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April - June 2023 British Edition



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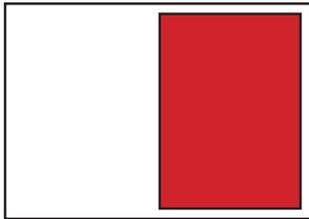
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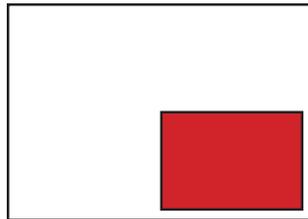
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News Roundup

Summary of the main news and sports events over the last three months

By Paul G Bazeley for Government World

April News Review

Deputy Prime Minister and Justice Secretary Dominic Raab, resigned from the positions after an investigation into allegations he bullied staff members.



Oliver Dowden was selected to replace him as Deputy Prime Minister, while Alex Chalk replaced him as Justice Secretary.

The European Commission agreed to donate a billion euros worth of ammunition to Ukraine to help with the ongoing invasion from Russia. The German government also agreed to a request by Poland to send GDR MIG-29 fighter jets to Ukraine.



Germany closed its last three remaining nuclear plants. The plan had been years

in the making after the previous Chancellor Angela Merkel had decided nuclear energy in Germany would end in 2022. The current coalition government agreed to continue with the nuclear phase-out, but with a three-month delay due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.



The competition and markets authority in the UK prevented Microsoft's \$68billion acquisition of Activision

Blizzard. It stated the deal would leave video gamers with fewer choices and may reduce innovation.

The Ford motor company's hands-free driving cars were approved for use on 2,300 miles of UK motorways by the



Department for Transport. The decision meant the UK were the first country in Europe to approve hands-free driving vehicles on public roads.

Endeavour Group Holding, the owners of the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), announced a merger estimated to be worth \$9.3 billion with World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE). The two companies will be combined with Endeavour control 51% with WWE shareholders controlling 49%.



The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) fined the social media company TikTok £12.7 million for their 'failure to protect children's privacy on the video platform. It becomes one of the largest ever fines issued by the ICO.

April Sports Review

Coach Rambler and the Irish jockey Derek Fox won the 175th Grand National at Aintree Racecourse. The race was delayed due to animal rights activists storming the track, the incident led to over 100 arrests being made.



The World Snooker Championship at the Crucible in Sheffield was interrupted when protestors from Just Stop Oil stormed at the two tables.

May News Review

Belarus and Russia reached an



agreement to allow the positioning of Russian tactical nuclear weapons on Belarusian soil. Alexander Lukashenko, the Belarusian President, stated that the weapons were already in transit as the news broke.

Net migration to the UK reached a record 606,000. Most of the arrivals were attributed to non-EU migrants according to the Office for National Statistics. Minister of State, Robert Jenrick, reiterated the governments

plan to reduce net migration to 'sustainable levels'.



The World Health Organisation announced it no longer considered COVID-19 to be a global health emergency. Instead it was classified as a global health threat.

The Writers Guild of America went on strike over disagreements with pay. It is the first time they've been on strike since 2007-2008. The strike is expected to last for several months.



Loreen, from Sweden, won the Eurovision song contest in Liverpool, England with her song Tattoo. The contest was held in the

UK after Ukraine won the previous year. Loreen became the first woman to have won the contest more than once, while it was Sweden's 7th win.

A paralysed man was given the ability to walk again after brain implants were implanted by Swiss scientists. The result was a medical first.



Princess Eugenie of the UK gave birth to a baby boy. The child was named Ernest George Ronnie.

May Sports Review

Manchester City won their third consecutive Premier League title. It was confirmed after Arsenal lost 1-0 to Nottingham Forest at the City Ground.



Luca Brecel defeated Mark Selby in the World Snooker Championships at the crucible in Sheffield. The Belgium beat the Leicester man 18-15 to make him the first person from continental Europe to win the tournament.

June News Review



The Wagner Group published a video showing a captured Russian commander stating that he had ordered his troops to fire on a Wagner group convoy. Yevgeny Prigozhin later declared he would stop the Russian Military leadership and called for justice after alleging that Russian government forces had killed his forces in airstrikes. Russia denied the claims. Prigozhin then warned his troops would march on Moscow unless he met with military leaders. The statement led to Vladimir Putin to address the Russian nation claiming a coup d'etat was under way. His troops later withdrew after an agreement was reached between Prigozhin, Putin and Alexander Lukashenko, President of Belarus.

informed by the Privileges Committee that he will be sanctioned for misleading Parliament with his involvement in the Partygate incident.



The Titan submersible, which was carrying tourists to the wreck of the RMS Titanic is reported missing. Later in the month it is announced

that the Titan had imploded on its voyage to the Titanic wreckage. Following the announcement safety concerns began to surface about the company and its Titan submersible.

Former Prime Minister, Boris Johnson,



resigned from Parliament after being

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak announced that the UK will host the world's first ever summit on artificial intelligence (AI) later



in the year. The announcement came as there are growing concerns over improvements in AI with websites such as ChatGPT now becoming a popular internet site.

Donald Trump, the former US President, was indicted on 37 counts related to mishandling of classified government documents.

Apple announced a new product, it's first in two years, after unveiling the Vision Pro a mixed reality headset. It is expected to be released in early 2024.



The former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi died at the age of 86 in Milan.

June Sports Review

Manchester City won the FA cup final after beating rivals Manchester United 2-1 at Wembley Stadium in London. It is City's seventh title and the match also saw their player Ilkay Gundogan record the fastest goal in an FA cup final with a goal after 12 seconds.



Later in the month Manchester City beat Inter Milan in the Champions League final held in Istanbul, Turkey. Man City won 1-0 to win their first Champions League. The win also meant that Manchester City became only the second club to win the continental treble (Premier League, FA Cup and Champions League) after rival Manchester United in 1999.

Iga Swiatek beat Karolina Muchova in three sets to retain her women's singles French Open title. Novak Djokovic defeated Casper Ruud in three sets to win the men's singles French Open title and go one clear of Rafael Nadal in the all-time Grand Slam titles list.



The PGA tour and European PGA tour reached an agreement with LIV Golf to combine the commercial rights together in a for-profit company. The company will be primarily funded by Saudi Arabia's Private Investment Fund. The merger ended all litigation between the tours. It is also thought it will allow LIV Golf 'defectors' the opportunity to play on the PGA and European PGA tour.



End

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A bronze elephant figurine standing on a white background. The elephant is facing left and has its trunk raised.

£1.6 billion investment brought forward to speed up vital water infrastructure projects

April

From: Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, The Water Services Regulation Authority, and Rebecca Pow MP

Over £1.6 billion of new investment will be directed into vital infrastructure to improve the water quality of our rivers, lakes and coastal waters and secure future water supplies, the government and Ofwat announced today (3 April).

It follows a request from Defra to English water companies to accelerate investments between now and 2025 to

tackle storm overflow discharges, reduce nutrient pollution from treatment works and address water resilience challenges.

This announcement comes ahead of the government's Integrated Plan for Water, which will be published tomorrow, and will set out how we can achieve cleaner and more plentiful water for future generations. The investment announced today will ensure improvements are made more quickly to address the unacceptable levels of pollution in waterways and deliver for customers.

As part of the new package of investment, announced in draft form by Ofwat, companies will commit £1.1 billion to help eliminate harm caused by storm overflows. A further £400 million will be spent on water resilience schemes and £160m to help reduce nutrient pollution.

It includes major new projects such as:

- United Utilities reducing around 8,400 spills per year, including reducing discharges into Lake Windermere (£800 million)
- Yorkshire Water improving wastewater treatment infrastructure in Ilkley to improve the bathing water quality of the River Wharfe (£67 million)
- South West Water upgrading assets and storage to reduce discharges in Falmouth and Sidmouth (£70 million)
- Anglian Water accelerating its



regional storm overflow reduction plan in the east of England (£27 million)

- Essex and Suffolk Water increasing water resilience in their area to better meet the needs of local customers including businesses (£18 million)

- Severn Trent rolling out smart meters and modifying its Draycote Water reservoir in Warwickshire to increase water capacity (£70 million)

Schemes will also focus on new infrastructure to reduce nutrient pollution. Improvements at 14 wastewater treatment works, with an investment of £160 million, will significantly reduce phosphorus pollution in protected site catchments. This includes proposals from Anglian Water to both reduce pollution and support sustainable housing development.

All work will start in the next two years, from 2023 to 2025.

Water Minister Rebecca Pow said:

“These new schemes will help accelerate the delivery of the urgent improvements we need to protect our environment. It includes £1.1 billion of new investment to stop sewage discharges at sites across

the country and will deliver a reduction of 10,000 discharges per year in places like Lake Windermere, the River Wharfe, Falmouth and Sidmouth.

The investment set out here will also provide an important boost for regional jobs, businesses and local communities.

