

The Chancellor's speech at the GG2 Leadership Awards

Thank you.

It's great to be back.

And an incredible honour to top the Asian Power List for the second year in a row.

I'm particularly delighted that two of my Cabinet colleagues are in the top ten this year.

A good reminder that this is the most ethnically diverse Cabinet ever. So congratulations to Priti...

...our outstanding Home Secretary...

...almost as good as the last one!

And can I say a particular well done to my colleague and friend Rishi Sunak.

Let me just say this:

As Chief Secretary to the Treasury, his job is to keep a tight grip on the public finances.

But last month's Spending Review saw the biggest increase in public spending for twenty years.

Keep up the good work, Rishi!

And you know what – I'd also like to congratulate the person in third place on tonight's list – Gina Miller.

We may not agree on the biggest issue of the day.

But she deserves the utmost respect for her determination in pursuing what she believes in. Congratulations to all of you...

...to everyone on this year's Power List...

...and to all the award winners tonight. But tonight isn't just about winners.

It's about all of us.

Like everyone on the Power List, I didn't get here on my own.

It's a cliché – but its true:

We really are all standing on the shoulders of giants. My Mum and Dad landed at a cold, dark Heathrow more than fifty years ago...

...with just £1 in their pockets...

...determined to build a better life for the next generation of Javids. They were part of a community...

...and a generation...

...whose sacrifice and hard work shaped not just the lives of us, their children...

...or even of the British-Asian diaspora...

...but have helped shape modern Britain itself. I'm incredibly proud of what our community has achieved.

British Asians are some of the most industrious and accomplished individuals in the country.

Despite being only around 6% of the population...

British Asians generate over £100bn a year to the UK economy...

Starting businesses, creating jobs, and paying taxes...

...which I'm especially grateful for, now that I'm Chancellor! But what really puts the British Asian community at the very heart of modern Britain isn't just economic value – it's your values.

Values like a belief in the importance of hard work, family and public service.

A conviction that education and entrepreneurship are good for individuals – and good for society, too.

And an understanding that true freedom demands true social mobility.

Ideas and values that will continue to guide me as Chancellor.

This year's awards, of course, celebrate the 150th birthday of Mahatma Gandhiji.

There is perhaps no greater giant – and no broader shoulders – than Bapu.

Shortly after Gandhiji was murdered, my predecessor as Chancellor of the Exchequer, Stafford Cripps, summed it up like this:

“No other man in history...has so forcefully and convincingly demonstrated the power of the spirit over material things.” Those words are as true today as they were 70 years ago.

Gandhiji dedicated his life to the values of non-violence, equality, and

democracy.

In his pursuit of ideals that were bigger and more important than himself, he sacrificed everything.

Including, in the end, his own life. When he died, his belongings were worth just a few pounds:

A dhoti, a spinning wheel, a pair of glasses.

But the moral inheritance he left us is unmatched.

The clarity of his ideas was powerful enough to inspire not just his brothers and sisters in India.

He became an example to people around the world, from the US civil rights movement to the South African battle against apartheid.

And he showed us that words and ideas can be as powerful as guns. But in today's deeply divided political landscape it can feel like his teachings are going unheeded.

Never in my lifetime has there been a political moment like this.

MPs' children facing death threats.

Rising extremism on our streets.

Attacks on mosques and synagogues, temples and churches. Britain for me has always been an open, tolerant and outward-looking place.

But we can never take that for granted.

So the question facing us today is this:

How do we win the argument for tolerance?

For humility?

For the belief that diversity is a strength not a weakness? Well, a good place to start is to remember Gandhiji and pass on his lessons to the next generation.

That's why I was incredibly proud, as Culture Secretary, to oversee the new Gandhiji statue outside Parliament.

It was the first statue in Parliament Square of someone who had never held public office.

And seeing it unveiled in 2015 was one of the proudest moments in my political career.

The father of the world's biggest democracy...

...watching over the home of the world's oldest democracy. Tonight, we take another step in honouring his memory.

You might not know this, but when you become Chancellor you also become Master of the Mint.

And being in charge of the nation's coins is not an opportunity I'm going to pass up! In recent years, we've had coins to commemorate important figures from every walk of British life.

Now is the time to add to that list.

So I can announce tonight...

...that I've asked the team at the Royal Mint to bring forward proposals...

...for a new coin to commemorate Gandhiji. Tonight we're rightly celebrating the phenomenal success of the British Asian community.

But Gandhiji taught us that power doesn't just come from wealth or high office.

We must always remember the values he lived his life by...

...and that our parents brought with them when they arrived here all those years ago. That success means a loving family as much as a thriving business.

