

News story: Minister encourages students to make their voices heard in upcoming Mayoral elections

The Minister for the Constitution, Chris Skidmore, spoke to students from Long Road Sixth Form college today about how they can raise awareness of voter registration in the lead up to the election for the first mayor of Cambridge and Peterborough.

Students engaged in lively discussion with the minister on what democracy means to young people living in the East of England.

Chris Skidmore, Minister for the Constitution, said:

I was impressed by the level of debate and interest shown by Cambridge's college students today. This government is committed to a democracy that works for everyone and this means understanding the needs of young people, and other under-registered groups, on their own terms.

Over the coming months, people in Cambridge will be canvassed by different parties in the lead up to the election for the first mayor of Cambridge and Peterborough.

This is an exciting time in your local history and it's crucial you register to vote so you can have your say. Whoever you are, whatever your background, wherever you live – your voice matters.

Christine Sherwin, College Principle, at Long Road Sixth Form college said:

We are delighted that Chris has chosen to visit Long Road Sixth Form College to hear about our initiatives to ensure that all our students register to vote.

We take our role in promoting democracy with our students very seriously, and our efforts begin on the first day that they join the college, when we show them how to register to vote and encourage them to do so at the same time. Our students are also encouraged to become involved with the UK Youth Parliament, with the majority wanting the Youth Parliament to campaign on obtaining the right for 16 and 17 year olds to vote in all elections and referenda.

The Minister is visiting Cambridge as part of his Every Voice Matters Tour.

The tour will see him visit every part of the country to understand how to tackle barriers to voter registration. As part of his trip to Cambridge, the Minister also visited the Winter Comfort homeless drop in centre to speak to users about how they can register to vote.

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Nicola Sturgeon has been told to take responsibility for the nurse staffing crisis which has led to cancelled operations and empty theatres – instead of agitating for another referendum.

As health secretary, she cut student nursing numbers in two successive years, a decision she today said she stood by.

However, this week it has emerged hospitals have had to cancel procedures because of a lack of workers, and desperate health boards are forking out up to £1500 for agency nurse shifts.

And even after announcing a modest increase in student numbers for next year, the Royal College of Nursing said yesterday this still wouldn't meet demand, adding: "It is not enough to say that there are more nurses or that today's intake figures are the highest in years."

At First Minister's Questions, Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said Ms Sturgeon should "confront the failings of 10 years" rather than obsessing about independence.

Ruth asked, were the First Minister to have her time again, would she still have cut those nursing numbers in 2010 and 2011.

Instead of admitting that error, she said: "We took decisions on the data available at the time."

This is despite both nursing bodies and opposition parties warning the cuts would come back to haunt the NHS.

Ruth also raised the example of north east patient Hugh Falconer, who was put on an urgent referral for treatment and told he would receive surgery within 12 weeks.

However, he's since been informed that the Aberdeen Royal Infirmary can't perform the surgery, and patients are no longer being referred to the waiting times back-up facility in Glasgow.

Scottish Conservative leader Ruth Davidson said: "We have a Scottish Government which puts its failing independence obsession before an NHS crisis of its own making.

"The First Minister asks what sort of country we want to be: I want a country run by a government that does the job we pay it to do – to look after Scotland's public services.

"Instead, we have one obsessed with a narrow nationalist project that has had its day.

"Six years ago, as health secretary, Nicola Sturgeon embarked on catastrophic cuts to student nursing places.

"She was warned by nursing leaders and opposition parties of the short-sightedness of this approach, and the impact it would have on patient care.

"Now, as predicted, patients are paying the price as routine operations are cancelled and treatment waiting times grow – all because of staff shortages.

"People want a country run by a Scottish Government that spends its every waking hour sorting out public services like the NHS – not obsessing about another referendum, or stoking up Brexit divisions.

"It's time for her to confront the failings of the last decade of this SNP government, and set out clear plans on how she intends to tackle them."