It builds on the key commitments in our five year strategy – our Environmental Improvement Plan – as well as our upcoming Plan for Water to tackle pollution, reduce water consumption and protect our waters.”

Ofwat Chief Executive David Black said:

“Substantial investment is needed to address the challenges to our water system of storm overflows, river and

bathing water quality and drought resilience.

We are pleased that we’ve been able to work with companies and identify significant investments which companies can start well before the next price control period. This will bring substantial benefits for customers and the environment and bring them faster. We want to see companies making more rapid progress in delivering improvements, and will hold them to account if they fall short.”

Ofwat will consult on these draft decisions and the consultation will close at midday on Monday 24 April 2023.



New measures to tackle child sexual abuse

April

From: Home Office and The Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC MP

People who work with children will be legally required to report child sexual abuse or face sanctions under new plans unveiled by the Home Secretary.

Home Secretary Suella Braverman has today (Sunday 2 April) committed to a mandatory reporting duty, subject to consultation, for those working or volunteering with children to report child sexual abuse, after the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) heard heart-breaking testimony from thousands of victims let down by professionals turning a blind eye to their suffering.

Mandatory reporting was one of the key recommendations made by the IICSA report to crack down on child sexual abuse and address the systemic under-reporting of this crime.

The first step to introducing the duty is a call for evidence which will be open to professionals, volunteers, parents, victims and survivors, and the wider public. It will be the start of extensive consultation to ensure everyone's views are represented ahead of implementing the new duty.

Suella Braverman said:

“Child sexual abuse is one of the most horrific crimes facing our society, it devastates victims, families and whole communities.

The protection of children is a collective effort. Every adult must be supported to call out child sexual abuse without fear.

That's why I'm introducing a mandatory reporting duty and launching a call for evidence. We must address the failings identified by the Inquiry and take on board the views of the thousands of victims and survivors who contributed to

it.

I would encourage everyone to engage with the process once it starts – it is important to have a national



conversation about this to help to shine a light on this terrible – but too often hidden – crime.”

The call for evidence will be published alongside the government’s full response to the Inquiry shortly.

To immediately support professionals who work with children, we are providing £600,000 to the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline. If a professional has concerns that their organisation isn’t reporting or handling child abuse cases appropriately,



they can contact the NSPCC whistleblowing helpline for support.

The helpline was launched in 2016 following Professor Alexis Jay’s report into the child sexual exploitation in Rotherham. Since then, it has provided advice to 1,062 individuals and led to over 300 referrals to the police.

Additional funding is also going to be made available for the NSPCC’s adult helpline, which is for anyone who is concerned about the welfare of a child. The helpline has established procedures and protocols around referring reports to statutory safeguarding partners, including children’s services and policing, so that they can be investigated and acted on.

The government is also speeding up the process for members of the public to find out if someone they know has committed child abuse in the past in order to better protect vulnerable people from predators close by.

Known as Sarah’s Law in memory of 8-year-old Sarah Payne, who was murdered by a previously convicted sex offender in 2000, the updated guidance for the Child Sex Offender’s Disclosure Scheme will make it easier for the public to raise a concern online and reduce the

timeframes for police to respond to enquiries, which will help the public get the information they need sooner and protect children from harm.

Dr Sara Payne MBE, the mother of Sarah Payne, said:

“After the news of my Sarah’s murder in 2000, I promised her that her death would not be in vain or forgotten or indeed, only remembered for the manner of her death. Since 2010, after years of campaigning, so many children have been protected in her name, a much more fitting epitaph to my princess.

I would like to thank my family, my own dedicated Phoenix team and the Home Office Sarah’s Law team for helping us all to reach this day, where I am pleased to announce the latest Sarah’s Law updates for 2023.

There is always more to do. This is an historical ‘turning point’ day today for child protection and I for one, sincerely welcome these much-needed changes to Sarah’s Law 2023, as we all know keeping up with ‘sex offenders’ is not and will never be ‘enough’.”

7 year low in maternal whooping cough vaccine uptake puts newborns at serious risk of hospitalisation

April

From: UK Health Security Agency

2022 data shows the average vaccine uptake across England has dropped to 61.5%, its lowest level since 2016.

The whooping cough (pertussis) vaccine is given to pregnant women to help protect their babies against whooping cough from birth during their first weeks of life.

Whooping cough can be a serious, life-threatening disease in young babies, usually requiring hospital treatment.

The latest UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) data on the maternal whooping cough vaccine programme shows that uptake has dropped to its lowest level in 7 years.

Data for 2022 shows an average uptake across England of 61.5%, a decrease of 3.9% since 2021 and 7.6% from 2020. Coverage in London is particularly low at 41.4%.

The maternal vaccine provides newborn babies with protection against whooping cough which lasts until they are old enough to be routinely vaccinated, with the immunity from the mother passed through the placenta during pregnancy.

Maternal vaccination was first introduced in 2012 due to very high rates of whooping cough. A study published last year found the vaccine provided 89% protection against hospitalisation and 97% protection against death from whooping cough in babies born to vaccinated mothers.

It is important that babies continue to be protected against this serious disease, though rates have fallen since 2012. Whooping cough is associated with difficulty breathing, and can lead to pneumonia, permanent brain damage and even death, particularly in infants under 6 months.

Dr Gayatri Amirthalingam, Consultant Epidemiologist at UKHSA, said:

“The whooping cough vaccination programme for pregnant women has been hugely successful in protecting newborn babies in the first weeks of life from serious disease and hospitalisation.

Whooping cough can be very serious for young babies, particularly under 6 months, and can lead to pneumonia, permanent brain damage and even death. That’s why it’s so important that all expectant mothers get the vaccine at the recommended time from 20 weeks,



to give their babies the best protection from this serious and highly contagious disease.

If you aren't sure whether you've had the vaccine, or would like further information, speak to your GP or midwife."

Health Minister Maria Caulfield said:

"Whooping cough can have serious consequences on the health of newborn babies, and in some cases it can be life threatening.

It's really important we do what we can to protect the health of our babies, so I want to encourage all expectant mothers to come forward for the free whooping cough vaccine and give your baby the protection it needs."

About the whooping cough vaccine

The vaccine is available for expectant mothers from 16 weeks, though women who have missed it can have it up until going into labour.

Babies receive further protection from pertussis in their routine childhood immunisations from 8 weeks onwards.

The maternal whooping cough vaccine also boosts the mother's immunity to polio, diphtheria and tetanus.

Record doctors and nurses working in the NHS helping to cut waiting lists

April

From: Department of Health and Social Care and The Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP

Latest data shows there are more doctors, nurses and staff than ever before working in the NHS.

- Government on track to deliver on commitment for 50,000 more nurses by 2024, with over 41,000 more nurses compared to September 2019
- New pension rules also come into force today to support senior clinicians to



continue working in the NHS for longer. There are record numbers of doctors and nurses working in the NHS in England helping to deliver extra appointments, speed up diagnoses and cut waiting lists, according to the latest stats.

Data published today by NHS Digital shows in January 2023 there were almost 1.27 million full-time equivalent staff working in NHS trusts and commissioning bodies in England - over 48,700 more people compared to a year ago, an increase of 4%.

The latest data also shows there were over 5,100 more doctors and over 11,800 more nurses working in the NHS compared to January 2022.

Since 2010, there are now over 37,700 more doctors and over 52,400 more nurses working in the NHS. The government is also on track to deliver



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on its commitment for 50,000 more nurses by 2024, with over 41,000 more nurses compared to September 2019.

Separately, reforms to public sector pensions announced at budget come into force today which will increase the annual tax-free pension allowance from £40,000 to £60,000 and remove the lifetime allowance charge. These changes will ensure doctors are not disincentivised from remaining in their NHS roles or taking on extra hours, meaning more expertise will be retained so we can continue treating patients and helping to cut waiting lists.

This is alongside wider changes to the NHS Pension Scheme to make retirement more flexible and support staff to remain in work for longer. These changes include allowing retired and partially retired staff to return to work or increase their working hours without having payments to their pension reduced or suspended, fixing the unintended impacts of inflation so senior clinicians are not taxed more than necessary and ensuring staff can continue to access the scheme when working in primary care networks.

Around 22,000 senior NHS clinicians could exceed the previous £40,000 annual allowance in 2023 to 2024 and around 31,000 clinicians have reached at least 75%

of the £1.073 million lifetime allowance.

These changes will mean more senior clinicians will be incentivised to stay in the workforce and work as many hours as they want, helping boost the workforce as the NHS continues to tackle the backlogs.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Steve Barclay, said:

“It’s crucial we have a sustainable workforce as we build a stronger, healthier NHS for the long term with patients at its centre.

We are making progress in training and recruiting a record number of staff, with over 48,700 more compared to a year ago - and the NHS will soon publish a workforce plan focused on recruiting and retaining more staff.

