

Speech: Liam Fox Speech at BETT education training and technology show

I'm delighted to be at the BETT show for the first time. As I'm sure you're aware, this is the world's largest edtech showcase, boasting nearly 40,000 visitors, some 12,000 of them coming from overseas to see all that the UK has to offer in this industry.

I would like to start by offering my thanks to all of you, not only for the limitless contribution that your industry makes to improving the lives of young people across the globe, but also for the huge service that you do for the United Kingdom

Thanks to your efforts, the UK is a world leader in education technology. Your contribution is not only economic, but also a priceless boost for Britain's soft-power, and the way our country is perceived around the world. The products displayed at this showcase today will shape the world leaders of tomorrow.

My Department for International Trade (DIT) was created to make Britain a global hub of trade, the natural place of business for companies from every continent and every industry.

Our first priority in this is to assist, in any way we can, those industries such as yours where Britain is already a leading player, helping you to maximise opportunities and expand your overseas operations.

In 2011, the UK exported over £17.5 billion of education products, making the industry more valuable to the UK economy than insurance services or information technology.

I've travelled extensively in my first few months as Secretary of State, and one thing that has been crystal clear is that there is almost limitless demand for UK expertise overseas. The key for us to match demand with supply

The importance of edtech to the UK economy cannot be overstated, and it is the Department for International Trade's ambition to see your industry play an increasingly central role in our export economy.

We intend to use the influence and expertise of Her Majesty's Government, and the Department for International Trade to assist and promote UK edtech around the world.

We want to:

- help your businesses to identify export opportunities through the great.gov.uk online platform
- provide guidance to those companies who are exporting for the first time, or want to significantly expand their overseas operations
- to act, where it is necessary, as the official front for government-to-

government activity

- to lead, where appropriate, on the establishment of industry consortia to take advantage of the largest strategic opportunities

One of my aims today is to impart to you the sheer number of opportunities that exist, across the world, for dynamic and innovative edtech businesses.

For example, colleagues from my department have recently visited Malaysia for a ministerial conference with the 10 ASEAN nations.

As most of you will be aware, this country already enjoys strong links with the Malaysian education sector, but there is significant scope to do more: Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam and Thailand all expressed a strong interest in forging new links with the UK education sector.

Yours is an industry that already boasts significant success stories. I have just visited GL Assessment's stand; their company is a fantastic example of how a truly innovative British product is changing global attitudes to pupil assessment.

- GL have recently invested in a programme with the Chinese government to trial their assessment tool with 25,000 students across 10 Chinese provinces
- If the trial is successful, the programme has the potential to reach over 16 million students across China; a true testament to the sheer scale of edtech opportunities that exist across the world, and the global appetite for British education products

We are truly starting from a position of strength; the UK education technology sector already enjoys an international reputation for innovation:

- our world-class educational establishments and training centres are producing the quality graduates that a successful edtech sector requires
- Britain is a global hub of edtech trade and collaboration. Its focal point is this event, the BETT conference, which attracts thousands of global partners to the UK every year
- last, but by no means least, is the sheer quality of you, our leading edtech companies. Not only are you innovating new education solutions, but you have the capability to deliver them globally, and the ambition to scale up and expand your operations overseas. You are a credit to your industry, and to this country

Lastly, I would like to encourage you all to engage with the [great.gov.uk](https://www.great.gov.uk) website and online resource.

For the first time, the government is working actively to put exporters such as yourselves in touch with overseas customers and opportunities, and offering help and support every step of the way.

As well as this, your details will be added to a globally-available directory of British education technology suppliers, allowing potential clients from across the world to contact you directly.

Lastly, you will be given help and advice on exporting to specific regions, and DIT will arrange key players from this sector to accompany us on overseas trips to regions where we have identified specific export opportunities.

What could be better?

I wish you an excellent and successful show, and look forward to working closely with the edtech industry as we secure Britain's influence and prosperity for generations to come.

Speech: Address to the National Roads Policing Conference

Introduction

Good morning.

I'm really pleased to join you for this year's National Roads Policing Conference.

Last night I was at a road safety event in the House of Commons meeting some of those who have lost friends or relatives in collisions on the road.

I also frequently meet bereaved families in my office in the Department for Transport.

These meetings are never easy.

Yet as I listen to people's stories, I am filled with respect for the job that you do.

Often, you're the first on the scene.

Often, too, you're the first to break the news of tragedy.

Few can understand how tough that job must be.

Yet all of us must be grateful that you are there to do it.

With courage and professionalism.

So I would like to start by saying: thank you.

Thank you for being there in the aftermath of tragedy, and for supporting those tragedy touches.

Of course, dealing with the aftermath of tragedy is only one part of your

job.

The priority is always to prevent it from happening in the first place.

And that's why I was so pleased to see this year's conference theme: enforcement.

