

News story: Government commits to drawing up new guidance to support working mothers of premature babies.

- Guidelines will include advice on flexible working and requests for additional time off
- Key stakeholders will be invited to provide their views on best practice
- Guidance to be published on ACAS website shortly

To mark Mother's Day the Government is committing to ensure employers know how best to support working mothers who give birth to premature babies.

The Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy will work with the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS), and invite the views of premature baby charities to develop guidelines for employers on how to support their staff.

While the government expects employers to be compassionate and flexible during this difficult time, the guidance will make it easier for both working parents and employers to access advice.

The guidance will cover everything from how employers can offer flexible working arrangements following a premature birth to how to handle requests for additional time off. ACAS will publish the guidance on its website shortly.

Business Minister Margot James said:

While most employers treat their staff with compassion, it's incredibly important that they know how best to support their staff at what can be a very difficult time for working parents.

New and expectant mothers must feel confident of their rights in the workplace and this new guidance will go some way to offering those reassurances.

The UK's maternity system is one of the most generous in the world. Eligible mothers can take up to 52 weeks of leave and up to 39 weeks of pay.

The Government will keep the impact of these measures under review but does not rule out legislating in the future.

Further information

1. In 2014, the Government extended the right to ask for flexible working to all employees in work for more than 26 weeks. Previously only parents and carers had a right to request flexible working

2. Around 20 million people are now eligible to apply for flexible working, with an estimated 60,000 people a year already taking advantage of new working arrangements. Employers must have a sound business reason for rejecting any request.
 3. Shared Parental Leave was introduced to give working families more flexibility to share childcare responsibilities.
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Speech: Liam Fox's speech at the Qatar-UK Trade and Investment Conference

Good morning, and welcome to the Qatar-UK Trade and Investment Conference.

We are delighted to have you all here today in London, and tomorrow in Birmingham, in what I hope will begin a new chapter in an already strong relationship.

I would like to start by thanking the Government of the State of Qatar – and in particular, His Excellency Sheikh Abdullah bin Nasser Al Thani and His Excellency Minister Rumaihi – as well as our business participants from Qatar and the UK, and all those who have helped to organise this conference.

Qatar and the UK have enjoyed a long history – a history of cooperation, friendship and ambition.

For decades, our 2 nations have been partners in energy, foreign policy, commerce and trade.

And today, Prime Minister Sheikh Abdullah has led the largest and most senior trade delegation in our history, to the UK.

As well as being a celebration of our existing relationship, it is also, of course, a chance to build upon all we have already achieved, to look to the future as we explore the wealth of opportunities that exist between Qatar and the UK.

This conference will help transform a firm friendship into a long term strategic partnership.

And it is only natural that we should seek to deepen the relationship between our 2 countries.

At an individual level, the bond between the UK and Qatar is strong.

Each year, we welcome around 6,000 young Qataris to study in the UK – both His Highness the Emir and his father before him graduated from the Royal

Military Academy Sandhurst.

Over 60,000 Qataris travel to the UK each year – many have homes here in London. It is not hyperbole to say that, for many Qataris, the UK is already something of a home from home. But this relationship is a 2 way street.

I visited Doha twice last year, both within 3 months of becoming the Secretary of State for International Trade.

These were only 2 of a total of 6 ministerial visits that Qatar has received from the UK in the 8 months since this government took office.

Such commitment shows how invaluable our international partnership has been, politically, diplomatically and economically.

Now is the time to deepen that relationship further.

There are 3 key reasons why this is the moment to do so, and why we have gathered here today for this conference.

Firstly, the UK and Qatar both stand on the edge of an exciting future. We are 2 countries looking outwards to the world, ready to embrace global opportunities.

Secondly, we have a proven track record of successful and profitable mutual investment, and we can build upon these returns by expanding that relationship.

And thirdly, the British government, like Qatar, is embarking upon a bold industrial strategy, taking the big investment decisions required on capital projects to stimulate our economy and project our prosperity far into the future.

For the UK, last June, represented a huge opportunity as the British people voted to leave the European Union, where Britain, after 40 years, will now have the chance to create our own trade policy as we pursue a strategy of a truly Global Britain.

We are now opening a new chapter in our history.

The Prime Minister, Theresa May, came to power with the promise to build an open, outward looking nation that is ready to engage with partners across the world.

We are looking beyond the boundaries of our own continent, ready to embrace all the opportunities of this new era.

This of course means forging new ties and building new relationships with other nations.

But perhaps more importantly, it means strengthening our commitment to our oldest friends and allies.

Qatar is one of the most valued of these.

Like your [2030 National Vision](#), Britain's ambition is to build an economy that works for everyone, spreading wealth and opportunity to every corner of our country.

Like Qatar, we want to give all our citizens a stake in our country's future.