Today’s pension changes will also help boost numbers of senior clinicians - so we can continue delivering high quality care for patients.”

NHS England will publish a comprehensive workforce strategy this year to help recruit and retain more staff, with independently verified forecasts for the number of doctors, nurses and other professionals that will be needed in 5, 10 and 15 years’ time.

Seven sites confirmed for UNESCO World Heritage Status

From: Department for Culture, Media and Sport

The Government has revealed the seven places it is backing to win UNESCO World Heritage Status

- York city centre, Birkenhead Park and an iron age settlement in Shetland could join prestigious list
- The sites are added to the Government’s ‘Tentative List’ with the aim of joining global landmarks such as



Named in the running for UNESCO World Heritage

April

the Taj Mahal and the Galápagos Islands Cultural and natural heritage sites including York's historic city centre are a step closer to becoming UNESCO World Heritage Sites after gaining Government backing for their bids.

Five new sites from across the UK and Overseas Territories have been added to the Tentative List meaning they are now part of a seven site list to be put forward by the Government for inscription on the illustrious list.

The Tentative List is published around every ten years by the UK Government. It sets out the sites it feels have the best chance of succeeding and will now work with local authorities and devolved administrations to develop their bids.

Cultural sites on the list include York which has fantastic civic and religious buildings including its Minster as well as a rich history left behind by its Anglo-Saxon, Viking and Norman inhabitants.

Birkenhead Park, which opened in 1847, was a pioneering project to bring greenery to urban environments and provided a blueprint for municipal planning that has influenced town and city parks across the world, including New York's Central Park.

UNESCO also awards World Heritage Site status to the most extraordinary natural places on the planet.

The East Atlantic Flyway, a migratory bird route over western parts of Europe including Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Essex and Kent, joins the UK's list in recognition of its vital importance to bird populations and wildlife. The area sees huge transient bird populations pass through every year as the seasons change.

The Little Cayman Marine Parks and Protected Areas, situated in the UK Overseas Territory of the Cayman Islands, have been put forward for their exceptional importance to marine biodiversity and their

incredible natural beauty. Also on the list today is the Zenith of Iron Age Shetland, a collection of three ancient settlements dating back thousands of years.

Heritage Minister Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay said:

"Today we are confirming our support for some of the most enchanting heritage sites and breathtaking landscapes in the UK and its Overseas Territories as they bid for UNESCO World Heritage Site status.

All the locations being put forward would be worthy recipients of this accolade – and we will give them our full backing so they can benefit from the international recognition it can bring."

Laura Davies, HM Ambassador to UNESCO, said:

"It is great that the UK is contributing to

making World Heritage more representative.

These five sites brilliantly reflect the diversity and beauty of the UK and its Overseas Territories' natural and cultural heritage, and I look forward to working with them towards World Heritage listing."

Michael Copleston, RSPB England Director, said:

"We are absolutely thrilled that the global importance of the English east coast has been recognised by the independent panel and that the east coast wetlands will now be part of the UK's Tentative List of World Heritage sites.

The east coast is an essential refuge for over 155 bird species as well as a world-leading example of how we can manage our coastlines in the face of a changing climate, with true value for nature and people.

We're really looking forward to working with partners and communities up and down the coast to develop a bid for UNESCO in the coming years."

UNESCO's World Heritage Site system offers a fantastic opportunity for cultural and natural heritage sites to gain international recognition and promote themselves on a global stage.

If successful, the seven sites would join the 33 other World Heritage Sites already based in the UK including Stonehenge and Hadrian's Wall.

Two sites which submitted their full nominations to UNESCO earlier this year also remain on the Government's Tentative List. One is The Flow Country, a large area of peatland across Caithness and Sutherland in the north of Scotland which plays a crucial role in supporting biodiversity.

The Gracehill Moravian Church Settlement in Northern Ireland is part of a joint bid alongside other Moravian religious sites in Denmark, the United States and Germany. The bid aims to recognise the church's work in setting up an international religious community.

UK Tentative List:

- Birkenhead the People's Park [Cultural]
- East Atlantic Flyway – England East
- Coast Wetlands [Natural]
- The Flow Country [Natural]
- Gracehill Moravian Church Settlements [Cultural, Transnational]
- Little Cayman Marine Parks and Protected Areas [Natural]
- York [Cultural]
- The Zenith of Iron Age Shetland [Cultural]



All new smart motorways scrapped

April

From: Department for Transport, National Highways, The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, and The Rt Hon Mark Harper MP

New smart motorways to be removed from government road-building plans due to financial pressures and lack of confidence felt by drivers.

- plans for new smart motorways will be cancelled in recognition of the current lack of public confidence felt by drivers and cost pressures
- smart motorways earmarked for construction during the third Road Investment Strategy (2025 to 2030) and previously paused schemes will now not go ahead
- existing smart motorways will continue to benefit from £900 million safety improvements
Plans for new smart motorways will be cancelled, delivering on the Prime

Minister's summer campaign pledge.

New smart motorways – including the 11 already paused from the second Road Investment Strategy (2020 to 2025) and the 3 earmarked for construction during the third Road Investment Strategy (2025 to 2030) – will be removed from government road-building plans, given financial pressures and in recognition of

the current lack of public confidence felt by drivers.

Initial estimations suggest constructing future smart motorway schemes would have cost more than £1 billion and cancelling these schemes will allow more time to track public confidence in smart motorways over a longer period.



Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said:

“All drivers deserve to have confidence in the roads they use to get around the country.

That’s why last year I pledged to stop the building of all new smart motorways, and today I’m making good on that promise.

Many people across the country rely on driving to get to work, to take their children to school and go about their daily lives and I want them to be able to do so with full confidence that the roads they drive on are safe.”

Transport Secretary Mark Harper said:

“We want the public to know that this government is listening to their concerns.

Today’s announcement means no new smart motorways will be built, recognising the lack of public confidence felt by drivers and the cost pressures due to inflation.”

Independent road safety campaigner, Meera Naran, whose 8-year-old son Dev, died in a motorway collision on the M6 in 2018, said:

“Since successfully campaigning for

the 18-point action plan, £900 million commitment and the pause in the roll out in January 2022, there has been a lot of joined up thinking in mutually coming to this decision.

I thank ministers and executives for inviting me to work alongside them in memory of Dev, towards a mutual goal and for their commitment over the years.”

The government and National Highways continue to invest £900 million in further safety improvements on existing smart motorways.

This includes progressing plans on installing 150 extra emergency areas across the network in line with the commitments made in response to the Transport Select Committee, as well as further improving the performance of stopped vehicle detection technology on every all lane running smart motorway.

The government will also continue to give motorists clear advice when using existing smart motorways.

While no new stretches of road will be converted into smart motorways, the M56 J6-8 and M6 J21a-26 will be completed given they are already over three quarters constructed.

One week to go u

From: Cabinet Office and The Rt Hon Oliver Dowden CBE MP

With one week to go until the UK-wide test of the Emergency Alerts system, the text of the alert has today been released.

- Text of the UK-wide test alert has now been released
- The test alert will take place at 3pm Sunday 23 April
- Will be received on mobile phones, along with sound and vibration for up to 10 seconds

The test alert, which will take place at 3pm on Sunday 23 April, will see people receive a message on the home screen of their mobile phone, along with a sound and vibration for up to ten seconds. The message will say:

Until UK Emergency Alerts test

April



“This is a test of Emergency Alerts, a new UK government service that will warn you if there’s a life-threatening emergency nearby.

In a real emergency, follow the instructions in the alert to keep yourself and others safe.

Visit gov.uk/alerts for more information.

This is a test. You do not need to take any action.”

For the test, the public does not need to take any action - the sound and vibration will stop automatically after ten seconds. All people need to do is swipe away the message or click ‘OK’ on their phone’s home screen - just like for a ‘low battery’ warning or notification - and continue to use their phone as normal.

Best practice of Emergency Alerts in other countries have shown that they

work more effectively when there is a real emergency if people have previously received a test, so they know what an alert looks and sounds like.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Oliver Dowden MP, said:

“At 3pm next Sunday we’ll be doing a nationwide test of our new Emergency Alerts system.

Getting this system operational means we have a vital tool to keep the public safe in life-threatening emergencies. It could be the sound that saves your life.”

Emergency Alerts have already been used successfully in a number of other countries, including the US, Canada, the Netherlands and Japan, where it has been widely credited with

saving lives, for example, during severe weather events. In the UK, alerts could be used to tell residents of villages being encroached by wildfires, or of severe flooding.

Chief Fire Officer Alex Woodman, Lead for Local Resilience Forums at the National Fire Chiefs Council, commented:

“We must use every tool at our disposal to keep people safe, and we need everyone to play their part - and the new Emergency Alerts system is one way we can do this. For 10 seconds, the national test may be inconvenient for some, but it’s important, because the next time you hear it - your life, and the life-saving actions of our emergency services, could depend on it.”

