

# Conservative Party Conference 2016

## Key Announcements

### 1. Education Opportunity Areas

**Summary:** We are giving ten areas in England that are facing challenges to social mobility priority access to a package of education programmes. Giving more young people opportunities and supporting them from nursery, throughout their school years and into the world of work.

- **The first six Opportunity Areas across England.** These are West Somerset, Norwich, Blackpool, Scarborough, Derby and Oldham. We will open bids for the next four in the coming months.
- **This is a new policy building on Achieving Excellence Areas proposal outlined in the March White Paper.** The Achieving Excellence Areas strategy was designed to improve primary and secondary standards in areas with low levels of good school places, by building the educational capacity in that area. The Opportunity Areas policy is a broader approach to social mobility, which pilots a range of interventions, including working with early years, higher education providers and employers.
- **£60 million of new funding to support work across the Opportunity Areas.** We will make available up to £60 million of new funding to support targeted, local work in ten Opportunity Areas to address the biggest challenges each of these areas face.
- **We will launch an innovation fund to improve teaching and leadership in the most challenging areas of the country.** This fund will also benefit the Opportunity Areas and is worth £75 million.
- **We will invest in improving careers and enterprise provision in Opportunity Areas.** The Careers & Enterprise Company will invite organisations to bid to deliver programmes in these areas that are proven to have a positive impact on careers-related outcomes.
- **The first set of successful bidders for the National Collaborative Outreach Programme, worth £22 million.** The National Collaboration Outreach Programme will help raise aspirations for disadvantaged children through summer schools, organising school visits and providing academic mentoring.

### 2. Immigration consultation

**Summary:** The Government will shortly be consulting on the next steps needed to control immigration. We will be looking across work and study routes to refocus these routes on the brightest and best, building a system that works for everyone, while Britain remains open for business.

- **We will consult later this year on the next steps to bring down net migration from outside the EU, while ensuring we still attract the brightest and the best.** Although non EU net migration is down on its peak under Labour, we need to take further steps to deliver on our manifesto commitment.<sup>1</sup>
  - **The consultation will propose a number of measures across the work and study routes.** It will also seek
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the views of universities, colleges, and businesses on the best way to deliver our commitments on immigration: bringing down net migration to sustainable levels, while continuing to attract the brightest and the best.

- The Home Secretary set out some early details on what will be in the consultation, including:
  - **Looking for the first time at whether our student immigration rules should be tailored to the quality of the course and the quality of the university.** For people who come to study we will continue to ensure our world class universities attract the best international students, but we will review whether all 150 different universities providing thousands of different courses to hundreds of thousands international students really are doing that.

At the moment if you come to study in this country, irrespective of your talents or the value of the course to this country, you automatically get favourable treatment when you apply for a job after completing your study; there is no restriction on the kind of work your family can undertake while you are here as a student; foreign students, even those studying English Language degrees, do not even have to be proficient in English. With 160,000 people arriving as students each year and tens of thousands remaining after their studies we need to ask whether these rules applying uniformly across the education sector really are in Britain's best interests.

- **Looking at how we can reward our world class universities and those that take steps to stop overstaying.** We do not want our very best universities to lose out on the top talent to their international rivals, so we will look at how we can improve their offer to the brightest and the best. An immigration system that treats every student and institution as equal only punishes those we want to help. This will include looking at whether we can support our very best, and most compliant universities, with less regulation and tailored support.
- **Tightening the test used to ensure people coming here really are adding value and not filling gaps in the labour market that could be filled by British people.** Currently, employers have to undertake a Resident Labour Market Test if they want to fill a vacancy with a non EU migrant. This only requires them to advertise the job in the UK for 28 days and confirm that no suitable resident workers are available. It does not provide a clear incentive for the employers to conduct an exhaustive search of the UK labour force or to invest in training to ensure that a local person could be trained so that they could do the job.
- The consultation will look to tackle weaknesses in the current test (where salaries may be concealed in the advert so they can offer something different to a migrant). It will also consider whether employers should have to set out the steps they have taken to foster a pool of local candidates, the impact on the local labour force of their foreign recruitment and the proportion of their workforce which is international, as is the case in the US. Reforming the system will help individuals, but also help us build a more productive economy with a more skilled workforce.