Your 2030 National Vision is among the most ambitious plans of its kind in the world.

The UK is looking on in admiration as you work tirelessly to expand your infrastructure, rebalance your economy, and nurture your country's human capital.

Like the UK's Midlands Engine and Northern Powerhouse, Qatar is developing local economic capacity to meet the challenges of the future.

Both Qatar and the UK know that such ambitions cannot be realised unilaterally.

Both nations are looking for reliable international friendships, and seeking to build long-term, committed partnerships able to rise to meet these challenges.

My own Department for International Trade was created to build and maintain these relationships, working to promote exports, attract inward investment, and create an open free trading environment.

We believe that no trade between the UK and Qatar should fail for lack of finance and insurance. That is why the UK government, through UK Export Finance, can give buyers and project sponsors in Qatar attractive long-term finance to make sourcing from the UK more competitive.

We will be doubling the finance available from UK Export Finance to support trade with Qatar to £4.5 billion. That is will be an additional £2.25 billion in support for UK companies exporting to Qatar, and for their Qatari buyers in both the public and private sectors.

In addition, following Autumn Statement 2016, UK Export Finance support will now be available in Qatari Riyal, allowing buyers in Qatar to access finance in their own currency, making the UK's world-leading goods and services even more competitive.

My Department is committed to promoting all mutual trade and investment with Qatar and this conference is proof of that commitment.

Fortunately, our nations are starting from a position of strength.

I have already mentioned our long history of political, diplomatic and commercial friendship.

Yet more recently, Qatar-UK relations have been characterised by ambitions

projects, profitable investments, and a proven track record of successful collaboration.

Most visible has been the £35 billion worth of investment that Qatar has made in the United Kingdom.

Some of the most iconic buildings of our capital city, from The Shard to Number One Hyde Park, stand as testament to the strength of our commercial relationship.

From commercial ports to hotels and hospitality, Qatari investments have made their mark on Britain as successful, profitable ventures.

It is no exaggeration to say that, through these ventures, Qatar has become part of the fabric of our nation.

Yet successful investment has not been a one-way process.

Over 600 UK firms are currently operating in Qatar, in industries from telecoms to education.

In the past decade, Shell has invested almost \$21 billion in your oil industry, making it Qatar's single largest foreign investor.

British firms have also been instrumental in helping Qatar prepare for the 2022 World Cup.

As a nation, we know a great deal about delivering such showcases – since the Sydney Olympics in 2000, there has been a British stamp on every major sporting event.

As we speak, British companies are in Qatar offering skills, knowledge and expertise on everything from stadium design and engineering to players' facilities.

Such success stories illustrate why Qatar and the UK are so economically suited to one another, and why our relationship can only go from strength to strength in the future.

Our industries and skill sets complement one another perfectly; Qatar has vast experience in large-scale construction and engineering projects, while the UK has world leading technology, education, medical and life science industries.

We each possess the skills required to help the other realise our goals, and achieve our national ambitions.

The UK government has put a bold new Industrial Strategy at the heart of its vision for Britain.

It is a keystone of our vision of a Britain that works for everyone – the strategy will help to rebalance our economy, shifting commercial focus to the dynamic, innovative regions of Britain, including Birmingham and the

Midlands, where tomorrow's leg of the conference is being held.

It will also work to spread prosperity and opportunity to every corner of our country, developing skills and upgrading our national infrastructure, giving the UK the tools it required to meet the challenges of the future.

We are not shying away from the bold decisions required.

Since coming to office, we have approved the construction of a third runway at Heathrow, published a National Infrastructure and Construction pipeline, and announced more than 720 new infrastructure projects, representing over £500 billion worth of planned public and private investment in the sector.

Of this, over £300 billion will be invested before 2021.

On-going projects such as HS2 will continue to deliver a stream of infrastructure upgrades and expansion across the United Kingdom.

In energy, where Qatar is already a key partner, the UK will continue to expand our capacity.

Our new nuclear power station at Hinkley Point C is the first in a series of projects that will end our overreliance upon coal as an energy source.

Put simply, there has never been a better time to invest in the United Kingdom, or more opportunities available to do so.

The UK has long been recognised as one of the best places in the world to invest.

Not only does our legal and regulatory environment offer security, stability and assurances for investors, but our capital projects consistently offer excellent returns.

I have spoken already of the transformative effect that Qatari investment has had on London, but the greatest opportunities of the coming years will lie outside the capital, particularly in the North of England – a region that last year saw a 24% increase in FDI projects – and the Midlands.

As new transport links cut journey times across our country, these regions will be at the forefront of our economic growth, centres of dynamism and innovation.

Never has there been a more attractive time to invest in the UK.

The UK wants Qatar to be our partner on this journey, just as we will invest in your 2030 National Vision.

