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July - September 2023 British Edition

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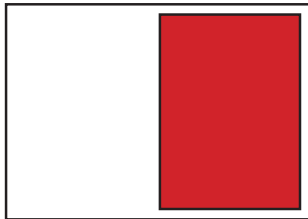
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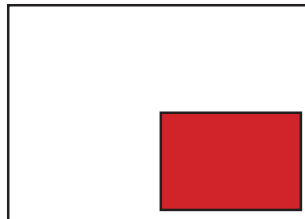
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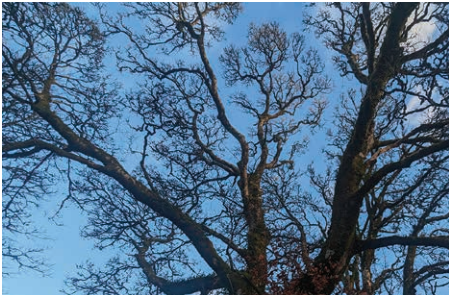
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Tree branches against a clear blue sky



News Roundup

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

By Paul G Bazeley for Government World

July News Review

Russia's war on Ukraine continued throughout the month with various attacks on targeted areas. There were reports suggesting there were civilian casualties. Ukraine launched counteroffensives with varying levels of success. Later in the month the United States of America (US) announced a \$1.3 billion military aid package to Ukraine.



US President Joe Biden declared the destruction of the country's remaining chemical weapon stockpile. The announcement marked the elimination

of all known chemical weapons across the globe after the Chemical Weapons Convention.



Tensions between North Korea and the United States increased after North Korea stated it would shoot down any US reconnaissance aircraft that came into their airspace. The threat came after the US planned to deploy a ballistic missile submarine near Korea.



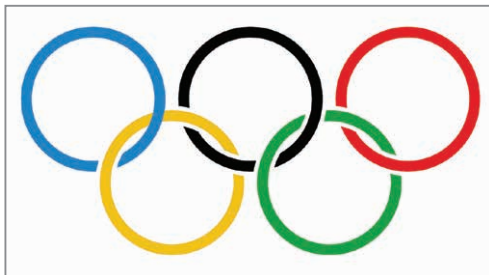
A male BBC presenter was suspended over allegations of sexual misconduct. It later transpired to be the newsreader Huw Edwards after his wife Vicky Flind publicly identified him and said he was seeking help for mental health issues. There were claims he had paid for sexually explicit images.



Elton John performed his final concert in Stockholm, Sweden. The musician had toured for over 50 years before concluding his last tour, Farewell Yellow Brick Road. At the time of writing he is the fourth bestselling musician of all time.

The government of Rome, Italy, announced it had discovered Roman Emperor Nero's private theatre under the courtyard of the Palazzo Della Rovere, a palace just outside Vatican City.

July Sports Review



The International Olympic Committee (IOC) announced that Russian and Belarusian athletes will not be invited to take part in the 2024 Olympic Games and will only be able to compete if doing so as neutral athletes.

In tennis, Markéta Vondroušová of the Czech Republic defeated Ons Jabeur 6-4, 6-4 in the Women's Wimbledon final. In the mens final Carlos Alcaraz beat Novak Djokovic to become the first non-big four player to win the tournament since 2002.



Brian Harman won his first golf major after winning the Open Championship by six shots. It was also the Americans first PGA tour win in six years.

August News Review

The Ukrainian security service said it had arrested a Ukrainian man



for allegedly assisting Russian intelligence. The man was believed to have had a role in a suspected plot to assassinate Volodymyr Zelensky, the Ukrainian President.

The former US President Donald Trump was indicted on four criminal accounts as part of an investigation



in his role in attempts to overturn the 2020 Presidential election.

The European Unions Copernicus Climate Change Service reported that July 2023 was the hottest July on record and 2023 was the third warmest year



to date. It came as no surprise after wildfires had spread across Europe, with Italy and Greece being among the worst affected.

Virgin Galactic launched its first space



tourism flight Galactic 02. Keisha Schahaff and Anastasia Mayers, a mother daughter duo from Antigua and Barbuda, became the first people from the Caribbean to fly to space.

Lucy Letby, a former neonatal nurse, was convicted of seven counts of murder and seven counts of attempted murder following the deaths of babies in the neonatal unit at the Countess of Chester hospital in England.