And you're covering a lot of ground today and tomorrow.

From older drivers, to emergency pursuits.

In my speech I'd like to focus on three specific areas of enforcement.

Drink.

Drugs.

And mobile phones.

Drink

First, drink driving.

It's amazing how far we've come on drink driving.

50 years ago, it was tolerated, if not something anyone would be proud of.

Today, most people agree that it's completely unacceptable.

So it's no coincidence that, during these last 50 years, deaths caused by drink driving have been cut by over 80%.

80%.

But not 100%.

Yes, with the drastic fall in drink-related deaths over the last 50 years, it becomes more difficult to maintain the same rate of progress.

But there is still more we can do before we get that number down further.

That's why, since 2015, in order for high-risk offenders to get their licenses back they've had to prove they're not alcohol dependant.

Another frustration that you've told us about is drivers who fail a breathalyser test and then demand a blood test – in the hope that they'll sober up in the meantime.

So we removed their automatic right to do so.

Making enforcement easier.

Of course, none of this is a substitute for people taking responsibility for their actions and their consequences. That's why our message during Christmas

was that a second drink can double the chance of a collision. Our message was complemented by police force's own initiatives.

For example, Essex Police's campaign focused on how it feels to live with the consequences of drink driving. And local forces carried out spot checks, deterring and catching drivers who were a danger to the public.

Drugs

In 2015 we passed [Section 5a of the Road Traffic Act](#).

This put drug driving on the same legal footing as drink driving.

And we brought in set limits for 8 drugs, legal and illegal.

And I am pleased to be able to give you the interim results for 2016.

To put it in context, in 2014 there were 879 endorsements for drug driving.

In 2016 – the first full year with the new law – there were 8,500.

That's 8,500 people you have caught and successfully convicted of drug driving.

8,500 dangerous drivers taken off our roads.

And, actually, the final total will be even higher, because the last 6 weeks of data aren't yet included in the figures.

But that is approximately 10 times as many drug users who lost their licences in 2016 compared to 2014.

People who were a danger to the public, banned from our roads.

No doubt, lives saved.

That's a fantastic result.

And it's thanks to the efforts of road police officers up and down the country getting out and enforcing the law of the land.

To support your work, we've also provided £1 million to police forces across England and Wales.

That money has trained a thousand officers in gathering evidence of impairment caused by drugs. It's also paid for roadside swabbing equipment, so when you pull over a suspected drug user you can test them for cannabis and cocaine immediately.

So our message to motorists is clear.

Drive under the influence of drugs and there's a very good chance you will get caught.

Mobile phones

But I also have another message for those minority of motorists with a scant regard for the law of the land. It's about mobile phones.

Most of you would never think of using your mobile whilst driving.

Talking. texting. checking updates.

You know that it's a serious crime which destroys lives.

But for those motorists who don't understand this, we're increasing the penalties.

From March (2017), it'll cost 6 points on your licence.

And the fixed penalty fine – doubled.

So our message to anyone thinking about using their mobile whilst driving is simple.

Don't do it.

It's a message that we'll be reinforcing with a hard-hitting THINK campaign.

Earlier I mentioned the connection between social attitudes and the drink drive casualty rate.

Put simply, an increased stigma means fewer deaths.

So I want every motorist to understand that using your mobile behind the wheel is as socially unacceptable as drink driving.

Or drug driving, for that matter.

That's why we will not only penalise such drivers, but we will also educate them about the consequences of their actions.

We want to work with police forces and with road safety groups to develop a practical model for education.

We're determined to get this model right, including changing legislation if needed.

Our role, as the government, is to support enforcement and the work that you do.

So that we can continue to make progress on safer roads.

Conclusion

But while legislation and statistics are crucial, the words can sometimes sound rather dry.

You know better than anyone that every statistic represents a lost life and a devastated family.

It's brought home to me every time I hold one of those meetings, or whenever I speak to a road police officer.

Yet I also never forget that due to your actions, there are many people who have been saved from such tragedies.

Each day and night of the year – whatever the weather – there are people who get to go home to their loved ones because the police are out on our roads.

Enforcing the law.

Protecting us from harm.

So thank you, once again, for the work that you do.

On behalf of the public, Parliament, and the government – thank you.

Press release: New streamlined Jobcentre Plus network with more support for jobseekers

Plans have been published to reform Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) Jobcentre Plus offices and benefit centres, in light of 20% of office space being under-used.

The way DWP services are delivered has changed significantly in recent years; for example 8 out of 10 claims for Jobseeker's Allowance and 99.6% of applicants for Universal Credit submit their claims online.

Since 2010, 2.7 million more people are in work, youth unemployment has fallen by 366,000 and the employment rate is at a record high.

Jobcentres and benefit centres are covered by old building contracts which are now coming up for renewal. In the 20 years since these contracts were signed the welfare system has undergone large scale reform.