When our Prime Minister met with his Highness the Emir at the GCC in December, she made it clear that the UK is seeking a renewed relationship with all of the Gulf nations.

Yet with few of them do we enjoy the close relationship that we already share

with Qatar.

The message of today's conference is simple, yet ambitious.

It is about deepening our friendship, strengthening the bonds of politics, commerce and defence that already bind us, and rising together to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

It is about building a partnership of equals.

Let us use this conference to secure the personal and professional relationships that will deliver for both our nations.

If we work together, there is nothing we cannot achieve.

Thank you.

Press release: Baroness Anelay at UN to build on PSVI progress

The Rt Hon Baroness Anelay of St Johns, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for the UN and the Commonwealth and the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, will travel to New York this week, during the final days of the UK's Security Council presidency.

The Minister will use her two-day visit to signal UK support for more women mediators within the UN system. She will outline the UK's next steps on the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative (PSVI) and discuss UN peacekeeping performance and reform.

On Monday, the Minister will meet with a range of senior representatives within the UN system. She will co-host events focused on increasing the number of women mediators within the UN and tackling sexual exploitation and abuse within peacekeeping missions. She will also meet with NGOs to discuss modern slavery.

On Tuesday, she will host an event to mark five years of the UK-led Initiative to end sexual violence in conflict, at which she will promote draft Principles for Global Action aimed at tackling the stigma attached to sexual violence in conflict. She will meet the new US Permanent Representative, Nikki Haley, participate in a number of meetings on sustainable peace, and will host Permanent Representatives from other Commonwealth countries, ahead of the UK-hosted Commonwealth Summit in April 2018.

Speaking ahead of the visit, Baroness Anelay said:

This visit to New York will allow us to make real progress on a range of UK priority issues at the UN.

As the UN increases its focus on gender and conflict prevention, I will be pushing for an increase in the number of women mediators in the UN system. Involving women in peace processes increases the chances for reconciliation and leads to stronger, more sustainable peace.

I will mark the five-year anniversary of the UK-led initiative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative during my visit. We must continue to build on progress to better support victims, and address stigma.

I also welcome the opportunity to discuss next steps in tackling sexual exploitation and abuse, to restore trust between peacekeepers and those they serve. I welcome the new UN Secretary General's leadership on this issue.

Further information

[Statement to Parliament: Bus Services Bill: English votes for English laws](#)

Analysis of English votes for English laws in relation to government amendments made at report stage to the Bus Services Bill.

I am pleased to announce the publication of analysis of English votes for English laws in relation to government amendments made at report stage to the Bus Services Bill.

The English votes for English laws process applies to public bills in the House of Commons. To support the process, the government has agreed that it will provide information to assist the Speaker in considering whether to certify that Bill or any of its provisions for the purposes of English votes for English laws. Bill provisions that relate exclusively to England or to England and Wales, and which have a subject matter within the legislative competence of one or more of the devolved legislatures, can be certified.

This analysis reflects the position should all the government amendments be accepted.

The memorandum can be found on the [Bill documents page of the Parliament website](#) and I have deposited a copy in the Libraries of the House.

News story: Track worker near miss incidents at Camden Junction South

Shortly after 01:00 hrs on 28 February 2017, two track workers narrowly avoided being struck by the 22:42 hrs passenger train service from Wolverhampton to London Euston. The incident took place close to Camden Junction South, as the train was on its final approach to Euston station. It was travelling on a line that the workers believed had been blocked to traffic to allow engineering work to take place.

The train was rounding a curve at approximately 47 mph (76 km/h) when the driver became aware of a track worker, who had been installing a possession limit board associated with the engineering work, moving quickly off the line ahead of him. The driver stopped his train and contacted the signaller to report a near miss with the track worker.

The signaller then authorised the driver to continue into Euston station. The driver had accelerated the train to 24 mph (39 km/h) when he again applied the brake in response to seeing a second track worker on the line ahead. The train stopped approximately 300 metres beyond its original stopping point, adjacent to the track worker who had also been installing equipment associated with the engineering work. The track worker moved off the line when he became aware of the approaching train, but did not have time to reach a position of safety (at least 1.25 metres from the nearest line) before the train reached him because he was working in an area some distance from the nearest position of safety.

There were no injuries.

Our investigation will determine the sequence of events. It will also include consideration of:

- the way in which information about engineering possessions is published and disseminated
- the management of information about engineering possessions within signal boxes
- any related issues associated with signaller workload and fatigue; and
- any relevant underlying management factors

Our investigation is independent of any investigation by the railway industry, the British Transport Police or by the industry's regulator, the [Office of Rail and Road](#).

We will publish our findings, including any recommendations to improve safety, at the conclusion of our investigation. This report will be available on our website.

You can [subscribe](#) to automated emails notifying you when we publish our reports.