimated 300,000 people a year through mental health conditions and it is crystal clear that by using early intervention within the workplace it is significantly easier to support someone than once they've crashed out to try to rebuild their confidence to get them back into work.

And that's why as a government we have commissioned this vital consultation [[Health is everyone's business: proposals to reduce ill health-related job loss](#)], and I know many members of this audience have contributed, and we've been overwhelmed with really helpful, constructive feedback into that consultation.

Because obviously, we need to increase the capacity of health support workers, not just for organisations like John Lewis who are leading the way, a shining example, but for those small and medium businesses that make up 40% of the private sector jobs. And I know this first hand. Before I came to parliament I ran my own small business. I had staff who had health challenges and by making very, very small changes, more often than not, we were able to keep that person in work, keep a brilliant team member for the business and we benefitted.

Now some of those asks are about increasing capacity, some are about improving signposting. Obviously big organisations like John Lewis have got collective expertise in this area. It's a given, its embedded into their very culture. But for a lot of those small and medium sized businesses, they don't have human resources departments. They don't have personnel departments, they are busily trying to stay a thriving growing small business. Therefore collectively, we must do better: to signpost them, to give them the confidence to seek that additional support.

And it has not been missed – like in most meetings I attend there is a bit of a financial ask about a tax incentive (for supporting employees experiencing mental health issues). Now that is a matter for the Treasury.

But what I would say is key for us, partly through the consultation, partly through the ongoing work that you are doing is to gather that evidence so we can prove to those in treasury that early intervention is a win-win; not just for the business and not just for the employee but also for the treasury who have to pick up the cost once people crash out of work.

And the final thing I would say that shows just how important this is – you

may have heard some rumours about a potential forthcoming election. People are campaigning there are hustings going on...

Yes, the Speaker's election – I don't know which other one you might have thought about.

And it's interesting, that as the 10 candidates to become Speaker, people who represent the House of Commons, who are responsible for our welfare as MPs on a day to day basis – one of the big issues they're campaigning on is to improve this support for us in the workplace. So if we accept this should be a given, then it should be a given for everybody in society.

So I pay tribute to all of you who are doing fantastic things.

Thank you for what you are doing, keep giving me that evidence, it will champion the work that I am pushing on, but more importantly Sarah [Newton] through her amazing cross party work to make sure that this is something, one of those few areas that politicians of all persuasions can get behind because it is a genuine win-win.

Thank you.

Chancellor marks beginning of decade of renewal for UK economy

A new chapter for the UK economy has begun which will kickstart a decade of renewal the Chancellor, Sajid Javid, will say at the annual IMF and World Bank meetings in Washington D.C. today (17 October).

In meetings with his international counterparts, the Chancellor will support calls from the IMF for countries to invest in long term growth. He will say that after a decade of hard work to get the deficit under control, the UK is determined to take advantage of record low borrowing costs for productive investment that improves living standards. He will also say that getting Brexit done is essential to unlocking the investment that has been held up by Brexit uncertainty, and that the UK will remain an open economy.

During his first trip to the US since entering 11 Downing Street, the Chancellor will meet with Kristalina Georgieva, the new Managing Director of the IMF, attend G7 and G20 meetings, and separately meet finance ministers from the US (Steven Mnuchin), India (Nirmala Sitharaman), Ireland (Paschal Donohoe), Japan (Tarō Asō), and The Netherlands (Wopke Hoekstra).

Further Information

On Tuesday, the IMF forecast the UK to be the third fastest growing G7

economy next year, ahead of Italy, Germany, France and Japan.