That free enterprise must be balanced with a strong community.

That economic responsibility must be balanced with social responsibility.
And that we should always look for ways to demonstrate...

...as Gandhiji did throughout his life...

...the power of the spirit over material things.

Thank you.

Commonwealth trade ministers: Reform WTO and resist protectionism

They will also work urgently together towards reforming the World Trade Organisation, which sets the global rules for international trade.

Following a meeting in London, ministers from the 53 Commonwealth member countries declared their collective support for free trade in a transparent,

inclusive, fair and open multilateral trading system, with the WTO as its core institution.

They agreed that any WTO reform should take into account the views of all members, underlining the special circumstances of the developing and the least developed countries, as well as small and vulnerable economies, including Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

Ministers also endorsed an action plan designed to boost trade among their countries to at least \$2 trillion by 2030, through the Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda. Intra-Commonwealth trade is projected to reach \$700 billion by next year.

Commonwealth Secretary-General Patricia Scotland said:

The multilateral trading system is the only way for our countries, as diverse as they are, to trade in a predictable, stable, transparent and fair environment. While the global trading system may be far from perfect, it is the surest pathway towards eradicating poverty.

Building on this, the Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda will help businesses, including micro, small and medium sized enterprises, to plug into global trade networks and benefit from world trade. In this way, intra-Commonwealth trade offers immense opportunities to contribute to reducing poverty and achieving sustainable development.

The Chair of the meeting, UK Secretary of State for International Trade and President of the Board of Trade Liz Truss said:

The UK along with its Commonwealth partners has today clearly set out its commitment to fight against protectionism. We must work together to promote free trade and reform the multilateral system to make sure it works for every nation, small or large.

Trade has the power to drive growth, jobs and opportunities – it is an essential tool in the fight against extreme poverty and insecurity.

By sharing experience across the diverse Commonwealth community, we can help to break down existing barriers to trade which currently prevent businesses in all our countries from trading successfully.

Ministers called for an end to the impasse regarding the WTO's Appellate Body – a key panel of judges, whose rulings help resolve the trade disputes.

They highlighted the need to update WTO rules to address new challenges and opportunities, including e-commerce. They pledged support for a global agreement that would prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, and eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing by the end of 2019.

In their communiqué issued from the meeting, ministers also welcomed progress made under the Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda, including the work of active country-led 'clusters' focused on five areas: digital, physical, regulatory, supply side and business-to-business connectivity.

The outcomes of the meeting will inform leaders' discussions at the forthcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Kigali, Rwanda in June 2020.

The Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda on Trade and Investment was adopted by the Commonwealth Heads of Government in April 2018. It aims to support global growth, job creation, the sharing of best practices and learning and sustainable development among members.

Work under the Connectivity Agenda is carried out through country-led thematic working groups, or 'clusters', in the following areas: physical (led by The Gambia), digital (UK and South Africa), regulatory (Barbados), supply side (Vanuatu) and business-to-business (Bangladesh) connectivity.

For more information, visit: thecommonwealth.org

[Lord Agnew Schools North East speech](#)

Good morning and thank you for your kind invitation to speak at one of the biggest education events in your region.

It's great to be at the Schools North East summit. Twelve years after a group of head teachers first got together to create what is still, unbelievably, the only UK regional network of schools.

I'm no-one's idea of a die-hard football fan, but St James' Park is one of the oldest grounds in the world. It's part of our national heritage.

My local team is actually Norwich City, and it just so happens that the last time we played Newcastle, back in August, the heroic Canaries won 3-1. Sadly not a performance they've managed to maintain – I was at the Aston Villa game on Saturday where they were thrashed 5-1.

Today I want to talk about a project that many of us in this room have been working on for the past twelve months. One year ago, almost to the day, the Department for Education launched Opportunity North East – a £24 million

programme to improve education and employment outcomes for the young people of the region.

When we launched the programme, we knew the North East faced some unique challenges.

Of all the regions, the North East has consistently had the lowest proportion of young people in good and outstanding secondary schools. Fewer 18-year-olds from the North East attend the country's top universities when compared to any other region. It lags behind others in terms of securing a sustained destination, like education or employment, after GCSE age.

There are too many education measures on which the North East is listed ninth in the list of nine English regions. Of course, everyone in this room will know the real picture isn't so black and white. In fact, the North East has some of the best performing primary schools in the country. Children in the region can expect a great start.

But when they move from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3, something seems to change—something that leaves many, particularly the most disadvantaged, struggling to keep up with their peers elsewhere. It seems the gulf between the primary and secondary curricula is too wide for some young pupils.