RCN Scotland said the SNP was "failing to futureproof" Scotland's nursing workforce:

<https://www.rcn.org.uk/news-and-events/news/student-nurse-intake-numbers-25-jan-2017>

Student nursing numbers have fallen under the SNP:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2014/12/student-nursing-numbers-hit-new-low/>

Earlier this week, the Scottish Conservatives revealed desperate health boards are paying up to £1500 per shift to agencies to cover staff shortages:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/01/agency-nurses-paid-more-than-1500-a-shift/>

It has been reported that operations are being cancelled as a result of staff shortages:

Tories should be aiming to have a mental health liaison team in every A&E as soon as possible – Barbara Keeley

Barbara Keeley MP, Labour's Shadow Cabinet Minister for Mental Health, commenting on a report by the National Confidential Enquiry into Patient Outcome and Deaths on Mental Health in General Hospitals, said:

"It is well known that patients with severe mental health conditions are likely to develop physical health conditions earlier in life, yet this report shows that only 46 percent of patients with a mental health condition received good care in General Hospitals. It is unacceptable that patients with a mental health condition receive both poor physical and mental healthcare.

"The number of people attending A&E with psychiatric conditions has risen sharply since 2010 and many patients also have an underlying mental health condition. Yet, the Royal College of Psychiatrists has reported that only seven percent of A&E departments provide liaison psychiatry services 24/7.

"Tory Ministers should pay serious attention to reports like this. They should be aiming to have a mental health liaison team in every A&E as soon as possible. This could help reduce the level of readmissions to hospital highlighted in this report and improve the standards of care for patients with a mental health condition."

Ends

Press release: Fines for six Hampshire anglers caught fishing without a

Licence

Jack Sillence of Blackfield, Southampton was caught at Mopley Pond on 5 June 2016 and fined £660 (plus £127 costs and £66 victim surcharge leading to a total bill of £853). The exact same amount was charged to Nik Sinclair of Ringwood who was apprehended on 29 May 2016 at Hightown Lake. Andrew Turner of Southsea was caught at Broadlands Lake on 29 May 2016 and fined £660 (plus £127 costs and £60 victim surcharge). None of the above entered a plea.

Environment Manager Mike O'Neill said:

We are seeing higher and higher fines for fishing without a licence. It makes no sense to have the embarrassment of a court visit, a criminal conviction and a bill for over £800 when an annual licence is currently just £27. We think these cheats will think twice before picking up a rod illegally again and if they don't, our officers are ready and waiting.

Kerry Farr of Eastleigh was caught at Broadlands Lake on 29 May and after pleading guilty was fined £440 (plus £127 costs, £44 victim surcharge). Kristofer Cairns of Andover was apprehended on 21 May 2016 at John O'Gaunt, Kings Sombourne, didn't enter a plea and was fined £600 (plus £127 costs, £60 victim surcharge). Finally, Jonathan Ramsey of Chessington pleaded guilty having been caught on 29 May at Broadlands – he was fined £500 (plus £127 costs, £50 victim surcharge).

Mike O'Neill added:

Yesterday was a good day for the near million anglers that fish legally every year, respecting each other and the sport. There really is no excuse – if you don't have a licence, pick one up from the Post Office or online before we pick you up.

The money from licence sales supports fish, fisheries and fishing and protects the future of the sport. A small number of anglers refuse to buy a licence, cheating the sport and their fellow anglers.

For the minority who flout the rules, the most common offence is fishing without a valid licence. Fishing without a valid licence could land you with a fine of up to £2,500 and a criminal record.

Overall, in 2015, Hampshire and Sussex enforcement officers checked 2,615 licences and reported 177 for fishing illegally. Last year in England, the Environment Agency checked over 62,000 rod licences and prosecuted more than 1,900 anglers for rod and line offences resulting in fines and costs in excess of £500,000.

Any angler aged 12 or over, fishing on a river, canal or still water needs a licence. A full rod licence costs from just £27 (concessions available). You can buy your rod licence [online from the Post Office](#), at your local Post Office or by phoning 0344 800 5386.

Money from rod licence sales is invested in England's fisheries, and is used to fund a wide range of projects to improve facilities for anglers including protecting stocks from illegal fishing, pollution and disease, restoring fish stocks through restocking, eradicating invasive species, and fish habitat improvements. Rod licence money is also used to fund the Angling Trust to provide information about fishing and to encourage participation in the sport.

To help crack down on unlicensed fishing the Environment Agency urges anyone to report illegal activity by calling the Environment Agency's incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

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](https://www.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.