

[News story: Over 160 firms are now signed up to the Women in Finance Charter](#)

A further 26 companies have signed up to the [Women in Finance Charter](#), including the Bank of England, Deloitte, and Tesco Bank, increasing the number of employees covered by [the Charter](#) to over 600,000. To coincide with the launch, and in collaboration with HM Treasury, Virgin Money has also created the Women in Finance app to support companies who want to sign [the Charter](#) and take action to improve gender balance within their organisation.

HM Treasury's [Women in Finance Charter](#) asks financial firms to commit to four industry actions to prepare their female talent for leadership positions. Over 600,000 employees in the UK – over half of those employed in financial services – are now covered by the plan, an increase of over 43,000 since July this year.

Since [the Charter](#) launched, 120 financial services firms have committed to have at least 30% women in senior roles by 2021 and of those, 40 firms have committed to a 50/50 gender split in senior roles by 2021.

Today's (10 November 2017) new signatories will announce their targets in February 2018.

Among the new signatories to [the Charter](#) are the Payment Systems Regulator, RSA Group, Allianz Insurance, UK Finance, the Association for Financial Markets in Europe, Old Mutual Wealth and Funding Circle.

The Women in Finance app which is also announced today, will feature video case studies, research and practical tools to support companies who want to act on the gender balance within their organisation.

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury, Stephen Barclay, said:

This is another excellent group of signatories to the Women in Finance Charter. Their actions, alongside those of the other signatories, have the potential to make the UK's pre-eminent financial services sector more representative and more inclusive. I'm keen to see even more firms follow their example and make a positive, public commitment to improve gender balance in our financial services.

Jayne-Anne Gadhia, CEO of Virgin Money and the government's Women in Finance Champion said:

I'm delighted to see that 162 companies have now signed up to the

Women in Finance Charter. Improving the gender balance of the financial services sector will undoubtedly improve productivity, profitability and outcomes for customers.

There are a range of issues organisations must address to develop fully inclusive workplaces. Through a recent YouGov survey we asked managers in Financial Services how greater equality in Financial Services could be achieved and they identified ten positive actions to help create the right culture.

To drive change, the Women in Finance company signatories have collaborated to share best practice on these ten positive actions, which are now freely available through the 'Women in Finance App' which is launched today. I believe this innovation will help drive improved gender balance throughout the Financial Services industry.

Stephen Jones, Chief Executive of UK Finance, said:

The Women in Finance Charter is an important part of the initiatives and support across the financial services industry for the advancement of women in senior management positions. UK Finance is proud to commit to the Charter and we have set ourselves the target of achieving 40 per cent female representation within senior management over three years, and aspire to achieve gender parity over the medium term.

Press release: New Secretary of State for International Development

Prime Minister Theresa May has appointed the Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt as International Development Secretary.

Secretary of State for International Development, Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt, said:

I am honoured to have been appointed International Development Secretary by the Prime Minister.

I look forward to working with the fantastic and dedicated DFID team to build a safer, healthier world for us all and giving the British people every reason to feel pride in what we do.

ENDS

General media queries

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[Press release: PM will meet with leaders of European business organisations: 9 November 2017](#)

The Prime Minister will meet with leaders from European business organisations on Monday (13) to discuss shared opportunities for industry as the UK prepares to leave the EU.

Theresa May will speak about the mutual importance of maintaining and developing the strong connections between EU and UK markets.

Mrs May will reiterate the UK's commitment to securing an implementation period of around two years once Britain leaves the EU in March 2019.

And she will ask the business experts from organisations including the CBI and BusinessEurope to share their input on how the UK and EU can continue to thrive side by side in industry and economic development.

The Prime Minister will also reiterate her vision set out in Florence for a bold and deep economic partnership with the EU – one in which the UK continues to be a global, free trading nation and the strongest friend and partner to the EU.

Alongside colleagues from the Department for Exiting the EU, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) and the Treasury, the Prime Minister will reflect on the historic strong relationship between European business and the UK – from BMW in Oxford building electric MINIs to Arla's work with dairy farmers across Britain.

The government has been engaging with industry through the Business Advisory Council since July this year as a vital part of preparations for leaving the EU. But this is the first meeting where she will engage directly with leaders from EU Business Organisations.

Greg Clark, Secretary of State for BEIS, will also set out the aims for the upcoming Industrial Strategy which will play a key role in UK's free market economy delivering economic and social progress for everyone in society.