Whatever the source of the problem, Opportunity North East was launched in part to tackle this very issue. That was challenge number one, which I'll return to later. But there are others.

After talking with key stakeholders in the region and analysing the data, we identified four more challenges that Opportunity North East aims to address.

We need to unlock the potential of young people in 30 of our secondary schools. We need to boost teacher recruitment, retention and development. We want to help far more young people find a pathway to a good job. And finally, we want to see many more young people progress to high quality higher education.

A year on, how are we doing?

The first thing we did was put together a strategic board made up of regional stakeholders who are passionate about the aims of Opportunity North East. Partners from schools, local enterprise partnerships, local authorities, further education, universities, businesses and Schools North East – all are on the board, and are proof of the regional collaboration driving this project.

In March, we launched the ONE Vision Schools programme—a three-year investment involving 28 secondary schools across the North East. Each of these schools currently needs support and are committed to improving; our aim is to help them become good schools.

Those ONE Vision schools include Newcastle's own Kenton School. There's also Polam Hall School in Darlington, originally founded as a Quaker 'finishing school' for girls, and Durham's Tanfield School, where England women's

football goalkeeper Carly Telford was educated.

Each school has been matched with a high-performing school leader who will work with the head teacher to help diagnose the most pressing priorities, and develop a bespoke improvement plan. This includes all our ONE Vision schools, to fund professional development for up to four governors from each school.

Finally, through our analysis of need, we've identified over £5 million of savings for those schools to work on. All of our ONE Vision schools have great potential. They just need help unlocking it.

Moving back to another core challenge, in the past year we've been talking to all the experts –head teachers, charities like the SHINE Trust and the Education Endowment Foundation, and to Schools North East – to find out why so many children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, find the jump from primary to secondary school such a struggle.

As part of that conversation, we invited the region's schools, trusts and local authorities to put forward their own proposals to better support pupils as they move from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3. The purpose of this project was to fund those we think could have the greatest positive impact for children.

By July, we had received some 32 draft proposals from local schools, trusts and authorities. By early next year, we will begin funding a handful, monitoring pupils as they move through the first three years of secondary school. In the summer, we also hosted an information event where teachers, school leaders and local officials got together to hear examples of what was working outside the region.

The event was so popular, we couldn't fit everyone in the room and had to hold a second event a week later. Blackpool is a case in point. As part of its own Opportunity Area programme, it has been trialling a special town-wide "transition week" involving all Blackpool primary and secondary schools.

Young pupils are offered taster lessons to calm those back-to-school nerves, while heads from both primary and secondary schools work together on curriculum planning. As a result, pupils in Blackpool are already showing improved progress in Year 7 and Year 8—the so-called "lost years" for too many disadvantaged pupils.

I also want to highlight a third and final piece of work. In the past year we've been working to help send more young people in the North East to the country's most selective universities, based on an approach developed by the Elephant Group. Formed by a collection of London head teachers, the Elephant Group's mission is to ensure that the top third of non-selective state school pupils get to attend the top third universities.

The Elephant Group is piloting a participation programme for sixth formers in parts of England—helping them with their university applications and prepping them for admissions tests. We've been working with local schools to bring the Elephant Group's ongoing pilot to the North East, and will be holding an information session next month at Cardinal Hulme Catholic School to target

help where it is most needed.

We're also looking at introducing "nudge" methods, such as undergraduates writing letters to sixth formers and other young people from similar backgrounds, sharing their university stories and inspiring them to join them. After all, Durham is already home to one of the best universities in the country.

Why shouldn't young people who were born down the road from it go there—or to Cambridge or Oxford or Bath for that matter? That's the story of Opportunity North East so far. But it's part of a wider story—one that affects schools across the country.

Over the next three years £14 billion of additional funding is going into the school system. Plus a pension funding increase of £4.5 billion – by some measures the biggest one-off boost to education funding for 15 years. We are also rolling out T Levels, the new gold standard in technical education.

Some 50 providers across the country will deliver the first T Levels from 2020—including four from the North East: Durham Sixth Form Centre, Gateshead College, New College Durham and St Thomas Moore Catholic School.

We're expanding the free schools programme with the aim of creating thousands of good school places across the country. And there are many successful ones in the area already. One example is Wynyard Church of England primary school in Stockton-On-Tees. The school, which opened in 2015, achieved an outstanding Ofsted Judgement in April 2018 whilst still in temporary accommodation.

Finally, we're rolling out a fully-funded, two-year package of training and support for early career teachers, to help recruit and retain the best and the brightest. In fact, as part of Opportunity North East, teachers here get access to this programme a year early. This gives them access to high-quality training, a trained mentor, and time off their teaching timetable to focus on their own personal development.