### 3. Controlling Migration Fund

**Summary:** The Government has outlined a £140 million fund to deliver on our manifesto commitment – to help ease pressures on public services in communities affected by high levels of immigration and reduce illegal immigration across the country. We will:

- **Build on the work we have already done to stop housing benefits going to illegal migrants.** The Government has already been working with local authorities to ensure councils are not mistakenly paying housing benefits to people with no right to be here. In one case when a Home Office member of staff was embedded in a local authority, over £1.5 million was saved by denying public funds.<sup>1</sup> This funding will allow us to roll this out more widely with councils able to bid for funding to pay

for Immigration Enforcement officers to ensure public money is not being misused.

- **Help to reduce rough sleeping by migrants.** Rough sleeping by foreign-nationals is a significant concern to local communities in many areas; we have introduced a new more assertive approach to allow Immigration Enforcement to deal with foreign nationals who are rough-sleeping, more quickly. Through the fund we will commit enforcement resources to respond to local authorities' requests to ensure that rough sleeping does not become a problem in their areas.
- **Crackdown on beds in sheds and overcrowded houses of multiple occupancy (HMOs),** through the fund providing new money for councils to identify overcrowded houses and share more intelligence with the Home Office if they suspect these people are here illegally. This will lead to joint operations to target the rogue landlords breaking the law and providing this accommodation to people who have no right to be here. There are good examples of this already taking place in Newham and Ealing, and this approach builds on the new powers in the Immigration Act and could complement work to tackle anti-social behaviour. This builds on the initiatives undertaken by the Government in the last Parliament.
- **English language training to help migrants learn English and integrate.** Local authorities will also be able to come forward with specific proposals by bidding into the Fund. We have not sought to limit the type of bids local authorities can put into the Fund as we want local areas to come forward with their solutions, which we will assess on a case by case basis. We will, however, encourage bids that include increasing provision for English language support because this will help improve integration, as well as reduce pressures on public services resulting from translation costs. Such translation also undermines integration by discouraging people from learning English, which is essential for people to get a job and get involved in community life.
- **Help illegal migrants to leave the UK voluntarily.** Investing in local authority capacity to engage with families and former unaccompanied asylum seeking children leaving care (who have no lawful basis to remain here) to prepare them for departure and co-ordinate with Immigration Enforcement could significantly reduce pressures.

## 4. Unduly Lenient Sentencing

**Summary:** The Government is extending the existing Unduly Lenient Sentencing scheme so that it applies to sentences given for the majority of terrorist offences.

- Some terrorism offences are currently included in the Unduly Lenient Sentencing scheme. Other terrorism offences that are either-way and not at present specified in the Unduly Lenient Sentencing scheme will be brought within scope. This can be done by statutory instrument and we will look to have this in place by early next year.
- Terrorism offences that extending the Unduly Lenient Sentencing scheme would bring into scope include:
  - **Proscription offences** (Sections 11 & 12 of the Terrorism Act 2000) – e.g. being a member of, or supporting a banned organisation. If the individual is convicted on indictment the sentence can be imprisonment for up to ten years and/or a fine. If it is a summary conviction it is up to six months and/or a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum.
  - **Possessing information useful to a terrorist** (Section 58 of the Terrorism Act 2000) – e.g. having a Daesh magazine that includes advice on how to make a bomb. Sentencing options as above.
  - **Encouragement of terrorism** (Section 1 of the Terrorism Act 2006) – publishing information or making statements which encourage others to become engaged in terrorist acts. On conviction or indictment the sentence can be imprisonment for up to seven months and/or a fine. On summary

conviction in England & Wales the individual can be imprisoned for up to twelve months and in Scotland or Northern Ireland it is up to six months. All summary convictions can also be given a fine not exceeding the statutory maximum as well as/instead of imprisonment.

- We are also considering a wider expansion of the scheme to include a range of either way offences sentenced in the Crown Court.

## 5. Removing European Criminals

**Summary:** We are toughening the rules on free movement so we do what we can to put Britain first while we are still members of the EU. We will introduce new secondary legislation that seeks to toughen how our courts interpret the rules governing free movement. This should make it easier to exclude extremists and terrorists, deport criminals and help to ensure that Europeans who repeatedly commit minor offences in this country can be deported. We will also be able to deport those who abuse free movement for the first time.

