

[News story: Defence Secretary welcomes new Canadian Defence Policy](#)

On a day that Canadian Armed Forces personnel took over the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace, Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon has welcomed the new Canadian Defence Policy.

The Second Battalion, Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry today (18 June) took over the Queen's Guard at Buckingham Palace for the first time in history.

The role will involve 85 soldiers from the unit, as well as musicians from the Royal Canadian Artillery band, who are based at Garrison Edmonton, Alberta. The Canadian troops will be instantly recognisable by the distinctive French Grey colour on the collar and cuff – known as regimental facings – of their full dress scarlet tunic.

In another demonstration of the UK and Canada's strong Defence relationship, Sir Michael has given his backing to Canada's new Defence Policy.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

I welcome the new Canadian Defence Policy. Its commitments to remain Engaged in the World, and maintain Canadian contributions to peace and stabilisation, mirror our own.

I am greatly encouraged by the Policy's commitment to an uplift in the Canadian Defence budget and new capabilities. In particular, the commitment to invest \$108 billion in purchasing and upgrading Canadian Forces equipment, including a full complement of 15 new warships and 88 advanced fighter jets, is a welcome development. This is representative of the way that NATO members across the alliance are stepping up to ensure that our collective defence will have the modern capabilities needed in a changing world.

[News story: David Davis heads to Brussels tomorrow with a clear](#)

message: we are leaving the European Union

The Brexit Secretary David Davis heads into tomorrow's first official talks to leave the European Union on a mission to deliver on the will of the British people.

Despite European leaders' attempts to leave open the possibility of the UK remaining in the UK, Mr Davis will make it clear that he is determined to achieve a Brexit deal that works for the whole of the UK.

Mr Davis will lead a team of experienced negotiators to Brussels confident that he can get a positive outcome and secure a new deep and special partnership with the EU.

He will also set out a bold vision for the UK's future after it leaves the EU and the exciting opportunities that will arise from our exit.

After ten months of planning, Mr Davis will meet with the EU's Chief Negotiator, Michel Barnier to agree the structure of the negotiations ahead so officials have a framework within which to discuss substantive issues.

David Davis, Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union said: "As I head to Brussels to open official talks to leave the EU, there should be no doubt – we are leaving the European Union, and delivering on that historic referendum result.

Now, the hard work begins. We must secure a deal that works for all parts of the United Kingdom, and enables us to become a truly global Britain.

Leaving gives us the opportunity to forge a bright new future for the UK – one where we are free to control our borders, pass our own laws and do what independent sovereign countries do.

We will soon introduce bills for new immigration and customs arrangements, and the Great Repeal Bill will transpose all EU law into UK law, providing certainty for businesses.

There has been a huge amount of work across Whitehall to prepare us for these talks, and make sure we get the best possible deal with the European Union.

We are not turning our backs on Europe. It's vital that the deal we strike allows both the UK and the EU to thrive, as part of the new deep and special partnership we want with our closest allies and friends.

These talks will be difficult at points, but we will be approaching

them in a constructive way.

The start of the negotiations comes as work continues across the UK Government to prepare Britain for life outside of the EU.

This includes preparations for new bills on customs and immigration. It will also see the Government introduce a Great Repeal Bill which will convert existing EU law into UK statute and enable the smoothest possible transition at the point of leaving.

The Great Repeal Bill is expected to be introduced as part of the Queen's Speech next Wednesday.

News story: DFID staff recognised in Queen's Birthday Honours

I congratulate all the DFID staff who have been recognised for their contribution to international development.

Their awards reflect the important and life changing work being done across the world by people in this department, sometimes in challenging circumstances and dangerous environments.

The commitment and hard work of people like those honoured this year makes an important contribution to the transformative power of UK aid across the globe.

Press release: Government to confirm two-year Parliament to deliver Brexit and beyond

- Rare two-year Parliamentary session to give MPs the time to consider crucial legislation
- Double the length of a normal Parliamentary session
- Great Repeal Bill to be considered alongside other Brexit legislation and government's domestic agenda

Parliament will sit for two years instead of the usual one to give MPs enough

time to fully consider the laws required to make Britain ready for Brexit. This includes the Great Repeal Bill, which by converting existing EU law into UK statute will enable the smoothest possible transition at the point of leaving.

The government will deliver this while also addressing deep-rooted inequalities in our society in order to give everyone the opportunities they deserve. Taken together, the EU exit process and the government's domestic agenda mean the new Parliament faces a substantial legislative programme.