None of this would amount to anything, of course, without the hard work you all put in, day in, day out. I've been an education minister for two years and have worked closely with trusts for nearly nine years.

Throughout that time I've never failed to be impressed by the dedication and passion you all bring to our educational institutions, in the face of many and varied challenges.

The best way to overcome those challenges is to work together, which is why collaboration is at the heart of Opportunity North East. This is a unique region. It stretches from coastal towns to rural hamlets, with every kind of school dotting its landscape.

We need your local expertise—the hard-won knowledge of local authorities, enterprise partnerships, colleges, universities, businesses, schools—so that we make the changes that work for you, not for us.

This is part of the government's broader plan to fire up the Northern Powerhouse; to increase productivity across the region. by giving the North more control. At the heart of that goal is improving education right here, from the schools near St James' Park to every corner of the North East.

As you all know, achieving that aim isn't a question of talent—the region is full of it. It's a question of opportunity.

Thank you.

[Upholding peace in Colombia](#)

Thank you very much, Mr President. As it's the first time I'm speaking in the chamber, let me congratulate you on assuming the presidency and thank our Russian colleagues for the presidency in the month of September.

It's very good once more to have the Foreign Minister with us. You're very welcome, Foreign Minister. It's always good to have you here. And we appreciate the seriousness with which you take this Council's consideration of this important mission. And thank you also to the SRSG for the briefing.

I think we all know that we're meeting almost three years since the peace agreement was signed in November 2016 and significant progress has been made since then. Transitional justice institutions have gained more stable ground, illegal crop substitution programmes are underway and thousands of ex-combatants are being re-incorporated into civilian life. And there have been other advances.

The progress, however significant, though, has been met with a number of significant challenges. The recent announcement by former FARC leaders that they were returning to armed activity was an obstacle. We have to admit that, but we should not let it overshadow positive steps forward. We condemn the dissidents' rejection of the peace accords, but at the same time, we also welcome the swift response by the Colombian government, the FARC political party and the transitional justice system, among other stakeholders. It remains clear – and this is welcome – that the majority of former FARC combatants remain committed to the peace process. Of course, we must guard against complacency and we must step up efforts to ensure that currently manageable threats like these do not escalate and worsen and spiral beyond our control. So rather than calling broadly for the implementation of the agreement, which is customary at this session, I'd like to particularly respond to the requests made by High Commissioner Archila, who is in the room today, on the council's recent trip to Colombia, for us to be more specific in our appeals.

Firstly, therefore, Mr President, we recognize the political and financial challenges that face the Colombian government. But we believe that sufficient

funding for rural development in the 170 PDET municipalities is essential to deliver the accords. Adequate resources should also be made available to the transitional justice system and reincorporation process, as these are crucial for public and ex-combatant trust in the peace process and therefore to ex-combatants' continued participation in it. Increased state presence in rural areas will assist in addressing ongoing security issues, not least the killing of former FARC members, community leaders and human rights defenders, as we've discussed here before.

Secondly, Mr. President, I'd like to underscore the importance of the party's renewed high-level engagement with vital spaces for dialogue, including: the Commission for the Follow-Up, Promotion and Verification of the Final Agreement; the National Commission of Guarantees; and the National Reincorporation Council. These mechanisms have been less active recently, but they serve an important purpose in maintaining communication and coordination on the accords.

Looking ahead, Mr President, to emerging developments, on 27 October, Colombians will vote in regional and local elections, a milestone on the road to peace, especially given the strong regional focus of the peace agreement. The SG's report highlighted worrying statistics of candidates being threatened or killed. In this regard, we welcome the signature of the new National Pact for Political Culture and Non-Violence during the electoral campaign. We call on all stakeholders to adhere to this pact, to refrain from violence and intimidation and to ensure peaceful elections.

Mr President, the UK commends the Colombian government for the progress made so far amid challenging circumstances. We look forward to continuing this support along Colombia's road to sustainable peace.

Thank you.

[UKAEA welcomes Government announcement on Culham campus](#)

On Wednesday, the Government confirmed its backing for a project to develop new fusion facilities, infrastructure and apprenticeships at UKAEA's Culham site.

[It was included in a series of measures announced by Business & Energy Secretary Andrea Leadsom to support UK researchers and businesses.](#)

Professor Ian Chapman, CEO of UKAEA, commented: "We are delighted with recent Government investments in UKAEA and fusion research, notably in designing the UK's own fusion powerplant – STEP – and a major upgrade to the Culham campus."