- **We will introduce new secondary legislation that will toughen how our courts interpret the rules governing free movement.** By introducing a legal statement about what is in the fundamental interests of the UK, we will make it easier to deport European criminals, aligning the approach more closely with that for non-EU offenders, as well as those who abuse their free movement rights by facilitating illegal migration or engaging in immigration abuse. Under free movement rules, in order to deport or exclude someone they have to be a 'genuine, present and sufficiently serious threat affecting one of the fundamental interests of society'.
- We will make clear that a threat does not need to be imminent to make it easier to exclude extremists or terrorists. We will also set out in domestic legislation what is in our fundamental interests, and bring this in line with how we treat non-EU criminals (who are generally deported if they commit a serious crime, receive a custodial sentence of 12 months or longer, or are a persistent offender).

This more aggressive interpretation of the existing law means that, for the first time, we will seek to deport Europeans who repeatedly commit minor offences in this country. They will now face a 5 to 10 year deportation, rather than a 12 month re-entry ban. Those who abuse free movement will face a 3 year deportation order.

## 6. Forces' Help to Buy Extension

**Summary:** Conservatives launched our Forces' Help to Buy scheme in April 2014 to help members of the Armed Forces afford a deposit to buy their first home. 10,000 personnel have already had their applications approved. We are extending the scheme until 2018 so that more can benefit.

- **Extending Forces' Help to Buy.** This £200 million scheme helps military personnel get onto the property ladder by enabling them to borrow a deposit of up to half of their annual salary, up to £25,000, interest free. It was due to end in April 2017 but with 20 per cent of service personnel considering using the scheme we are extending it by a year to allow more personnel to benefit.
- **Over 10,000 applications have been approved.** At last year's conference Michael Fallon set an ambition for 10,000 personnel to be approved - 10,584 applications have now been approved. Over £127 million has been paid to over 8,300 military personnel, an average of £15,200 per claim. The remaining claims are ready to pay on completion of property purchases.
- **It has proved most popular with non-officers.** In August, 81 per cent of payments were made to other ranks. The scheme is supporting those troops that need our help to get onto the housing ladder.
- This policy applies to all regular members of the Armed Forces personnel to buy a property in the UK (or Republic of Ireland for those recruited that are of Irish parentage).

## 7. New State School Cadet Units

**Summary:** Our manifesto committed to increasing the number of cadet units in state schools to 500 by 2020. We are announcing the first 25 new units across the country, giving more young people the opportunity to develop essential skills to help them get on in life.

- **Increasing the number of cadet units in schools to 500 by 2020.** The 25 new units approved in state schools will bring the total number of units to 382. There are already a further 124 expressions of interest in the Combined Cadet Force programme.
- **Focusing Combined Cadet Force expansion on state schools.** The additional funding will be available to any government-funded state secondary school and 16-to-18 college across the UK to apply to open a new Combined Cadet Force Unit.
- **Extending the opportunity to be part of a Combined Cadet Force.** The 25 state schools approved for a Cadet force since November 2015 focus on areas of high deprivation and areas where there is currently limited access to the cadet experience.

## 8. Protecting our Armed Forces from legal claims

**Summary:** We will protect our Armed Forces from persistent legal claims by having a presumption to derogate from the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) in future conflicts, if the circumstances existing at the time make it appropriate to do so. This will help to reduce the burden of industrial-scale claims we have seen following operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

- **We want to reduce litigation burden on our armed forces.** We will have a presumption in favour of derogating from the ECHR during times of war or other public emergency threatening the life of the nation, if the circumstances prevailing at the time make it appropriate to do so. Had there been a valid derogation from Article 2 (right to life) and Article 5 (right to liberty) applying to UK operations in Iraq and Afghanistan from the outset, a large proportion of the current litigation burden would not have arisen.
- **This would help our Armed Forces to do their job.** Derogating would remove the threat of potential legal action under specific articles and avoid the considerable stress and uncertainty caused by legal claims related to those articles, often filed long after events have occurred. It would free our soldiers from ECHR based limitations on their ability to hold detainees as well as many of the onerous ECHR investigative obligations which arise in certain cases, and instead let our soldiers get on with their job.
- **Our Armed Forces will remain subject to the rule of law.** It is essential that our Armed Forces operate to the highest standards and are subject to the rule of law at all times. They will continue to operate under a comprehensive legal framework in accordance with International Humanitarian Law (the law of armed conflict, including the Geneva Conventions) and to Service Law, which includes the criminal law of England and Wales, regardless of where they are serving.
- **We will spend our defence budget on our Armed Forces, not lawyers.** Every pound spent on defending meritless legal claims or making payments is a pound that is not spent on our Armed Forces. With a growing defence budget, increasing in real terms every year of this Parliament, we want to spend that money on more ships, more planes, more troops ready to act, better equipment on Special Forces, and more on cyber.

