

Lord Parkinson speech at Venice Biennale

Good evening everyone,

I am very pleased to be with you all this afternoon, representing Her Majesty's Government. It's great to be here in person at La Biennale di Venezia and to be celebrating the British Pavilion, and Sonia Boyce's wonderful art work.

I am very grateful to the British Council for inviting me to this auspicious event and to say a few words.

The Biennale is a much cherished opportunity to showcase some of the best artists in the UK, but also to see international artists and colleagues, reinforce connections, and to make the most of the face to face interaction which we have all been missing so much.

But of course we meet against the backdrop of the terrible situation unfolding in Ukraine. I know everyone here will want to extend our support and warmest wishes to our Ukrainian friends as they continue to suffer under the deplorable invasion by the Russian Federation.

I look forward to visiting the Ukrainian pavilion during my stay here in Venice, to demonstrate the UK's solidarity with Ukraine – and to admire the wonderful artwork of that culturally rich country.

It is clearer than ever that to survive the challenges of this troubled world we must work together, and it is here that Sonia Boyce's work has much to teach us. She is an artist who embodies the value of working together, of sharing a platform, whether she's working with local communities in Barking and Dagenham or exhibiting at the Tate – or indeed the British Pavilion here at the Biennale.

Sonia has had a 30 year career as a teacher as well as an artist. She has influenced many generations, sharing her expertise and experiences as an artist and enriching those with whom she has come into contact.

We are very proud that she is representing Britain here in Venice.

She joins an august group of previous exhibitors, including Henry Moore, Barbara Hepworth, Anish Kapoor, Gilbert & George, and Jeremy Deller. The British pavilion has always been a showcase for the brightest and best of UK art, managed by the British Council, and I'm delighted to see this tradition continue this year.

On behalf of the HM Government I would like to thank the British Council for the brilliant job they have done managing the British Pavilion programme, which, together with their wider work around the globe, has promoted the best of the UK's arts and culture on the world stage.

And may I also express my gratitude to the many sponsors, supporters and patrons of the British Pavilion, whose kind and generous support is so vital to its continued success. Thank you very much.

The Central Exhibition will also feature the work of five further artists from the UK, supported by the British Council through the Biennale Foundation.

The 59th Venice Biennale is therefore set to be a great showcase for British arts, demonstrating that the UK is an international cultural powerhouse, not only in our heritage but in our amazing and thought-provoking contemporary art.

So I would like to conclude by wishing the greatest success for the British Pavilion, and the UK artists in this year's festival. And it's now my pleasure to hand over to Stevie Spring, Chairman of the British Council.

Thank you

[Home Secretary meeting with Masrour Barzani](#)

The Home Secretary, Priti Patel, this afternoon hosted Masrour Barzani, Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, for talks at the Home Office.

The meeting took place on the second day of Prime Minister Barzani's visit to the UK, during which he met Prime Minister Boris Johnson and other senior members of the government to discuss a variety of issues.

The Home Secretary began by welcoming the opportunity to finally meet Prime Minister Barzani in person. Both sides discussed the importance of working together on security and agreed that officials should meet to further strengthen joint efforts to address migration challenges over the coming months.

The Home Secretary thanked Prime Minister Barzani and his officials for the productive cooperation between the Kurdistan Region of Iraq and the UK thus far.

The Home Secretary highlighted the necessity of this cooperation to prevent further loss of life and reiterated her heartfelt condolences to those Kurdish families who lost loved ones in the tragedy in the English Channel last November.

The Home Secretary was also able to brief Prime Minister Barzani on the government's recently signed Migration and Economic Development Partnership

with Rwanda and how it will help break the business model of the people smugglers behind the small boat crossings in the Channel.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

I was pleased to host Prime Minister Barzani at the Home Office today.

The global nature of the migration crisis dictates that we must work with international allies both to tackle the drivers of irregular migration and to disrupt and bring to justice the evil people smuggling gangs. There is also much for us to do together in the security sphere to keep our peoples safe.

I look forward to further cooperation with Prime Minister Barzani and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq in the months and years ahead.