The Government has worked together with the emergency services and

partners, including the Football Association and London Marathon, to make sure the national test has minimum impact on major events taking place on the day.

At every stage, the Government has worked with organisations and charities who represent vulnerable groups to make sure they are not adversely affected. Women and girls who are subject to domestic abuse and have concealed phones can opt-out of the national test either by turning off Emergency Alerts in their phone settings or by switching their phone off.

Emma Pickering, Senior Operations Tech Abuse Manager at Refuge, said:

“Next week, the Government plans to send a test alert to all devices including tablets as well as phones. These alerts will come through as a loud siren even if devices are on silent, and could alert an abuser to a concealed device. Refuge’s Technology-Facilitated Abuse and Economic Empowerment Team have put together two videos on how to turn these alerts off, both on Android phones and on iPhones for anyone that is concerned that these alerts will put their safety at risk.

We want to ensure as many survivors as possible know how to ensure these alerts are turned off on their hidden devices. We have more information on securing your devices – for example your location settings or privacy settings – on refuge.techsafety.org.”

The Government has also worked with the transport sector and organisations such as Highways England to make sure drivers are aware of the alert and they follow the normal rules as when receiving any phone call or message; that they do not look or touch their phone until it is safe to do so.

Emergency Alerts will transform the UK’s warning and informing capability; by working with mobile broadcasting technology it will provide a means to get urgent messages quickly to nearly 90 percent of mobile phones in a defined area when there is a risk to life, and provide clear instructions about how best to respond.

The system will be used very rarely - only being sent where there is an immediate risk to people’s lives - so people may not receive an alert for months or years.



Seabed mapping crucial to protecting our oceans

May

From: UK Hydrographic Office

More collaborative approach to collecting and sharing data from the marine environment will help tackle climate change, says British MP.

Seabed mapping will play a crucial role in helping protect the UK's climate, oceans and coastal communities, according to Sally-Ann Hart, MP for Hastings and Rye.

Speaking at the recent UK Centre of Seabed Mapping (UK CSM) showcase event in London, Hart said building a community of maritime industry stakeholders that acquire, share and harness hydrographic data collaboratively, rather than working in isolation, was key to tackling climate change.

“Whatever we do to help protect and preserve our climate, our oceans and our coastal communities, it is clear that

seabed mapping is a critical part of the infrastructure we need.

To that end, the UK Centre for Seabed Mapping is an exciting step forward to better harness and coordinate the rich expertise within our nation.”

The UK CSM was launched in 2022 to

enable UK government organisations involved in seabed mapping to build a community where members coordinate efforts to collect and share data. This information is crucial to maritime trade, informing sustainable environmental and resource management decisions



and supporting national security and infrastructure.

Hart said that climate change was a significant threat to the UK's economy and well-being that could, if not managed properly, lead to devastating consequences such as rising sea levels, more frequent and severe storms and increased temperatures. This would subsequently compromise the UK's infrastructure, agriculture, health and security.

However, Hart added that managing climate change was an untapped opportunity for economic growth in the UK.

“The transition to a low-carbon economy can create new jobs, drive innovation, and stimulate economic growth. For example, investing in renewable energy technologies, such as wind and solar power, can create new jobs in manufacturing, construction, and installation.”

The ocean will play a critical role in helping manage climate change and unlocking opportunities for economic growth in this area, said Hart, who is Chair of the All Parliamentary Group for the Ocean (APPG), a group for

parliamentarians to support and promote ocean research and awareness.

During her speech, Hart discussed some of the findings from the APPG's 'The Ocean: Turning the Tide on Climate Change' report, which calls for the UK government to prioritise and facilitate investment in blue carbon and ocean-based initiatives to combat climate change. The report suggests several recommendations, such as:

- Include blue carbon habitat mapping within the UK's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).



- Re-align and restore 20% of the UK's saltmarsh and seagrass habitats by 2030. The UK has lost more than 90% of its seagrass meadows since the 1930s, making those remaining saltmarsh and seagrass habitats an essential blue carbon habitat on UK coasts.

- Establish 'Highly Protected Marine Areas' and ban harmful practices, particularly bottom trawling and dredging, across all existing UK Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

- Include more aspects of marine carbon storage and sequestration, specifically saltmarsh and seagrass, in the UK's Greenhouse Gas Inventory.

- Create a Minister for the Ocean to coordinate all ocean issues under one direct and exclusive ministerial responsibility.

The UK CSM showcase, held at the International Maritime Organization's (IMO) headquarters, brought stakeholders from across the UK maritime industry together to explore the benefits of sharing and harnessing seabed mapping data.

Improved rewards and benefits to be offered to communities backing onshore wind farms

May

From: Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and The Rt Hon Graham Stuart MP

Government to broaden benefits packages for areas that agree to have local onshore wind farms.

- Communities that wish to host onshore wind infrastructure should benefit directly from it
- government proposals will put communities at heart of energy plans and embed best practice of developer engagement into the planning system



• with costs of onshore wind having already fallen dramatically, today's measures will help boost the UK's energy security and reduce household bills
New and improved reward schemes, including the potential of lower bills, could be offered by developers to communities in England who want to support onshore wind farms in their area, under proposals announced by the government today.

The government recognises the range of views on onshore wind. Decisions on onshore wind are best made by local representatives who know their areas best and underpinned by democratic accountability. To deliver this, and our commitments in the British Energy Security Strategy, we are consulting on a more localist approach that provides local authorities more flexibility to respond to the views of their local communities.

Today's proposals build on benefits already offered by developers to areas that agree to have onshore wind farms locally. These include holding a stake in a turbine, which

gives them the potential to receive profits from the site's operation, or funding for new community facilities, such as charging points for electric cars or new sports and recreation facilities.

As part of a consultation launched today, the government is proposing that emerging and innovative types of community benefits, such as energy bill discounts, are added to the range of reward schemes that onshore developers currently offer host communities. This would be agreed between developers and communities on a case-by-case basis.

It is also proposing best practice principles of engagement, currently published by the government, are embedded into planning guidance for local authorities and developers to ensure the views of the community are heard and addressed.

These changes will further place local people at the heart of the government's

plan Powering Up Britain and deliver cheaper, cleaner and more secure homegrown energy.

Minister of State for Energy Security and Net Zero Graham Stuart said:

“Onshore wind is a vital part of our plans to deliver cheaper, cleaner, and more secure homegrown energy.

It is right that new developments have the support of host communities, and that local people benefit directly from it, such as through either a discount on their energy bills or other significant community benefits.

Our proposals will ensure developers and local residents can work together more efficiently to maximise community benefits for supportive communities while delivering the clean and secure energy the country needs.”

Community benefits can have a lasting positive impact on local residents. For example, when building its Tirgwynt Wind farm in Wales, developer Belltown Power

engaged with the local community and identified the need to support educational facilities in the area. The company provided £2.5 million – with match funding from the local council – to build a new school building, saving it from closure. The wind farm now hosts an annual visit for local school children.

The proposals set out today include:

- formally embedding best practice principles of engagement between developers and communities, as outlined in existing community engagement guidance published by the government, into official planning guidance for local authorities and developers. This will strengthen the way in which developers are transparent and receptive when they engage with communities through digital and online methods
- working with RenewableUK to update their existing Community Benefits Protocol for England to account for emerging and innovative types of community benefit packages, such as local energy bill

discounts and other new and improved community rewards

Onshore wind will continue to be decided at a local level. Today’s proposals build on a government consultation run earlier this year on how proposals demonstrate support for the onshore wind project locally and how they address impacts identified by the local community. The government is currently analysing the responses and will respond in due course.

The government is investing billions of pounds into renewable and nuclear technologies to reduce the country’s reliance on volatile fossil fuel markets that, impacted by Vladimir Putin’s illegal war in Ukraine, led to the unprecedented increase in people’s energy bills.

The government acted swiftly and decisively, covering around half of a typical family’s energy bill this winter. But the longer-term answer is to achieve greater energy security, developing cleaner, cheaper and more secure homegrown energy sources – including both offshore and onshore wind.

With almost 15GW of it deployed in the UK, onshore wind has a key role to play in creating a more secure and cleaner energy system and to meet the UK’s



ambition to have amongst the cheapest wholesale electricity prices in Europe.

With the costs of onshore wind having already fallen dramatically – currently around half what they were less than a decade ago – these proposals have the potential to play a crucial role in boosting the UK’s energy security, where there is local support. The government is clear that where communities host this vital infrastructure, they should benefit directly from it.

RenewableUK’s Head of Onshore Wind James Robottom said:

“We’re pleased that the government is consulting on the wide range of benefits which onshore wind can offer to local communities in England. We have a long track record of working closely with communities to ensure that they decide what form these benefits will take, depending on the needs and priorities of local people.