Ministers attending the Downing Street roundtable, which the CBI helped to organise, will be:

- Rt Hon Greg Clark MP, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
- Rt Hon David Davis MP, Secretary of State for Exiting the EU
- Stephen Barclay MP, Economic Secretary to the Treasury

Attending businesses organisations will be:

- CBI (UK)
- Institute of Directors (UK)
- BusinessEurope (EU)
- European Services Forum (EU)
- BDI (Germany)
- BDA (Germany)
- MEDEF (France)
- Confindustria (Italy)
- CEOE (Spain)
- VNO-NCW (Netherlands)
- Ibec (Ireland)
- Confederation of Swedish Enterprise (Sweden)
- Polish Confederation of Private Employers (Lewiatan)
- Confederation of Industry of the Czech Republic, SPCR (Czech Republic)
- VBO/FEB (Belgium)

Press release: UK's £2 million tourism fund working for the Highlands

A £2 million tourism fund created by the UK Government is helping to attract more international visitors and increased spending into Inverness and Loch Ness.

The First Secretary of State Damian Green hosted a GREAT Inverness Loch Ness tourism reception in Inverness to celebrate the success of the venture and thank local businesses for their contributions.

The Minister also met with the Highland Council to discuss the progress of the Inverness and Highland City Region deal. The UK Government is investing almost £1 billion in Scottish City Deals, which aim to benefit businesses and communities across Scotland. The Inverness deal was agreed in January this year and is worth more than £300m in total. Mr Green met with Council Convener Bill Lobban and Council Leader Margaret Davidson in Inverness today.

Through the GREAT campaign the UK is directly spending £2 million over the next four years, promoting tourism in Inverness and the Highlands.

There were over 340,000 international visitors to Inverness last year, bringing with them over £115 million in additional spending. This is an increase of 46% since 2015.

First Secretary of State and Minister for the Cabinet Office Damian Green said:

It's great to see how the UK Government's investment is helping boost the numbers of tourists to Inverness and Loch Ness and deliver economic benefits for local people and businesses.

This whole region is steeped in history and surrounded by breathtaking scenery, offering our international visitors a truly spectacular and memorable experience.

I was very pleased to hear that the Inverness and Highland City Region deal is making a real difference in areas like tourism and digital connectivity. Its success reflects the UK Government's commitment to spreading economic growth to all parts of the United Kingdom.

VisitBritain Director Patricia Yates said:

The legend of Nessie is a fantastic springboard to promote the stunning landscapes, activities and experiences that you can only have on a trip to Inverness and Loch Ness.

We want to inspire visitors to book a trip right now to come and explore this part of the Highlands, spreading the economic benefits of tourism outside the peak holiday periods.

The GREAT Campaign showcases the very best of what our nation has to offer, encouraging the world to visit. Key to the success of the GREAT Inverness Loch Ness campaign has most recently been targeted activity at France, Germany and the Netherlands, with the tagline – "Come hunting for Nessie, stay for the experience." The campaign aims to deliver an additional £21.6 million in incremental spend and to sustain 400 local tourism jobs.

[Press release: Minister for the Middle East statement on Iranian involvement](#)

in Yemen

Alistair Burt expresses UK concern about the provision of ballistic missiles to Houthis.

On 6 November the Saudi-led Coalition released a statement providing details of Iranian support to the Houthis in Yemen, including via the provision of ballistic missiles. The UK has had longstanding concerns about Iranian involvement in Yemen, which we have raised with the Iranian government. The provision of weapons to the Houthis and forces aligned to former President Saleh is contrary to UN Security Council Resolutions.

Alistair Burt, Minister for the Middle East, said:

There is a critical need to end the conflict in Yemen which has created the world's most serious humanitarian crisis and poses risks to regional security and stability.

I am deeply concerned by reports that Iran has provided the Houthis with ballistic missiles, which threaten regional security and prolong the conflict. It is essential that the UN investigates these reports. The UK Government condemned the Houthi missile attack on Riyadh on 4 November, which deliberately targeted a civilian area and was intercepted over an international airport.

There remains a desperate need for a political solution to the Yemen conflict to help end the suffering of the Yemeni people, counter destabilising interference and end attacks upon neighbouring countries. The UK will continue to work towards a political settlement, and we call upon all countries in the region to support that goal. We will also continue to support our partners in the region to protect themselves against security threats.

Notes to editors

The UK is playing a leading role in the humanitarian response as the 3rd largest humanitarian donor to Yemen and the 2nd largest donor to the UN appeal. We have increased our UK aid for Yemen to £155 million for 2017/18 and are pressing the international community to step up its efforts.

Further information