

Speech: PM to athletics stars: 'your success will inspire further generations of athletes'

I am delighted to welcome you to Downing Street and to have this opportunity – on behalf of the whole country – to thank you for everything you did to make London 2017 the biggest and best World Athletics and Para Athletics Championships in history.

This was the first time that the World Athletics and Para Athletics have been held in the same city in the same summer.

And just as with the Olympics and Paralympics five years ago, you showed the world that when it comes to hosting a global sporting event there is no-where better than the United Kingdom.

The statistics speak for themselves. More people attended the World Para Athletics Championships this summer than in all previous Championships combined.

This included almost 100,000 children – with Transport for London taking the largest number of schoolchildren to a single destination in their history.

While the World Athletics Championship set a new Guinness Record for its ticket sales – with over 700,000 sold, far exceeding the previous record of just over 417,000 for the 2009 Championships in Berlin.

Across the two championships, London welcomed more than 3,000 athletes from over 200 nations competing in 250 events.

And this was all made possible by the fantastic organising team – and by an army of 4,500 volunteers.

So first of all, I want to thank Cherry Alexander and all her team at London 2017, the GLA, UK Athletics, UK sport and all the volunteers for everything they did to make these Championships such an incredible success. Second, I want to pay tribute to all our athletes in the Great Britain and Northern Ireland team.

Once again this summer we have seen the results of your incredible hard work and dedication, as you push the limits of what's possible against the toughest competition in the world.

With 39 medals in the Para Athletics, you didn't just surpass your pre-Championship target, you amassed the best tally for GB and Northern Ireland in the modern era.

And this included 30 new records, the highest number of any nation at the Championships.

In the World Athletics Championships, the nation came together to honour the most successful British athlete of all time – Sir Mo Farah.

But his retirement from the track was far from the only story of these Championships. For we also saw the emergence of an exciting new generation of British talent.

And in that 4 by 100 metres relay final...when the eyes of the world were on Usain Bolt's final race – and that American team with all its big names – it was our British team who re-wrote the script and stormed to the Gold medal.

So as we celebrate the biggest and best Championships ever – let us also look to the future with confidence.

And as we do so, let me assure you that the government will be right behind you every step of the way.

We know how crucial the lottery and other sources of funding are to your success, and I have also increased government funding to UK Sport for the Tokyo cycle. That means UK Sport have been able to invest over £27 million pounds for athletics and almost £12 million pounds for Para-Athletics for the Tokyo cycle.

And with that funding – and with all your hard work, the hours of training, those cold, dark mornings and long winters, and all the dedication that you give, I know that we can stand here today not just treasuring great memories of this summer and the summers that have gone before, but with real excitement about the future ahead.

A future in which your success will inspire further generations of athletes from Great Britain and Northern Ireland to write their own place in the history books.

A future in which your success will inspire all of us to get out there and live healthier and more active lives.

And a future in which Great Britain and Northern Ireland will truly establish our place as a global sporting superpower.

So thank you for everything that you have done.

Thank you for making our whole country so proud once again.

And let us go forward, inspired by the memory and the legacy of London 2017 – the greatest World Athletics and Para Athletics Championships of all time.

News story: Prisons Minister visits new graduate recruits as prison officer recruitment reaches record high

The Minister has met with some of the participants from [Unlocked Graduates](#), a specialist prison officer recruitment programme, at the University of Suffolk in Ipswich, which is where their prison officer training starts.

His visit follows last week's announcement of a net increase in prison officer numbers of 868 since January, meaning the government is on track to recruit its target of 2,500 by 2018.

Those taking part in the Unlocked Graduate scheme at Suffolk spend time covering technical skills before going to prisons in London or the South East, where they will put their theory into action.

Prisons Minister Sam Gyimah said:

I was hugely impressed by the enthusiasm and dedication of the Unlocked Graduates. These new recruits can help bring fresh ideas to the prison service and together with our experienced staff, can really help to make a difference and turn our prisons into places of safety and reform.

I have always been clear that as well as punishing offenders, our prisons must become places of reform and rehabilitation. We must do all we can to give prisoners the best chance to turn their lives around. The Unlocked Graduates will play a crucial part in helping to deliver that vision.

The Unlocked Graduates programme provides applicants the chance to work alongside some of the most experienced prison officers, developing vital and diverse skills whilst completing a Master's degree. More than 600 top graduates and career changers applied for just 40 places through new independent charity Unlocked Graduates.

Natasha Porter, founder of Unlocked Graduates said:

We were delighted to welcome the Minister to our first ever Summer Institute. We are asking our participants to think from day one on their wings about what could be done differently in prisons.

At the same time, their Master's degree is designed to help them think about system level change so it is critical to have this

high-level support from the Ministry of Justice.