Building strong relationships with local communities as early as possible is the best way to establish successful partnerships which last for decades. Alongside much-needed planning reforms, this consultation provides an opportunity to increase the amount of cheap clean power we can generate for consumers as well as strengthening our nation’s energy security.”

Thousands to benefit from low-cost heat in push to drive down energy bills

May

From: Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and Lord Callanan

The UK’s first system drawing heat from deep underground to provide low-cost heating for nearly 4,000 homes is one of 7 innovative projects backed by government funding.

- 7 state-of-the-art heat network projects across England awarded government funding
- UK’s first system drawing heat from deep underground will be built to warm nearly 4,000 homes, schools and a leisure centre



- projects will help homes and businesses ditch oil and gas boilers – cutting costs and reducing carbon emissions

The UK’s first system drawing heat from deep underground to provide low-cost heating for nearly 4,000 homes is one of 7 innovative projects backed by government funding today (Friday 12 May 2023).

The Langarth Deep Geothermal Heat Network will involve drilling to a depth of 5,275 meters to extract the heat from granite rocks beneath the United Downs Industrial Site in Cornwall.

It is one of 7 state-of-the-art heating systems that will receive a share of £91 million from the government’s Green Heat Network Fund.

Heat networks take heat found underground or use excess heat generated through manufacturing or

waste management, and supply heating and hot water to homes and businesses through a connected network.

This allows them to ditch fossil-fuel burning gas and oil boilers, which helps cut costs and reduce carbon emissions. The projects will boost the UK's energy security and independence and help delivering on the government's commitment to grow the economy – with the schemes expected to create hundreds of new, skilled jobs.

Among the 7 ground-breaking projects to benefit from the latest round of funding are:

- the development of a heat network in Goole, using excess heat generated by a local manufacturing plant to supply heating to local homes and businesses, creating 40 jobs
- the expansion of a heat network in East London to supply heating to 2 new developments in and around the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, serving around 500 new homes and 250 non-domestic premises

Lord Callanan, Minister for Energy Efficiency and Green Finance, said:

“The UK is a world leader when it comes

to reducing carbon emissions – but we must continue to push the boundaries to reach our net zero goal.

These innovative projects will not only benefit the communities they serve, by reducing emissions and providing low-cost heating that helps to drive down energy bills, but also support the nation's push for greater energy security and independence.

They form part of our energy revolution – creating hundreds of new jobs for our ever-expanding green economy.”

The Green Heat Network Fund (GHNF) is a £288 million scheme that opened in March 2022 to public, private and third sector applicants in England and is anticipated to run to 2025. It replaced the Heat Networks Investment Project (HNIP) scheme which closed for applications in January 2022.

In contrast to the HNIP scheme, the GHNF scheme will only fund heat network projects where there is a low-carbon heat source.

The funding, announced by the government today, will pave the way for low-carbon technologies – like air source heat pumps, which extract heat from the air, solar and geothermal energy – to be

delivered at scale and established as a central source of energy in this country.

Ken Hunnisett, Programme Director for Triple Point Heat Networks Investment Management, delivery partner for the GHNF and HNIP, said:

“Continuing the legacy of the first GHNF projects to be announced in December, over £91 million more targeted support has been announced from the fund today to deliver low carbon heating across the country.



From Cornwall to London, Reading to Rotherham, funding announced today will go far to help us reach our net zero ambitions and provide clean heating across residential and commercial buildings.

We are excited to work with the teams in each of these locations to deliver these new heating infrastructure projects to help them deliver on their green goals and make a real difference to how we heat our buildings.”

Kieran Sinclair, Heat Network Policy Manager at the Association for Decentralised Energy (ADE), said:

“It is great to see more low-carbon heat network projects being funded through the Green Heat Network Fund.

They show the potential for heat networks across the UK to reduce both carbon emissions and customer heating bills, while providing clean energy to both public and private sector buildings.

By 2050 a much larger proportion of the country will get their heat from low-carbon heat networks as part of the UK’s net zero targets.”

In February, the government also launched the £32 million Heat Network Efficiency

Scheme to make vital upgrades to old and inefficient heat networks and provide thousands of homes in England and Wales with cheaper, greener energy.

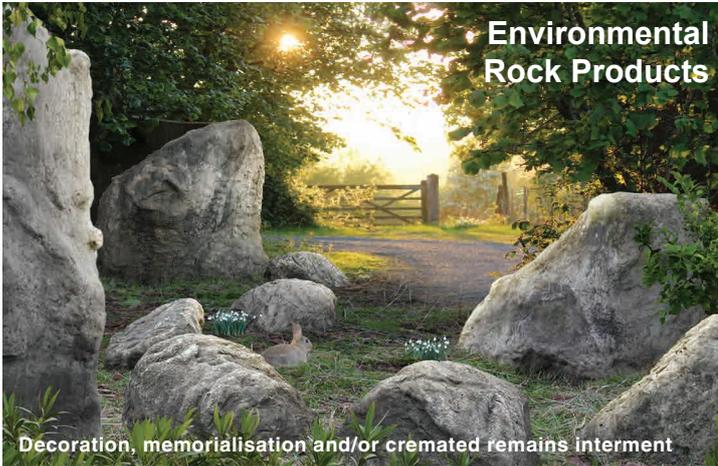
The government is also taking action to regulate the heat networks market through the Energy Bill. The Bill will appoint Ofgem as heat networks regulator, with new powers to investigate and intervene where prices for consumers appear to be unfair. The legislation also provides the Department’s Secretary of State with powers to introduce a heat networks price cap should it be necessary to protect consumers.

The full list of projects to receive support today from the government’s Green Heat Networks Fund are:

- Bradford Energy Limited - £20 million to build an air source heat pump heat network, to supply businesses and other buildings in the city centre
- Cornwall Council - £22 million to develop the Langarth Deep Geothermal Heat Network – the first of its kind in the UK that will use geothermal energy from hot granite rocks beneath Cornwall to heat 3,800 local homes and public facilities in the region
- East Riding of Yorkshire Council - £12

million to create the new Goole District Energy Network, that will use waste heat from a manufacturing plant to power local homes and businesses, cutting the town’s carbon emissions by 322,000 tonnes over 40 years and creating 40 new skilled jobs

- Rotherham Energy Limited - £25 million to build a new Rotherham Energy Network to deliver a heating and hot water to 34 homes and businesses in the town centre
- Kirklees Council - £8.2 million to create the Huddersfield District Energy Network, that will provide low-carbon heat and electricity to public and private sector buildings in and around the centre of the town, helping the council reach its goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2038
- East London Energy - £1.76 million to expand the heat network to supply more homes in and around the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in Stratford
- University of Reading - £2.1 million to help decarbonize its Whiteknights Campus, currently powered by a combined heat and power led district heating network



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Government backs British farmers with new package of support

May

From: Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street, Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, and The Rt Hon Thérèse Coffey MP

Prime Minister sets out new support for

farmers to strengthen food security and grow the economy.

Farmers will benefit from a commitment to protect their interests in future trade deals, support to boost domestic fruit and

veg production and new investment in technologies, thanks to a package of support set out by the Prime Minister Rishi Sunak ahead of a summit hosted at Downing Street today (16 May).

Representatives from the whole food supply chain will come together at No10 for the UK Farm to Fork Summit, to identify ways to boost growth, drive innovation and improve sustainability, fulfilling a commitment made by the Prime Minister last Summer to host the event as part of his pledge to back British farmers.

Ahead of the Summit, government confirmed a range of measures to help strengthen the long-term resilience and sustainability of the sector and provide greater stability for farmers following a difficult period caused by global challenges, including the illegal invasion of



Ukraine which has contributed to rising costs. To give further certainty to the sector, government also announced that 45,000 visas will be available again to the horticulture sector next year, enabling them to plan ahead for the picking season.

Attendees at the Summit will include senior representatives in the UK's farming, horticulture and agri-food sectors. The event will look at how government and industry can work together to increase investment, innovation and sustainability and support the long-term resilience at every stage of the food system, from farming to manufacturing, distribution and retail, and feature discussions on a set of key themes alongside a showcase of great British food and drink businesses and innovators.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said:

"I will always back British farmers, and I pay tribute to their hard work and dedication all year round which keeps shelves stocked and food on our tables.

"Supporting our farmers and food producers must, and always will be, at the heart of our plans to grow the economy and build a more prosperous country.

"That's why I'm proud to host this summit, and working together, I'm determined to build resilience, strengthen our food security and champion the best of British at home and overseas."

Secretary of State for Food and Farming
Thérèse Coffey said:

"Food production is the primary purpose of farming, and our world-leading farmers and food producers work tirelessly day-in-day-out to keep the nation fed, despite global challenges including the illegal invasion of Ukraine.

"I am delighted that today we have embarked on our next step to back British farmers and ensure a thriving food and drink sector which will see more British

produce on supermarket shelves and plates both in the UK and across the globe. I look forward to working together, right across the food supply chain, to boost growth, innovation and sustainability."