## 9. Increasing medical student places for a self-sufficient NHS

**Summary:** We will make the NHS in England self-sufficient in doctors by opening up medical training to many more people in our country, thereby broadening opportunity, cutting waste on locums and agency staff, and ending our reliance on importing doctors from overseas.

- **Expanding medical education training in England – with up to 1,500 more government-funded training places each year.** Removing the current restrictions will increase medical student places from 6,000 a year to up to 7,500 with the first cohort of these additional doctors entering the NHS in 2023.
- **All students who receive NHS funding for their training will now be expected to work in the NHS for a minimum of four years.** This ensures a return for the taxpayer (it costs £220,000 to produce a qualified doctor) in the same way that graduates whose higher education was funded by the armed forces have to commit to staying in the armed forces for a period afterwards.
- **Making sure international students pay a fair price for their training – allowing us to nurture more home-grown talent.** International students who study in our medical schools will now be charged for the totality of their training, including clinical placements which they are not currently charged for.

## 10. Team England Commonwealth Games Funding

**Summary:** The 2018 Commonwealth Games are taking place on the Gold Coast, Australia. Sport England are awarding £4 million of National Lottery funding to Team England – so we are well-prepared to beat the Aussies in their own backyard.

- **Sport England’s £4 million lottery award will enable athletes to properly train and prepare for the Games.** DCMS arms-length body Sport England has approved a National Lottery award to Commonwealth Games England of £4 million, through to 2019.
- **This funding will allow Team England to take a full-team to the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games.** England topped the medal table in Glasgow 2014 and the aim will be for them to do so again, this time on Australian soil.
- **These Games will promote sport for all.** The team will be the biggest, strongest and most diverse team England has ever taken to a Commonwealth Games. The Games will have a positive legacy for young people and adults across the country, who will be inspired to enter sport by the success of our great athletes.

## 11. Guaranteeing EU-funded projects

**Summary:** The Chancellor has announced that the Government will provide further guarantees to EU funding schemes. As we prepare to depart the EU, HM Treasury will provide a guarantee for all structural and investment fund projects, including agri-environment schemes (i.e. multi-year public sector projects) that run over the point of departure.

- Where departments – as determined by their relevant Secretary of State – are content that EU-funded projects meet the following high-level criteria, this funding will be subject to a Treasury guarantee. They must:
  - provide value for money, in a way that had a comparable benefit to other domestically-funded programmes;
  - support domestic strategic priorities, specifically projects that fit with department’s own priorities and the Government’s agenda.

- These conditions will only be applied in such a way that the current pipeline of committed projects are not disrupted, including agri-environment schemes due to begin this January.

## 12. Public finances

**Summary:** The Chancellor has outlined his approach to managing the public finances.

- We will restore fiscal discipline in a pragmatic way that reflects the new circumstances we face. We will no longer target a surplus at the end of this Parliament, but the task of fiscal consolidation must continue.
- At the Autumn Statement in November the Chancellor will set out a new plan to deliver long-term fiscal sustainability that responds to the consequences of short-term uncertainty and recognises the need for investment to build an economy that works for everyone.

## 13. Midlands Connect funding

**Summary:** The Department for Transport is announcing funding of £12 million for Midlands Connect.

- **We are providing additional funding of £12 million until the end of the Spending Review period (2019-20).** This means we are placing Midlands Connect on a similar financial footing to Transport for the North, which also has funding committed until the end of the Spending Review.

## 14. Housing package

**Summary:** The Communities Secretary Sajid Javid, and the Chancellor, Philip Hammond, have announced a package of new measures to build more houses, more quickly, in the places people want to live. This is a £5 billion package of investment.