Masrour Barzani, Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, added:

The relationship between the Kurdistan Region and the UK makes the world a safer place for us and our partners. We combat terrorism and organised crime, and disrupt the political weaponisation of vulnerable families.

I also welcome our recent cooperation in disrupting international people smuggling networks. In that spirit, we agree on the importance of upholding international law.

In today's meeting, I also encouraged Home Secretary Patel to help us tackle the root causes of migration by exploring business initiatives and creating more job opportunities at home.

[Planes running on batteries and hydrogen to become a reality under new group of aviation experts](#)

- new Zero Emission Flight Delivery Group launched to focus on catapulting latest innovations in aviation decarbonisation technology
- new chair, Rachel Gardner-Poole to lead the forum
- builds on UK's ambition to be world-leaders on aerospace R&D with an additional £685 million to be provided for Aerospace Technology Institute programme over the next 3 years

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps and Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng have today (20 April 2022) set out a new group of aviation experts across industry and government who will work together to make zero emission flight a reality.

As world leaders in aviation decarbonisation, the new Zero Emission Flight (ZEF) Delivery Group, will further Britain's role in the global effort to end flight emissions.

Launched at the fifth meeting of the [Jet Zero Council](#), the new steering group will help position the UK at the forefront of the global shift to green aviation by supporting the development of zero emission aircraft and airport infrastructure. It will also look at how the law needs to adapt so that sustainable flying can truly become a reality.

The new group will sit under the Jet Zero Council – an advisory forum with experts from across the industry – and will focus specifically on the technology, infrastructure and regulation needed to make zero emission flight a reality.

Speaking at the fifth Jet Zero Council meeting today, the Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps said:

From the first jet engine created here in the UK, Britain is truly a world-leader in flying. Now we are determined to revolutionise flying and we want to see everyone have the opportunity to travel guilt-free.

We are determined to bring forward the flight technology of the future, and through our new Zero Emission Flight Delivery Group, we will help create thousands of jobs around the country and take another step toward zero emission flights.

The new group will be led by aviation expert Rachel Gardner-Poole, who joins with over 20 years of experience in military and commercial aviation, both in the public and private sector. Currently the Chief Operating Officer for the Connected Places Catapult, Rachel has previously worked at the Civil Aviation Authority, the UK Space Agency and IBM.

Under Rachel's leadership, the ZEF Delivery Group will build on the progress made through the Aerospace Technology Institute's (ATI) [FlyZero](#) project and the Department for Transport's [Zero Emission Flight Infrastructure](#) project.

Zero Emission Flight Delivery Group Chair, Rachel Gardner-Poole:

It is a great privilege to be asked to be the Chair of the ZEF Delivery Group and I am committed to the critical work ahead to make zero emission aviation a reality.

I am passionate about using innovation and technology to create a

positive impact on our planet and look forward to collectively addressing the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead of us.

The government is investing in aerospace R&D through the ATI Programme and £685 million will be provided over the next 3 years, which was announced in March by the Business Secretary.

In addition, government is providing £125 million (matched by £175 million from industry) of support for Innovate UK's [Future Flight Challenge](#). The challenge will shortly announce projects successful in its third funding competition including those advancing electric flight technologies that will support the operation of sub-regional aircraft and the UK in reaching its net zero target.

[DBS works with Skills for Care to support safer recruitment](#)

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and [Skills for Care](#) have been working together to provide free, specialised training to social care providers across the Midlands.

Around 300 people recently attended two successful workshops, and following these sessions in the Midlands, DBS and Skills for Care are now planning to provide further free training sessions, to support safer recruitment in social care.

Further workshops will be hosted in the Midlands in November, and following this, they plan to expand the training nationally.

The training aims to support people working across the adult social care sector, particularly those with recruitment or safeguarding responsibilities.

The most recent workshops were split across two sessions, each lasting 90 minutes, with one session focusing on disclosure and the other focusing on barring.

The disclosure workshop covered:

- the different types of DBS checks
- how legislation affects the type of role that can be applied for
- the information contained on each type of DBS certificate, and how to evaluate this
- the legal definition of 'regulated activity' and how this relates to DBS processes

The barring workshop covered barring referrals, the legal duty to refer, and

what the process for barring an individual consists of.