By doubling the length of the session the government is providing the space for MPs and peers to scrutinise and debate the government's approach to both Brexit and its domestic agenda without interruption. Next week the government will confirm the legislation required to deliver Brexit, including new laws on immigration, as set out in the government's white paper on Brexit earlier this year.

Rt Hon Andrea Leadsom MP, Leader of the House of Commons, said:

Whilst our top priority right now is supporting the victims of the terrible tragedy at Grenfell tower, we also need to look ahead by setting out a legislative programme that not only delivers a successful EU exit but also a domestic agenda which aims to tackle the social injustices in our country.

The UK will spend the next two years preparing for our departure from the European Union in a way that best places us to realise the opportunities ahead and build a fairer society.

This will require substantial amounts of legislation, beginning with the Great Repeal Bill.

We will build the broadest possible consensus for our Brexit plans and that means giving Parliament the maximum amount of time to scrutinise these bills by holding a two-year session of Parliament. It will mean we can work together to deliver a successful Brexit deal and a strong social legislative programme that delivers justice and opportunity to everyone.

[Press release: UK to observe minute's silence for victims of Grenfell](#)

Tower fire

The United Kingdom will observe a minute's silence at 11am on Monday 19 June in remembrance of those who lost their lives and all those affected by the fire at Grenfell Tower.

The silence will be marked at all Government buildings and other organisations may follow suit.

On Friday the Prime Minister met with survivors, residents, volunteers and community leaders where she set out a comprehensive package of support for victims of the tragedy.

This includes:

- A commitment that victims who lost their homes be rehoused within a maximum of three weeks;
- A £5 million Grenfell Tower Residents' Discretionary Fund, made immediately available; and
- A guarantee to rehouse people as close as practically possible to where they previously lived.

Following the second meeting of the Grenfell Tower Recovery Taskforce, chaired by the Prime Minister, the Government is today announcing further measures to support those who lost loved ones and members of the emergency services:

- Providing an additional £1.5m to pay for mental health support to the Emergency Services through Mind's Blue Light Programme, including to ensure those involved in the response to the Grenfell Tower fire are able to receive targeted support should they need it; and
- Ensuring there is tailored bereavement support for the families of those who have lost loved ones, those who have family members still missing or have been affected by the tragedy. We will offer each family support from their own named mental health practitioner, in addition to the support they receive from the police Family Liaison Officers.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

The residents of Grenfell Tower, families who have lost loved ones, and the emergency services who have been working so hard to help them have been through some of the most harrowing and traumatic experiences imaginable. As we do everything we can to help them, we will make sure they have the counselling and emotional support they need in the difficult days, weeks and years ahead.

Secretary of State for Health Jeremy Hunt said:

What we have witnessed at Grenfell is truly horrific and my thoughts are with all those affected by this terrible tragedy. We are ready to do everything we can to help – which is why the NHS will be offering specialist bereavement support to all of the bereaved families.

I would like to pay tribute to our heroic emergency services for their response – particularly those NHS staff who once again have gone above and beyond in order to provide outstanding, compassionate care.

Paul Farmer, Chief Executive of Mind, said:

This funding enables us to extend and expand Mind's Blue Light Programme so that we can continue to support and reach more people who work in the emergency services. As recent terrible events in London and Manchester have brought to light, Blue Light workers do an extremely challenging job, encountering difficult and traumatic situations. That's why it's so important that comprehensive, ongoing mental health support is available in the short and long term.

If a family is in need of extra psychological support, or if a Family Liaison Officer believes that they are and obtains the agreement of the family, the bereavement pathway announced today will provide a named NHS mental-health practitioner to provide that specific support.

Additional information:

1) LIBOR provided £10m between 2014 and 2016 to support Emergency Service Charities, including Blue Light mental health projects. At the Autumn Statement in 2016 the Government committed a further £2.3m to the Ambulance Services Charity and £1.5m to MIND for additional Blue Light Mental Health. Today the government is announcing an additional £1.5m for Blue Light Mental Health Support.

2) Mind is delivering the Blue Light Programme to provide mental health support for emergency services staff and volunteers from ambulance, fire, police and search and rescue services across England and Wales. Thousands of staff and volunteers across these services have actively challenged mental health stigma, learnt more about mental health and made positive changes in their approach to wellbeing with the support of the Blue Light Programme so far. More detail here:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/news-campaigns/campaigns/bluelight/>

3) To provide a comprehensive government response to the tragedy the Prime Minister set up the dedicated Grenfell Tower Recovery task force, chaired by her with representation from a number of Whitehall departments including the Treasury, Home Office and Department for Communities & Local Government.