### *Accelerated Construction*

- **The Government will step in to address failures in the market.** Government will take direct action, using public land to encourage new developers with different models into housebuilding, and support SMEs. This will help us close the housing supply deficit.
- **We will make more surplus public land available and ready to build on.** We will identify sites within the Government's portfolio which can be built on by 2020, and will work with local authorities to help them bring forward their own sites. We will deliver outline planning permission and undertake the costs of some remediation work to reduce development risks on our sites, and work with local authorities to ensure they do the same on theirs.
- **We will diversify the market.** We will partner with new entrants, SMEs, custom builders and offsite manufacturers and build out sites at up to twice the rate a large developer might. By using our land as equity rather than expecting an upfront receipt, we lower developer risk and overcome issues with access to finance.
- **This will deliver up to 15,000 new homes on surplus public sector land by 2020, and 30,000 in total** – ensuring that valuable public sector land is used to generate the homes that people need.

### *Homes Building Fund*

- **We are opening a £3 billion Home Building Fund.** This Fund will deliver housing growth through direct

Government support for those who cannot access financing in the market.

- The £3 billion Home Building Fund will provide:
  - £1 billion of short term loan funding for small builders, custom builders and innovators, delivering 25,500 homes this Parliament.
  - £2 billion of long term funding for infrastructure and large sites, unlocking a pipeline of up to 200,000 homes over the longer term – with the emphasis on developments on brownfield land.

### *Urban Regeneration*

- **We will take action to radically increase brownfield development and to bring life back to abandoned sites.** That means high quality housing for families in town centres, breathing new life into our high streets, turning abandoned shopping space into new communities and increasing density of housing, including around transport hubs, to build homes that people want to live in.
- **There will be a ‘de facto’ presumption in favour of housing on suitable brownfield land.** By strengthening national planning policy we will create a ‘de facto’ presumption in favour of housing on suitable brownfield land and drive up density levels in high demand areas while ensuring that developments are well-designed and respect the character of the local area. This could deliver an addition 25,000 new homes by 2021.
- **We will allow local planning authorities to grant permission in principle on sites suitable for housing-led development identified in the new Brownfield Registers.** This will make development of up to 140,000 homes per annum on brownfield land less risky for developers, identified in the Brownfield registers we introduced to help housebuilders quickly identify suitable brownfield sites in their area for new housing.
- **We will also build on the existing benefits of our recent permitted development rights on office to residential development.** The permitted development rights for office to residential, which gives a general permission for developing office space into housing, will be extended to allow for demolition of the offices and replacement with housing on a like-for-like basis. This could provide around 4,000 new homes by the end of 2021. We will explore other opportunities to make underused land available for new homes.

## 15. Brexit – Article 50 and ECA Repeal

**Summary:** On the first day of the conference the Prime Minister set out more detail on the Government’s plan for Brexit covering three areas: timing, process and the Government’s vision for Britain after we leave the EU.

- **Our vision is for a fully-independent, sovereign country with freedom to make our decisions.** The process we are about to begin is not about negotiating all of our sovereignty away again. It is not going to be about any of those matters over which the country has just voted to regain control. It is not, therefore, a negotiation to establish a relationship anything like the one we have had for the last forty years or more.
  - We will do what independent, sovereign countries do. We will decide for ourselves how we control immigration. And we will be free to pass our own laws.
  - We want to give British companies the maximum freedom to trade with and operate in the Single Market – and let European businesses do the same here. But let’s be clear: we are not leaving the European Union only to give up control of immigration again.
  - We want our deal with the European Union to reflect the kind of mature, cooperative relationship that close friends and allies enjoy.