The package of measures announced ahead of the summit aims to boost every element of the food supply chain, from farm to fork, and promote the UK's world-renowned produce around the world to help boost British businesses and grow the economy.

NFU President Minette Batters said:

"I am absolutely delighted that the Prime Minister has honoured the commitments he made when he



addressed our hustings event back in the summer to hold this food summit at Number 10, and we welcome the announcements made today.

“They show a recognition and an understanding of the strategic importance of British food and farming to the nation.

“These actions recognise the importance of coordinated action across government to support confidence, investment and growth in British food. We look forward to working with the Prime Minister, the Defra Secretary and the rest of the cabinet to Back British farming and bolster our domestic food security.”

UK Hospitality Chief Executive Kate Nicholls said:

“It’s fantastic that the Prime Minister is convening the breadth of the food supply chain, from farm to fork, at his summit today and showcasing our superb hospitality offering here in the UK to highlight iconic produce and brands.

“Hospitality in the UK is recognised as one of the finest in the world and is frequently the launchpad to propel British products and brands to markets abroad. Further investment into the GREAT campaign is welcome news and, in

addition to boosting exports, will help to promote the UK as a tourist destination and boost our hospitality venues.

“Hospitality plays a huge role in keeping the nation fed, whether it be through our restaurants and pubs or public sector catering in schools, hospitals and the armed forces, and I’m looking forward to discussing how we can all work together to overcome current challenges and grasp future opportunities.”

To boost trade and export opportunities to get more British food on plates across the world, building on the £24 billion a year generated by our food and drink exports, the government has confirmed that:

- Farmers’ interests will be put at the heart of trade policy through a new framework for trade negotiations, committing to protect the UK’s high food and welfare standards and prioritise new export opportunities. The Prime Minister has



written an open letter to farmers today setting out how these new principles will help the industry benefit from the trade opportunities available to us outside the EU.

- We will invest £2m to boost our programme of global trade shows and missions, as well as providing £1.6m for the GREAT food and drink campaign.

- We will build on our existing overseas network with five additional agri-food and drink attaches who will spearhead the removal of restrictive market barriers

- We will extend funding to promote seafood exports around the world with an extra £1 million between 2025 and 2028, and create a new bespoke £1m programme to help dairy businesses, particularly SMEs, to seize export opportunities, particularly in the Asia Pacific region.

The government will unlock the benefits of innovative technologies to strengthen our food security, cementing the UK’s leadership in this field through:

- Up to £30 million of investment

to drive forward the use of precision breeding technologies, building on the £8 million already invested over the last five years and the passing of the Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Act earlier this year

- The creation of a new working group – bringing together plant breeders, food manufacturers and retailers – to get produce from farms to the shelves.

The government will protect the interests of farmers by making sure they get a fair price for their produce:

- We are already using new powers under the Agriculture Act to improve transparency and contracts in the pork and dairy markets;
- We are now announcing additional reviews into fairness in the horticulture



and egg supply chains, in light of the impact of global challenges on these sectors in particular.

- Recognising the unique role and needs of the sector, and listening to the calls from the NFU, FDF and others, the Groceries Code Adjudicator will not be merged with the Competition and Markets Authority, in recognition of its importance in ensuring our food supply chains function as they should.

The horticulture sector is worth £5 billion across the UK and the government will support the industry to boost production and extend the growing season by:

- Confirming we will improve future support for horticulture by replacing the retained EU Fruit and Vegetable Producer Organisation Scheme when it closes in 2026 with an expanded offer as part of our new farming payment schemes.

- This will be tailored to the needs of our domestic growers and will be more inclusive than the EU scheme, ensuring it is a good offer for glasshouses as well as other growers.

- Helping the controlled horticulture sector overcome barriers to accessing government schemes, including by

looking at how the sector is classified

- Making it easier to build new glasshouses through changes to national planning policy

Further announcements to increase the resilience of the sector and support its growth include:

- Plans to cut the red tape currently holding farmers back from delivering projects on their land to diversify their incomes, such as repurposing farm buildings to use as shops, with a call for evidence later this year.

- Increasing water security by accelerating work on water supply infrastructure, so that farmers can count on steady access to water,



including in periods of intense dry weather.

The event will also build on progress made since the launch of the government's Food Strategy last year, which committed to broadly maintain levels of domestic food production. This includes sustainably boosting production in sectors such as horticulture and seafood, where there are opportunities to grow outside the EU.

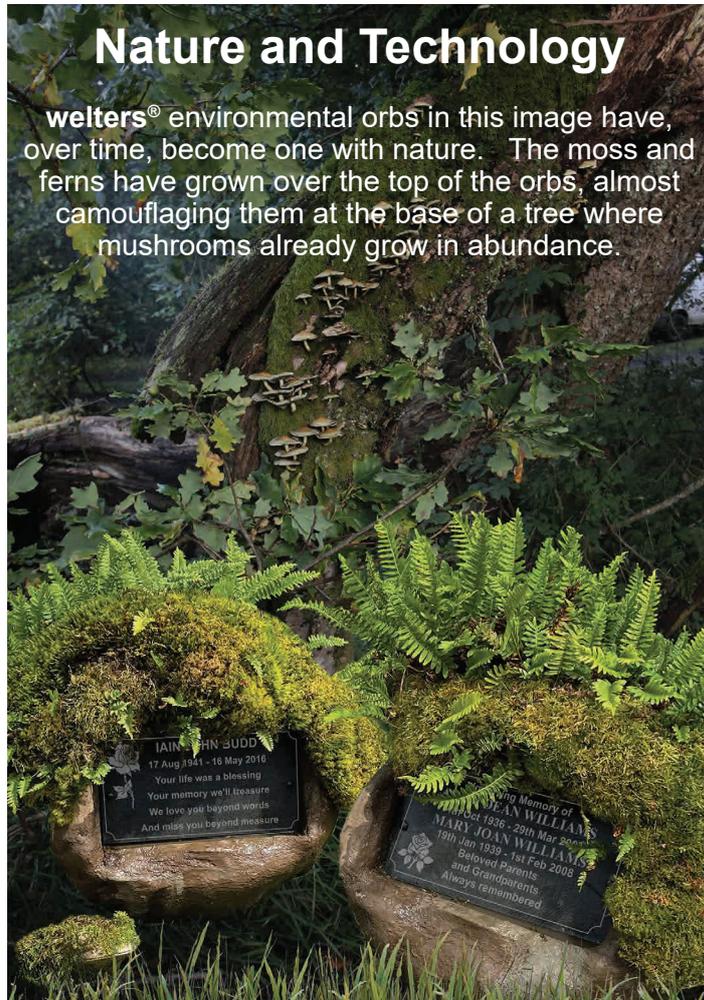
It also set out a range of measures to back our farmers by helping to support domestic production, spread jobs and grow the economy, alongside the work of the UK Agriculture Partnership which brings together key stakeholders from across the UK to identify how to address shared issues facing the agricultural sector.

Also today, 22 innovative and ground-breaking projects have been awarded a share of £6.2 million of funding through the Seafood Innovation Fund, as part of the government's UK Seafood Fund. The winning projects will enhance the UK seafood sector's productivity and sustainability, ranging from an on-land cultivation system for seaweed, to cutting-edge packaging developments that improve the shelf life of seafood.



Nature and Technology

welters® environmental orbs in this image have, over time, become one with nature. The moss and ferns have grown over the top of the orbs, almost camouflaging them at the base of a tree where mushrooms already grow in abundance.



Over one million NHS staff to receive pay rises from today (1st June 2023)

June

From: Department of Health and Social Care and The Rt Hon Steve Barclay MP

Eligible workers on the Agenda for Change contract, which includes nurses, paramedics and 999 call handlers, will receive the pay rise, backdated to April.

- More than one million NHS staff in England, including nurses, paramedics and 999 call handlers, will receive a pay rise, backdated to April

- A newly qualified nurse will see their salary go up by more than £2,750 over 2 years

- Staff will also receive a one-off 'NHS backlog bonus' worth at least £1,250

From today (1 June 2023), more than one million NHS workers will start to receive a pay rise following an agreement between the government and unions.

As part of the deal, eligible workers on the Agenda for Change contract, which

includes nurses, paramedics, 999 call handlers, midwives, security guards and cleaners, will receive the pay rise, backdated to April.

As a result of this package, a newly qualified nurse will see their salary go up by more than £2,750 over 2 years from 2021 to 2022 to 2023 to 2024. They will also receive over £1,890 in one-off payments this year.

In addition, they will receive a one-off 'NHS backlog bonus' which recognises

the sustained pressure facing the NHS following the pandemic and the extraordinary effort staff have been making to meet the Prime Minister's promise to cut waiting lists.

The backlog bonus will be worth at least £1,250 per person, but will be determined based on how much experience staff have and based on an individual's pay band. The average nurse in pay band 5, for example, will receive £1,350.