The DWP estate covers around 1.5 million square metres across the country and 300,000 square metres of this is under-utilised and could be vacated.

Some smaller jobcentres will be merged with larger ones, and others will be co-located with local government premises. DWP will be better able to offer a more efficient service while delivering good value for the taxpayer, saving around £180 million a year for the next 10 years.

The support provided to jobseekers will be further strengthened this year as staff numbers are boosted by a recruitment drive to hire 2,500 new work coaches.

Damian Hinds, Minister for Employment said:

We will always make sure that people have the support they need to get into and progress within work, that's why we are recruiting 2,500 more work coaches to help those who need it most.

The way the world works has changed rapidly in the last 20 years and the welfare state needs to keep pace. As more people access their benefits through the internet many of our buildings are under-used. We are concentrating our resources on what we know best helps people into work.

The changes we've announced today will help ensure that the way we deliver our services reflect the reality of today's welfare system.

Today's announcements include proposals for:

- merging 78 smaller Jobcentre Plus offices in urban areas with larger ones nearby
- co-locating around 50 Jobcentre Plus offices with local authorities or other community services to provide joined-up services for the local community with all services in one place
- closing 27 back office buildings around the country and developing larger, more efficient processing sites including opening 5 new large service centres across the country in a phased approach starting in 2018
- retaining over 700 existing offices
- re-organising our corporate centre to make maximum use of 6 regional corporate hubs, including establishing a new office in central Manchester

The planned changes will be made in consultation with staff taking into account the impact on benefit claimants and DWP staff. The vast majority of staff will have the option to relocate or offered alternative roles.

Department for Work and Pensions Jobcentre Plus estate proposals

PDF, 758KB, 59 pages

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More information

We announced that we would renegotiate our tenancies in the [2015 Spending Review](#).

DWP currently uses about 900 buildings around the UK – all of them leased from a range of landlords.

The expiry of the PRIME contract provides DWP with the opportunity to review which offices we need, leaving those that we no longer need at commercially advantageous terms and having the opportunity to negotiate better deals on those we want to use in future.

The savings of around £180 million a year for the next 10 years will be made by a combination of a smaller estate, rent set to market levels, a new service delivery model and maximising space usage.

Where practical, we are co-locating with local authorities in their buildings. These arrangements bring benefits for the department, claimants and the taxpayer. More of the services that customers use are in one place which means that claimants have access a greater breadth of expertise.

The most recent figures show that employment rate is at 74.5 per cent – a joint record high; unemployment down 906,000 since 2010 as the economy has grown.

Media enquiries for this press release – 0203 267 5141

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[News story: Article 50 Bill process begins](#)

From:

First published:

26 January 2017

Part of:

The European Union (Notification of Withdrawal) Bill has been introduced to the House of Commons today, by Secretary of State for Exiting the European

Union David Davis.

The straightforward Bill, which gives the Prime Minister the power to formally trigger Article 50, is expected to move through both the House of Commons and House of Lords before gaining Royal Assent prior to the March 31st deadline.

The Bill comes ahead of the introduction of the Great Repeal Bill, that will transpose EU law into UK law to ensure the maximum stability on exit, with changes to the law requiring the full consent of Parliament.

Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union David Davis said:

The British people have made the decision to leave the EU and this government is determined to get on with the job of delivering it.

So today we have introduced a Bill in Parliament which will allow us to formally trigger Article 50 by the end of March.

I trust that Parliament, which backed the referendum by six to one, will respect the decision taken by the British people and pass the legislation quickly.

The Bill is being introduced following the judgment handed down by the Supreme Court earlier this week. It can be found [here](#).

[News story: Government commits to ensuring new and expectant mothers have sufficient protections from redundancy](#)

From:

First published:

26 January 2017

Today the government is committing to making sure new and expectant mothers have sufficient protections from redundancy in the workplace.

In a [response](#) to a report by the Women and Equalities Select Committee on

pregnancy and maternity discrimination, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy said it will consult in due course on options to ensure new and expectant mothers in work have sufficient protections from redundancy.

Business Minister Margot James said:

We are determined to tackle pregnancy and maternity discrimination and a key part of that is making sure new and expectant mothers are supported and treated fairly by their employers.

While most businesses abide by the law, some do not. There should be zero tolerance of discrimination against pregnant women, or women who have just given birth, that's why today we are committing to making sure new and expectant mothers have sufficient protections from redundancy.

I'd like to thank the Women and Equalities Select Committee for shining a light on this issue which is a key priority of mine.

The government has also committed to considering what further guidance can be provided to both courts and claimants about existing flexibilities in the employment tribunal system to extend the time limit for bringing a case.

The 3-month time limit for bringing a case can be extended when the independent employment tribunal decides it is "just and equitable" to do so.