- **We will invoke Article 50 no later than the end of March next year.** By this point, Britain will begin its formal negotiations to leave the European Union. This will provide certainty that there will be no unnecessary delays and no attempt to stay in the European Union by the back door, as well as certainty for other European countries on when this begins.
  - It is up to the Government to trigger Article 50. When it legislated to establish the referendum, Parliament put the decision to leave or remain inside the EU in the hands of the people. And the people gave their answer with emphatic clarity. So now it is up to the Government to get on with the job.
  - Those people who argue that Article 50 can only be triggered after agreement in both Houses of Parliament are not standing up for democracy, they're trying to subvert it. They're not trying to get Brexit right, they're trying to kill it by delaying it. They are insulting the intelligence of the British people. That is why, next week the Attorney General himself will act for the Government and resist them in the courts.
- **The European Communities Act will be repealed on the day we leave the European Union – meaning that the authority of EU law in Britain will end.** We will soon put before Parliament a Great Repeal Bill, which will remove from the statute book – once and for all – the European Communities Act. This historic Bill – which will be included in the next Queen's Speech – will mean that the 1972 Act, the legislation that gives direct effect to all EU law in Britain, will no longer apply from the date upon which we formally leave the European Union. We will convert the body of existing EU law and Parliament will be free to amend, repeal and improve any law it chooses.
  - This process will give businesses and workers maximum certainty as leave the European Union. And we are absolutely clear: existing workers' legal rights will continue to be guaranteed in law.

## 16. More funding to tackle mental health stigma

**Summary:** The Health Secretary has announced that the Government will be committing an extra £12.5 million to the Time to Change mental health campaign over the next 4 years.

Time to Change is a campaign run by the charities Mind and Rethink Mental Illness to change the way everyone thinks and acts about mental health problems. This will include:

- Creating a Time To Change hub in every region – this will be a dedicated centre for people to talk about mental health problems and build their own campaigns to tackle stigma in their areas.
- Training a regional Time to Change Champion – this will see people of all ages working to tackle stigma in their communities, schools and workplaces.
- Part of the training will involve a mental health 'boot camp' for young adults where they will learn about the barriers people with mental health problems have to overcome. The five day course will teach participants techniques to help engage their communities and how to have the greatest impact tackling stigma.
- Time To Change will also work in schools to create a head teacher peer support network. This will link up school leaders so they can discuss the issues they face, share experiences and discuss the best ways to address them.
- A series of social media campaigns will also work to target negative attitudes in the general population. Time To Change will focus particularly on men, children and young people, African and Caribbean communities.

## 17. Prison Staffing

**Summary:** The Government will boost staffing in 10 of our most challenging prisons to ensure prisons remain safe and provide meaningful opportunities for reform.

- **Immediate staff increases in 10 of our most challenging prisons.** We will invest £14 million a year to increase staffing in 10 of the most challenging prisons, boosting staffing levels by over 400. Staffing levels will be ramped up over the coming months and we are planning for all staff to be in place by March next year.
- **Nationwide roll-out of new working practices so staff in every prison spend more time supervising inmates.** There is a clear link between higher levels of staff engagement with prisoners and lower violence. We will roll out a new staff deployment model across the entire prison estate. This model will increase the amount of time staff spend engaging with and supervising prisoners.
- **Boosting the number of ex-service personnel working in prisons.** We will increase the number of service leavers applying for prison officer posts through targeted work experience schemes. We will ensure that service leavers continue to receive their Armed Forces salary whilst undertaking a work experience placement and, if accepted as a prison officer, during their initial training.
- **Prison safety and reform plan to be launched in the coming weeks.** We will be launching a comprehensive plan for prison safety and reform in the coming weeks, followed by legislation early next year.

## 18. Employment practices review

**Summary:** The Prime Minister has announced that Matthew Taylor, Chief Executive of the RSA and a former senior adviser to the Labour Party, will lead an independent review of employment practices in the modern economy.

- **Matthew Taylor, the chief executive of the RSA and a former senior Labour adviser, will lead an independent review of employment practices in the modern economy.** The review will consider whether our employment rules have kept pace with changes in the economy, such as the growth in self-employment, on-demand working, the practice of contracting rather than hiring, and zero hour contracts. It will make recommendations to government about how to maintain flexibility while supporting job security, workplace rights, opportunities for progression and representation for the growing number of people who do not have traditional employment relationships.

## 19. Stopping benefit reassessments for those most in need

**Summary:** We will stop requiring people with the most severe, lifelong conditions to be reassessed for their out-of-work benefits.