London Police stated they would take no further action in an investigation into allegations that King Charles III's charity associates offered a Saudi



Arabian billionaire a knighthood and citizenship in return for a large donation.

Hartwig Fischer, the British Museum director, resigned after being warned



about potential thefts from the museums collection and not carrying out sufficient investigations. George Osbourne, the museums chair, announced it would begin recovering the stolen artefacts.



The Royal Mail began to use drones to deliver post for the first time. The postal service used Skyports drones to deliver post to the Orkney archipelago in Scotland.

Barbie, the American film directed by Greta Gerwig became the first film directed by a female director to exceed \$1 billion in the worldwide box office.



July Sports Review

Spain beat England 1-0 in the final of the FIFA Women's World Cup. The tournament had been hosted in Australia and New Zealand. It was Spain's first Women's World Cup title since the tournament began.

The Spanish football federation president, Luis Rubiales was suspended by FIFA for 90 days after the footballer Jennifer Hermoso claimed that Rubiales kissed her without consent. Rubiales denied the claims.



Viktor Hovland won the PGA Tour Championship and secured the FedEx Cup championship trophy, finishing five strokes ahead of Xander Schauffele in second.



September News Review

North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un met with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Russia. During the summit Kim expressed his support for Russia's fight against the west and pledged that he will 'always be with Russia'. Putin also seemed to verify that Russia would help North Korea build satellites after stating 'that's why they came here' when asked about the possibility.



Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko proposed a three-way alliance between Belarus, North Korea and Russia while visiting Russian President Putin in Sochi, Russia.



The Sycamore Gap Tree, a historic tree in Northumberland, sometimes known as the Robin Hood tree, was illegally cut down. A 16-year-old was arrested soon after, and a second man believed to be in his sixties was also arrested



In tennis, American Coco Gauff defeated Aryna Sabalenka in the US open women's final. It was Gauff's first major singles title. In the men's final, Novak Djokovic beat Daniil Medvedev in three straight sets to win another major title.

A collage of images related to Keith Welters. At the top left is a poster for the 'SOUTH BANK EXHIBITION LONDON' featuring a stylized sun and a face. To its right is a small tag that says 'WELTERS of WYCOMBE' with a red elephant icon. Further right is a circular logo for 'THE WYOMBE AND DUTCH' featuring a bull and a house. Below the sun poster is another poster for 'FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN' with a colorful geometric design. To its right is a tag that says 'WELTERS of WYCOMBE' with a red elephant icon. Below the 'FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN' poster is a large, dark grey rectangle containing the text 'Keith Welters' in a stylized font, followed by 'FURNISHING' in a bold, sans-serif font. Below this rectangle is the word 'welters' in a large, bold, sans-serif font, followed by 'ORGANISATION WORLDWIDE' in a smaller, bold, sans-serif font. Below this is the text 'Design and Innovation' and the website 'www.welters-worldwide.com'. At the bottom of the collage is a bronze sculpture of an elephant standing and facing left.

Prepayment meter customers to pay less for energy from today (1st July)

July

From: Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and Amanda Solloway MP

- Unfair charge on prepayment meter customers scrapped
- change will help around three million households and save on average £21 a year
- together with the new energy price cap taking effect today, households will save hundreds of pounds on their bills

Fairness will be delivered for households today as the government scraps the unfair charge on prepayment meter customers.

The change, taking effect from today, will help around three million households using prepayment meters across Great Britain - bringing their bills in line with those who pay by direct debit, with the government stepping in to cover the

difference.

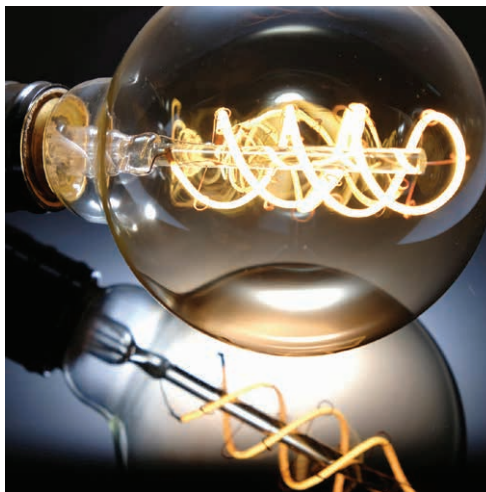
Currently, households on the pay-as-you-go meters pay more on average than direct debit customers, as it costs suppliers more to service their homes – such as collecting payments or giving out vouchers – with the charges passed onto

consumers.