Health and Social Care Secretary Steve Barclay said:

"More than one million of our hard-working NHS staff will begin to receive more money in their pay packet from today, including a backlog bonus for all their efforts during the pandemic.

We're giving nurses, paramedics, physiotherapists and other eligible staff a fair pay rise, which will see, for example, band 6 staff getting an extra



£5,000 over 2 years.

We hugely value the work of NHS staff and the vital role they're playing to cut waiting lists, which is one of the government's 5 priorities, and recognise the work they put in day in and day out."

Under the deal, eligible Agenda for Change staff will receive a non-consolidated award of 2% of an individual's salary for 2022 to 2023. This is on top of the pay increase of at least £1,400 (pro-rated for staff working part-time) staff received for 2022 to 2023, as recommended by the independent pay review body process. This meant a newly qualified nurse received a 5.5% increase, and those on the lowest salaries received a pay rise of 9.3%.

For 2023 to 2024, the government has given Agenda for Change staff a 5% consolidated increase in pay, worth at least £1,065.

The deal will also provide a higher pay uplift for the lowest paid NHS staff, with all those in bands 1 and 2 having their pay raised to the same level.

The pay increase was reached following constructive talks with unions and organisations including UNISON, GMB, the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy and the British Dietetic Association.

Nearly £2 million to fund innovative transport tech including apps to assist disabled passengers

June

From: Department for Transport and The Rt Hon Jesse Norman MP

Innovative start-ups awarded government funding to develop projects that will provide greener transport systems that are accessible to everyone.

- over 60 projects awarded funding develop pioneering transport tech that could enhance people's daily lives and support growth across the UK
- projects backed by nearly £2 million, include 80% based outside of London awarded funding to help revolutionise transport
- augmented reality app for visually impaired passengers to help them navigate stations and kites to tow ships are among creative projects receiving new funding

Personalised navigation apps for disabled passengers and robots for freight at ports are among 67 transport technology projects

being developed and tested through new government funding.

Technology Minister Jesse Norman has announced today (6 June 2023) 67 innovative projects developing transport technology, which are receiving a share of £1.96 million in funding as part of the government's Transport Research and Innovation Grant (TRIG) Programme. A record number of this year's winning projects are based outside London, with almost 4 in 5 based outside the capital.

The projects receiving funding include:

- an app that uses augmented reality (AR) to help visually impaired passengers get around rail stations
- remote-controlled robots for deliveries
- kite-powered tug boats to reduce emissions
- drones to deliver packages in hard-to-



reach areas

The TRIG programme looks to encourage engineers, academics and innovators to develop ‘blue-skies’ research into real-world solutions to address some of transport’s most pressing issues, such as decarbonisation. This can be a useful way for researchers to take their first steps in creating a new company, helping to grow the economy and create jobs across the UK.

Transport and Decarbonisation Minister Jesse Norman said:

“From making travelling easier for visually impaired passengers to improving rural connectivity, these winning projects have the potential to transform the future of transport.

The government wants the UK to be a world

leader in the future of transport and, through the TRIG programme, the Department for Transport is supporting innovators and businesses to decarbonise and improve transport while growing the economy and supporting jobs across the UK.”

Some of this year’s winning projects include:

- Makesense Technology to create an app that uses augmented reality to create bespoke walking routes to help visually impaired travellers get around railway stations
- Bluewater Engineering Ltd to develop its unique SKYTUG system that uses large kites to tow ships at the same speed as a traditionally-powered craft, which could help reduce the use of polluting engines and decarbonise shipping
- IONA Logistics Ltd to explore how autonomous drones based out of small delivery hubs can be used to deliver small packages faster and cheaper to hard-to-reach rural areas
- Transreport Limited to create an app that allows disabled and older passengers to book the support they need on planes in advance to improve the experience. This app is already in use on trains

- Port of Tyne to explore the viability of using remotely-controlled, and in some instances automated, electric heavy-duty robots to replace HGVs to provide a cleaner and faster alternative, reducing delays in the delivery process

- CC Informatics to explore the use of drones to create 3D digital models of structures, such as bridges and rail tracks, to identify cracks and defects in the structures that would otherwise be invisible, meaning repairs can be made quicker and before more serious issues could develop

- Imperial College London to research the use of Kiacrete – a new type of paving made from recycled materials – instead of concrete, as a more permeable solution to see how it can be used on highways to drain away surface water and reduce flooding

Through the TRIG programme, funded projects could have a transformative impact on transport. This year’s winners bring the total amount invested through the TRIG programme to over £12 million since it launched in 2014, having funded nearly 300 projects.

The programme is designed to focus on a range of transport-related areas, including:

- maritime decarbonisation
- the future of freight
- local transport decarbonisation
- improving the rail passenger experience
- transport resilience to severe weather and flooding

The TRIG programme, delivered in partnership with Connected Places Catapult, brings together talented innovators – mainly start-ups and universities – and policymakers at the earliest stage of innovation to help enhance the UK's transport system.

Nicola Yates OBE, Connected Places Catapult, Chief Executive Officer, said:

“By getting funding into innovative start-ups, we are creating jobs of the future and growing vital areas of the economy.

Transport Research and Innovation Grants support high-potential innovators to develop their ideas into new products and services.

In addition to an injection of funding, companies that join the TRIG cohort benefit from access to experts from Connected Places Catapult to help them on their journey to commercialisation.”

UK to provide £16 million in humanitarian aid for Ukraine

June

From: Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office and The Rt Hon James Cleverly MP

The FCDO is to provide £16 million to address widespread needs in Ukraine, including to support people affected by the destruction of the Nova Kakhovka dam.

- in recognition of growing needs FCDO to provide £16 million to enable aid partners to help civilians, including 32,000 people directly affected by flooding, as well as at the frontlines and displaced communities



- UK funding will assist aid organisations with their response and includes £10 million to the Red Cross Movement, £5 million to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and £1 million to the International Organisation for Migration (IOM)

- to bolster rescue efforts and manage impact of ongoing flooding the FCDO is sending boats, community water filters, water pumps and waders to Ukraine
- The UK has today (10 June) set out an additional £16 million in humanitarian support as Ukraine deals with the aftermath of flooding caused by the destruction of Nova Kakhovka dam, which has affected 42,000 people in the Kherson area, and continuing Russian attacks.

This builds on our existing humanitarian support of £220 million which is allowing partners, such as the Ukraine Red Cross, to help evacuate civilians

affected by the flooding.

Alongside this the UK-led Partnership Fund for a Resilient Ukraine has already delivered 2 specialist rescue boats, search and rescue equipment, and trauma medicine to Kherson to assist the ongoing rescue operations by the State Emergency Services.

The additional £16 million is given in recognition of mounting needs across Ukraine, including in the areas affected by the destruction of the Nova Kakhovka dam.

Funding will support aid organisations in the area who are currently assisting people affected by the flooding with rapid response equipment, shelter and essential supplies, as well as in areas affected by fighting and communities who have been displaced.

Beyond the immediate rescue efforts, this funding will help to respond to the ongoing impacts from flooding, including waterborne infectious diseases, loss of livelihoods and risks from landmines.

The funding will consist of £10 million of support to the Red Cross Movement, £5 million to OCHA and £1 million to IOM.

The UK is also providing a package of rescue boats, community water filters, water pumps and waders to help State

Emergency Services of Ukraine responders deal with the ongoing impact of the flooding. Equipment is expected to start arriving in Ukraine by next week.

Today's announcement comes as water levels in Kherson continue to rise, with flooding spreading to other towns along the Dnipro River. The UK has moved quickly to bolster its support to Ukraine as it deals with severe flooding from the dam, which is expected to last for weeks and leave many in need of food, water and basic supplies.

Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Secretary James Cleverly said:

“Flooding from the destruction of Kakhovka dam is having an untold impact on over 32,000 people living in Kherson, and thousands more in the surrounding area.

The UK is leading the way in providing support to those desperately in need. Our funding is playing a vital role in helping Ukrainian services and aid organisations evacuate people and get help to those in need.

We will continue to stand by Ukraine in dealing with this terrible incident.”

This aid package is part of the UK's total support for Ukraine which so far totals £1.5 billion in economic and humanitarian

support, which has paid for the delivery of more than 11 million medical items as well as food supplies, ambulances, shelter kits.

Earlier this week the Foreign Secretary visited Ukraine to highlight the UK's unwavering support for Ukraine and its recovery. During his time there he met President Zelenskyy in Kyiv and discussed how best the UK will continue to support Ukraine against Russia's aggression.

The UK is also set to host the Ukraine Recovery Conference later this month, which will bring together governments and industry leaders to develop a concerted multi-sector plan to help Ukraine to recover from Russia's illegal invasion.