- **Exempting those with serious and chronic conditions from reassessments.** We will work with medical professionals, our health assessment provider, and others to develop criteria to stop re-assessments for people with the most severe health conditions. People with illnesses such as severe Huntington's, severe autism or a congenital heart condition, will be amongst those who might qualify to continue to receive Employment Support Allowance automatically.
- **Simplifying the assessment process.** In addition, we will also explore in a forthcoming Work and Health Green Paper how we might simplify and improve the assessment process and how we can use information more effectively to support people with health conditions and disabilities.

## 20. Support to boost new technologies

**Summary:** We want the UK to lead the world in the development, commercialisation and adoption of new technologies. So the Government will: (a) provide additional £100 million funding to extend and enhance the Biomedical Catalyst supporting innovative UK life science companies translate research into commercial success, (b) provide additional £120 million funding for universities to fund new tech transfer offices, and (c) expand the Challenger Business Programmes to address regulations that pose the largest barriers to the adoption of disruptive technologies.

- The **Biomedical Catalyst** provides grant support at the early innovation stage targeting the funding gap to ensure that emerging disruptive healthcare technologies are delivered to market. The programme offers funding at varying stages of technical and commercial development from proof of concept to feasibility awards. Average grants are £750,000 per company mainly to start-ups and spin outs. It has been hugely oversubscribed with funding applications outnumbering grant awards fourfold. The new funding extends the programme for the next four years.
- The UK has some world class university **tech transfer offices** that support effective transfer of the research carried out at universities and research institutions, into commercially viable business ventures. However, there is a wide variation between universities, and there are significant economies of scale to be reaped from better collaboration. This new programme incentivises universities to bid for funds to collaborate and expand their network of tech transfer centres.
- A key part of developing new technologies is creating a regulatory environment that supports the development of disruptive technologies. The **Challenger Business Programme** was launched in October 2013 to identify and as far as possible remove the barriers that stop insurgent and innovative businesses from setting up and thriving in the UK. This programme will be expanded into new sectors and new businesses as an element of the Industrial Strategy.

## 21. New support for Afghanistan

**Summary:** The Government is committing up to £750 million from the aid budget to Afghanistan between 2017 and 2020.

- **We will commit up to £750 million, from the aid budget, to Afghanistan between 2017 and 2020.** This will help deliver improved health and education systems and stronger economic growth.
- **We will help clear deadly mines.** Our support will help clear contaminated land, help people make use of that land, and educate people about the danger of un-cleared land.
- **We will meet urgent humanitarian needs.** In addition to this long-term development support, we will help meet the most immediate needs of around a million displaced Afghans before winter hits. By giving £15 million to the United Nations Flash Appeal for Afghanistan, we will provide shelter, food and medicine to vulnerable Afghan families, including people who have returned from Pakistan and women and children driven out of their homes by continuing fighting inside the country.
- **Our support will help bolster the economy and state of Afghanistan.** This development aid is a vital complement to the separate support we provide to the Afghan security forces. Making this commitment will send a clear signal that the international community will not walk away from Afghanistan.

## 22. Building our new nuclear submarines

**Summary:** The Conservative Government was elected on a manifesto commitment to renew our nuclear deterrent – the ultimate guarantee of the nation’s security. Having gained the overwhelming backing of Parliament in July, we will now invest £1.25 billion in order to move to the build phase of the project.

- **Committing to build a new generation of nuclear submarines.** Our election manifesto made a clear commitment to maintain our continuous at sea deterrence by building four new nuclear submarines. We are announcing £1.25 billion to begin the build phase known as ‘delivery phase 1’.
- **That money will enable us to start building boat 1.** Delivery phase 1 will see us begin building the auxiliary machine space, containing switchboards and control panels for the reactor, as well as carrying prototyping, purchasing material for boats two to four and investing in facilities at the yard in Barrow where they will be built.

## 23. Digital skills for everyone

**Summary:** Karen Bradley announced on Saturday 1 October that the Government will ensure free training for adults who lack basic digital skills in the Digital Economy Bill currently before Parliament.

- **We will provide free training in basic digital skills for adults lacking qualifications or capabilities – ensuring everyone can benefit from the digital economy.** A forthcoming amendment to the Digital Economy Bill currently going through Parliament will introduce this, putting digital skills on the same footing as English and Maths. Where adults want and need to improve their digital skills and courses are available, we will offer free training. The digital skills training will be delivered by colleges and other adult education providers.