The aim of both workshops was to give adult social care staff a better understanding of DBS checks and barring referrals, and how they support safer recruitment.

The training sessions are being delivered by [DBS Regional Outreach service](#). This service provides organisations with a single point of contact for all DBS-related queries and questions, as well as the opportunity to access tailored, DBS training for their staff. The team also collates feedback to ensure future improvements can be made to DBS services and processes.

The DBS and Skills for Care training is being delivered by DBS Regional Outreach Adviser for the East Midlands, Lizzie Whittington. Lizzie said:

It has been fantastic to receive support from Skills for Care to deliver these workshops to such a range of organisations across the Midlands. I'm looking forward to continuing our work together later in the year, where we will have more workshops available in November.

Following the workshops, Lizzie has received numerous queries from attendees. Organisations based in the East Midlands can access free advice by contacting Lizzie via the [Regional Outreach service](#).

A list of Regional Outreach advisers in other parts of the UK, can also be found in our [Regional Outreach guidance](#).

Natalie Benton, Executive Director of Strategy and Performance at DBS, said:

DBS is pleased to support Skills for Care and adult social care providers in the Midlands with free training and support. This work helps to give organisations a better understanding of DBS checks and our role in barring people from certain roles if they pose a risk to children or vulnerable adults, and enables these employers to make safer recruitment choices.

The training was one of multiple ways in which Skills for Care and DBS have been working closely together, with DBS attending some of the Skills for Care Registered Managers Networks and regional manager events.

Renny Wodynska, Head of Area for the Midlands at Skills for Care, said:

We are delighted to be able to work closely with DBS to help provide this important information to providers. The training sessions were very well received, and we look forward to running more later in the year. We're also in discussions to hopefully expand the training out nationally as well.

If you are interested in accessing DBS and Skills for care training, please visit the [Skills for Care website](#).

[How government is supporting online consumers](#)

Today (Wednesday 20 April), the government has announced [new measures to shield online consumers from rip-offs](#). This includes tackling fake online reviews by making it clearly illegal to pay someone to write or host them, and a crackdown on subscription traps means businesses must make clear what consumers are signing up for and let them cancel easily.

To strengthen the enforcement of consumer protections, the government is delivering on its manifesto promise to give the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) enhanced powers to tackle rip-offs and bad business practices. The CMA will be able to directly enforce consumer law, which replaces going through a court process that can take years. Tough penalties for non-compliance will see the CMA able to punish consumer law breaches with fines worth up to 10% of a business' global turnover.

These reforms will ensure consumer protections keep pace with a modern, digitising economy. The pandemic has accelerated the trend towards online shopping and cast a spotlight on bad business practices like the fake reviews and subscription traps the government is tackling. The average UK household spends around £900 each year influenced by online reviews and spends £60 on unwanted subscriptions.

These measures build on the announcement earlier this month that [social media sites and search engines will be forced to stamp out fraudsters and scammers on their platforms](#). A new legal duty will be added to the Online Safety Bill requiring the largest and most popular social media platforms and search engines to prevent paid-for fraudulent adverts appearing on their services.

Separately, the government has launched a [consultation on proposals to create a more transparent, accountable and safer online ad market](#). Harmful or misleading adverts, such as those promoting negative body images, and adverts for illegal activities such as weapons sales, could be subject to tougher rules and sanctions.

With the growth in internet consumption, advertising has become the primary source of revenue for many online businesses and underpins the provision of key online services such as search and social media. These reforms will ensure industry practices are accountable, transparent and ethical – so people can trust what they see advertised.

The [Office for Product Safety and Standards \(OPSS\)](#), the UK product safety

regulator, is also working to ensure only safe and compliant products are sold online. Last year, OPSS removed more than 12,500 unsafe and non-compliant products from online sale. Ensuring only safe products are placed on the market is a priority for the government.

Today's new measures to shield online consumers from rip-offs including fake reviews and subscription traps will apply in England, Scotland and Wales. Consumer protection is devolved in Northern Ireland.

The legal duty preventing paid-for fraudulent adverts and the proposals to create a more transparent, accountable and safer online ad market apply across the UK.

OPSS' product safety work takes place across the UK.