One of the new recruits, Laura, originally from Ipswich, applied to be an Unlocked Graduate after volunteering with an organisation that worked with people in police custody and those that were homeless. She said that this experience encouraged her to go into a career where she could have a great impact on people's lives.

The 21-year-old has just completed the programme and will be joining the front line prison staff along with the other new graduate recruits.

Laura said:

As part of my degree I volunteered at an organisation that involved working with those in police custody, those with housing issues and those who were homeless so this, alongside my studies, encouraged me to pursue a career where I could help people and make an impact in social issues.

It has been an intense first few weeks as I had just a month from handing in my dissertation to starting with Unlocked Grads but I'm really enjoying it.

Since publication of the White Paper:

- we are making a substantial investment in marketing and targeted recruitment to generate even more interest in these valuable roles
- we have increased our Prison Officer Entry Level Training (POELT) training capacity by more than 75% for this year and next
- starting pay for a National based Prison officer ranges from £20,751 to £23,052 for a 37 to 41 hour week and this increases to a maximum range of £23,122 to £25,685 for the same hours

Find out more about [Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Careers](#).

Press release: Restoration of devolution a 'priority', says Secretary of State

Secretary of State, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, has said that his priority is to restore devolution in Northern Ireland – but that it is for the political parties to find a way of making it work.

He was speaking in Dublin after a series of high level engagements with the Irish Government where the current political impasse in Northern Ireland and the impact of EU Exit were discussed.

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

My priority is to see the restoration of the devolved institutions in Northern Ireland, working on a sustainable basis to deliver good government for everyone. Over the summer I have kept in touch with the political parties and I will be bringing them together over the next week as we enter a new phase of talks.

Urgent progress is required. The lack of an Executive making key decisions on matters including health and education means that public services in Northern Ireland are suffering. We need to find a way forward that will allow an Executive to be formed.

We must ensure that politicians locally are working together to strengthen the economy, to deal with the challenges and opportunities of EU Exit, and build a stronger, shared society based on respect for everyone. Ultimately, it is for Northern Ireland's political parties to find a way to make this work.

The Secretary of State met the Irish Foreign Minister, Simon Coveney TD, to discuss the next steps in the political process. The UK Government and the Irish Government have both pressed party leaders in recent weeks to form an Executive. Mr Brokenshire also met An Tanaiste, Frances Fitzgerald TD, and Justice and Equality Minister, Charlie Flanagan TD, to discuss EU Exit and security matters during his visit.

The Secretary of State took the opportunity to brief the Irish Chamber of Commerce on the recent publication of papers by the UK Government on EU Exit and its proposals to manage the border and customs arrangements between Ireland and Northern Ireland.

[Press release: M25 junction 28 upgrade backed](#)

Under the plans, junction 28 of the M25, where the motorway meets the A12 in Essex, will be reconfigured to improve traffic flow. A new two lane loop road will be created for traffic leaving the M25 for the A12, a short section of

the M25 will be widened with the eastbound A12 interchange at the junction being redesigned to reduce congestion.

Over 90% of people taking part the consultation agreed that improvements were needed at the junction, with nearly half of respondents backing option 5F – more than twice as many as the other two options put together. Highways England Project Manager Piotr Grabowiecki said:

It's great to see that there is clear backing for the improvements, and I would like to thank everyone who took part in our consultation. We can now move on to developing a detailed design for the upgrade. There will be another opportunity for anyone interested in the scheme to have their say early next year, when we put the plans to people for their views.

The scheme will improve journey times through the junction and allow more capacity on the exit slip roads, reduce the incident rate and resulting disruption at the roundabout, and minimise the impact on local air quality and noise by smoothing traffic flow. There will also be less likelihood of traffic queuing back onto the M25 due to the reconfiguration of the junction.

Proposed improvements to the M25 junction 28 roundabout

A public consultation on the options was held from Wednesday 16 November 2016 to Friday 6 January 2017. A total of 228 responses were received during this consultation. A copy of the consultation report can be found on the Highways England website and copies of the announcement flyer are available online, as well as at a variety of locations in the local area.

Anyone interested in the scheme can view an animated visualisation outlining the preferred route and sign up to receive updates on the [scheme page on the Highways England website](#).

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[News story: Help the Charity Commission develop digital services](#)

We are looking for people to help us test our digital services to make them easier to use.

We are developing a number of digital services to make it easier for you to complete tasks online. As part of this development we are testing services with the charity sector, and using the feedback to improve them.

Testing services with real users helps us to understand needs, and create the best possible experience online.

By taking part in user research and testing sessions, you'll also have the opportunity to positively influence our services.

We will be hosting several sessions across the country over the coming months. If you think you can help [complete the online form](#) and submit.