Removing the prepayment meter premium means these households will save around £21 a year on their bills, making sure the system is fair and providing extra support to consumers who are typically on low incomes.

Scrapping the prepayment meter premium comes as Ofgem's latest price cap takes effect today - which thanks to improvements in the wholesale market, will bring the typical annual energy bill down from £2,500 under the Energy Price Guarantee to around £2,074. This will help lower inflation – one of the Prime Minister's five promises – as high energy prices drive up prices across the economy.

The fall in energy bills will save the average household around £426, or 17%, and means for every



£100 previously spent on energy bills, consumers will now pay £83.

Energy Consumers and Affordability Minister Amanda Solloway said:

“No one should be charged more for having a prepayment meter - today, we’re putting an end to this historic injustice.

With households on prepayment meters typically on some of the lowest incomes, this is a vital change.

Alongside the hundreds of pounds coming off energy bills from today, thanks to the fall in the price cap - this will offer extra help to ensure families stop being unfairly penalised.”

To ensure the prepayment premium comes to an end as quickly as possible, the Government will be funding the change up to April 2024. Ofgem as the energy regulator will be devising a plan that will eradicate it permanently after that date.

Earlier this year the government took steps to crack down on the abuse of prepayment meters by energy suppliers. The Energy Security Secretary Grant Shapps demanded action from Ofgem and suppliers to put an end to wrongful prepayment meter installations in vulnerable households.

The government is clear moving customers to prepayment meters must

always be the very last resort and has asked for regular updates from Ofgem and consumer groups to make sure all suppliers adhere to the regulator’s new Code of Practice – which puts measures in place to protect against them being installed in homes where they shouldn’t be.

Recent figures showed nearly £40 billion was spent by government between October 2022 and March 2023 to help keep household and business energy bills down, the most ever provided to subsidise household bills in UK history.

Over winter, the government covered nearly half a typical household’s energy bill and saved the average home roughly £1,500 by the end of June. That included providing £650 million to households on traditional prepayment meters through the Energy Bills Support Scheme. The scheme saw vouchers totalling £400 issued over six months from October with latest figures showing 85% had been redeemed by the end of May. While the deadline for applications has passed, that number is expected to rise with the last applications and reflected in figures due over the Summer.

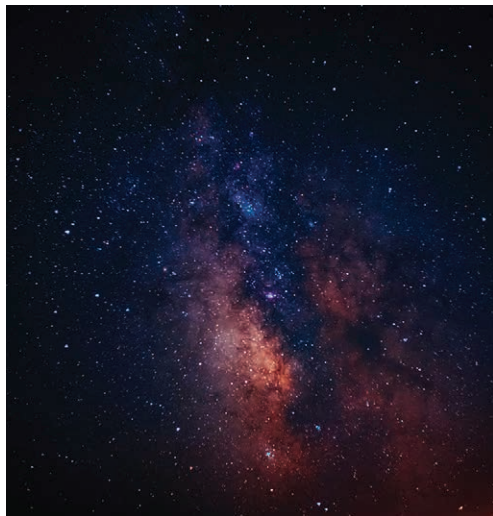


Mission to map the “dark Universe” sets off on space journey

July

From: UK Space Agency

A European mission to explore how gravity, dark energy and dark matter has shaped the Universe has launched following £37 million UK Space Agency funding.



The Euclid space telescope will map the “dark Universe” by observing billions of galaxies out to 10 billion lightyears, across more than a third of the sky, to gather data on how its structure has formed over its cosmic history.

Led by the European Space Agency (ESA) and a consortium of 2,000 scientists across 16 countries, Euclid will spend six years venturing through space with two scientific instruments: a UK-built visible imager (VIS) that will become one of the largest cameras ever sent into space, and a near infrared spectrometer and photometer, developed in France.