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British Sign Language GCSE moves one step closer to the classroom

June

From: Department for Education, Tom Pursglove MP, The Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP, and The Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP

New GCSE will be the first of its kind and will teach students how to communicate through sign language.

Students are one step closer to the British Sign Language (BSL) GCSE being taught in schools, as the government launches a 12-week consultation on the content of the new qualification.



The qualification will include students being taught to communicate effectively with other signers for use in work, social and academic settings, providing them with valuable life skills welcomed by employers.

The Department for Education (DfE) has been working closely with subject experts, stakeholders and schools to develop proposed content to ensure that this new GCSE is internationally recognised and accepted in school and college performance tables. In line all qualifications, the GCSE will be knowledge-rich, diverse and as challenging as any other GCSE.

Views on the new qualification, including the language skills to be studied and the role of history, are being sought from teachers, employers and the deaf and hearing communities. The government aims to introduce this for first teaching from September 2025.

Education Secretary Gillian Keegan said:

“It is fantastic that British Sign Language will soon be taught in schools up and down the country.

Good communication is essential both inside and outside the workplace and this historic GCSE will give students a vital life skill valued by employers.

This new qualification will break down barriers, advance equality of opportunity, and celebrate the history and rich culture of British Sign Language.”

Ofqual Chief Regulator Dr Jo Saxton said:

“At their best, qualifications increase opportunities and break down barriers. This GCSE in British Sign Language will do that by encouraging

more people to study the language, so I'm delighted to be launching our consultation on how students should be assessed in this exciting new GCSE.

The proposals reflect our judgements about how the Department for Education's subject content should be assessed to best allow students to demonstrate their performance in this subject. We want anyone with an interest in this new GCSE subject to tell us what they think about our proposals and whether these allow students the best opportunity to show how well they understand and can use British Sign Language."

Susan Daniels OBE, Chief Executive of the National Deaf Children's Society, said:

"We're delighted that a GCSE in British



Sign Language (BSL) is now a step closer.

BSL is a native British language used by tens of thousands of people, so it's only fair and right that BSL users should have the opportunity to achieve a GCSE in their own, legally recognised language. This qualification will help to breakdown communication barriers between deaf and hearing people and educate more people about the deaf community and culture.

We know there are incredibly high levels of support for a BSL GCSE among both deaf and hearing students, as well as from their parents. Our recent survey also found teachers overwhelmingly believe sign language would be a useful skill for both deaf and hearing students to learn."

Tasha Ghouri, influencer and activist for the deaf community said:

"As lots of you will know, being deaf is my 'superpower'. But as someone who has had a cochlear implant since 5 years old and relies on lip-reading – going to school had its challenges.

Being included and made to feel equal means everything to me and I've been on a personal mission to raise awareness of

the challenges facing deaf children.

That's why I'm absolutely delighted that today, the government has announced it will soon be launching a brand new GCSE in British Sign Language which will be available to all pupils."

Ian Morgan, Chief Executive, Eduqas, said:

"As one of England's largest exam boards, Eduqas is committed to supporting the development of a new GCSE in British Sign Language (BSL); this builds on exciting work already underway in Wales to design a new GCSE BSL for WJEC students by September 2026.

Equality and inclusion matter to us, and we're confident that this pioneering new GCSE will boost the profile of the language and play an important role in increasing the number of speakers from all communities.

We look forward to working closely with teachers, learners and subject experts to create a qualification that is engaging, relevant, and fit for the future."

Lindsay Foster, Executive Director at Signature said:

“It’s great to get the public consultation out there, so that the public can see what a GCSE in BSL could look like.

We have been working towards a BSL GCSE for over 12 years now, so this feels like a milestone moment. What is important now is that people have their say on subject content and we look forward to seeing the outcome of that.

From the secondary schools we have spoken with, around 60% have told us that they would like to offer this as part of their curriculum. We really hope that over the years to come we see this in as many schools as possible.”

Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Tom Pursglove MP, said:

“The British Sign Language (BSL) Act is helping make our society more accessible, opening doors to better communication for more Deaf people.

A BSL GCSE is a fantastic step in the right direction, encouraging more students to learn BSL to help increase the number of BSL users that Deaf people can speak with, making the UK an even

more inclusive society.”

The recently published special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and alternative provision (AP) improvement plan set out how all children and young people, including those who are deaf or have a hearing impairment, will get the support they need to succeed in their education.

British Sign Language was recognised in law as a language of Great Britain in the BSL Act (2022) and the new GCSE will be key to advancing inclusivity within education.

The study of BSL will enable students to develop ways of expressing and negotiating meaning through visual spatial language, communication and visual memory skills that will be an advantage to them for the rest of their lives.

As well as learning how to sign effectively, the GCSE will also give students an understanding of the history of sign language in the UK. This will provide a solid foundation for students’ understanding of how the language has reached its current form.

Over £200 million

From: Department for Business and Trade and Nusrat Ghani MP

Industry Minister Nusrat Ghani has announced more than £200 million in funding for cutting-edge UK aerospace projects at the 2023 Paris Air Show.

- Government announces £218 million of funding for groundbreaking R&D aerospace projects, supporting jobs and growth across the UK.
- Funding will help develop cutting-edge green aviation technology and grow UK’s share of the global aerospace market.



to help UK lead the way on greener air travel

June

- Industry Minister announces package on first day of Paris Air Show – the world’s largest event for the civil aerospace sector.

Projects to help the UK lead the way on greener air travel and deliver on one of the Prime Minister’s five priorities to grow the economy, are to receive more than £200 million in funding, Industry Minister Nusrat Ghani has confirmed today [20 June].

A total of £218 million combined government and industry funding has been announced to develop new green innovative landing gear, and lower carbon and more efficient aircraft wings, engines and sensors.

The funding, being delivered through the Aerospace Technology Institute (ATI) Programme, will secure more high-skilled jobs and increase investment in aerospace technology across the UK.

The joint commitment with industry to invest in new aircraft and manufacturing technologies is set to help secure at least £20 billion of further private investment in aerospace in the UK and support over 100,000 jobs. This delivers on the Prime Minister’s commitment to grow the economy, creating better-paid jobs and opportunity right across the country.

Announcing the funding at the Paris Air Show, Minister for Industry and Economic Security Nusrat Ghani said:

“We’re growing the economy and supporting high-skilled, high-wage careers across the UK by backing our world-leading sectors like aviation.

We want to achieve net zero air travel by 2050, and I want UK firms to lead the way developing the exciting technologies of the future. Backing our innovators will attract even more investment and create



massive export opportunities for British firms.”

Backed by the Government, the ATI funds world-class R&D in the UK aerospace sector, and this funding builds on £3.2 billion of ATI support from government and industry for the sector since 2013.

This support has backed over 300 innovative R&D projects and supported thousands of high-wage,

green jobs, 90 percent of which are outside of London and the South East.

The cash injection will support ten groundbreaking new projects led by world-renowned companies including Airbus and Rolls-Royce. They will be delivered alongside over 40 UK-based partners, helping to develop greener, lower carbon and more efficient aircraft equipment such as engines, landing gear, wings and sensors.

Airbus UK Chairman and General Counsel John Harrison said:

“The strong partnership we have with DBT and the ATI enables Airbus to develop new technologies that will help boost the skills we need to keep aerospace manufacturing in the UK.

Finding scalable solutions can't be done alone so the ATI programme draws together UK industry leaders, academics and research organisations who are all making strides to bring our aircraft and industrial systems up to the level we need for a decarbonised future.”

Alan Newby, Rolls-Royce Director Aerospace Technology and Future Programmes, said:

“We greatly value the continued long-term partnership we have with both the Department for Business and Trade and the ATI, accelerating important research that improves our manufacturing processes and the performance of both our current and future products.

These projects will improve both our cost competitiveness and the product performance of our current and future engines, which is vital for meeting industry and Government Net Zero targets. This work will involve collaboration with a broad ecosystem of academic, research centres and SME partners across the UK that creates value across the country and helps us to reach our goals.”

While at the Paris Air Show this week, Minister Ghani will be promoting the UK's world-class aerospace sector – which contributed £10.9 billion to the economy in 2022 – to senior leaders of international companies, helping move towards the



£20 billion investment commitment, and connecting UK firms at the show with international partners to boost export opportunities.

She will also encourage greater investment in the UK's aerospace sector, promoting the ATI Programme – which has a budget of £685 million between 2022-2025 – and the UK sector's world-class R&D offer on the global stage at the Air Show.

Gary Elliott, CEO of the Aerospace Technology Institute said:

“The investment through the ATI Programme that the Minister has announced today will support a range of world-class research projects in technologies to improve the sustainability of aerospace, from new design processes to new materials.

The ATI is proud to join the Minister at the Paris Air Show to showcase the best of UK innovation and technology to a global audience.

Between 2014-2025, government and industry is expected to co-invest £4 billion in the aerospace sector, developing new ultra-efficient and zero emission aircraft technologies.”



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