Secretary of State for Science and Technology Chloe Smith said:

“The launch of the Euclid mission is a truly significant moment. Backed by £37 million in UK funding and supported by our remarkable scientific talent and expertise, the mission will launch one of

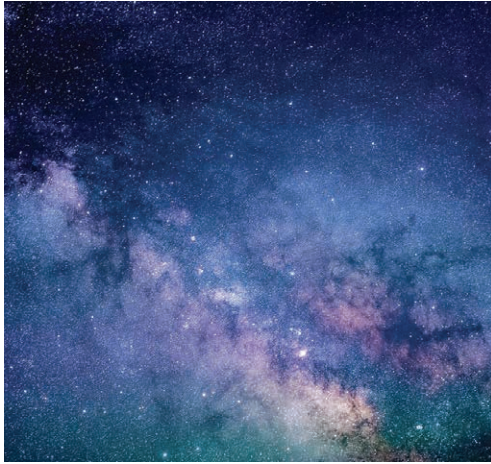
the largest cameras ever into space to look out across our universe.

The mission will gain unparalleled insight into the mysteries of how the Universe was formed, delivering ground-breaking discoveries that will redefine what we know about space.”

Dr Paul Bate, Chief Executive of the UK Space Agency, said:

“Watching the launch of Euclid, I feel inspired by the years of hard work from thousands of people that go into space science missions, and the fundamental importance of discovery – how we set out to understand and explore the Universe.

The UK Space Agency’s £37 million investment in Euclid has supported world-class science on this journey, from the development of the ground segment to the build of the crucial



visible imager instrument, which will help humanity begin to uncover the mysteries of dark matter and dark energy.”

Euclid took off on board a SpaceX spacecraft from Cape Canaveral in Florida at 4.12pm (BST) on 1 July.

The UK Space Agency’s funding goes back to 2010, up to 2024, and is divided between teams at University College London, The Open University, University of Cambridge, University of Edinburgh, University of Oxford, University of Portsmouth and Durham University.

All these institutions have contributed

to the development and implementation of the Euclid UK Science Ground Segment (UKSGS), which runs the Euclid data analysis. Led by the University of Edinburgh, which hosts Euclid’s UK Science Data Centre (SDC-UK), the UKSGS will process hundreds of petabytes of data over the next six years to produce maps of the galaxies and dark matter of the Universe.

The wider Euclid Consortium includes experts from 300 organisations across 13 European countries, the US, Canada and Japan.

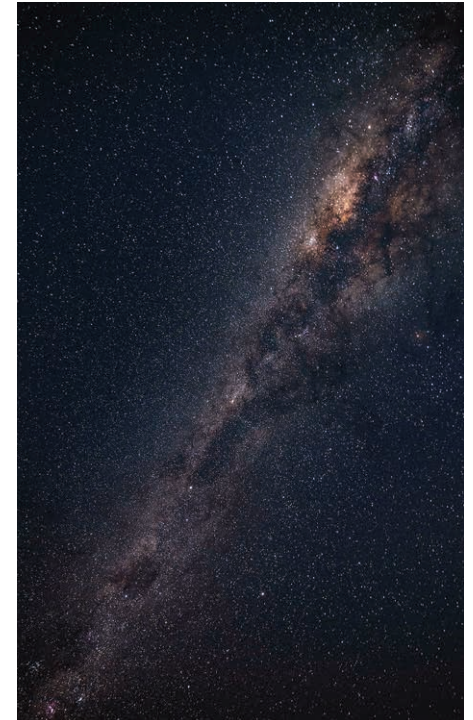
The Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) also contributed to design and development work on Euclid instrumentation and provided funding to UK astronomy teams who will analyse the data returned from the mission, including studies on the physics responsible for the observed accelerated expansion of the Universe.

Executive Chair at STFC Professor Mark Thomson said:

“Euclid will answer some of the biggest and most profound questions we have about the Universe and dark energy. Congratulations to everyone involved in the design, construction and launch

of Euclid – we are opening a new window on the cosmos.

This is a fantastic example of close collaboration between scientists, engineers, technicians, and astronomers across Europe working together to tackle some of the biggest questions in science.”



All secondary school pupils eligible for free flu vaccine

July

From: Department of Health and Social Care, UK Health Security Agency, NHS England, The Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP, and Maria Caulfield MP

- Over 3 million secondary school pupils to be offered nasal spray vaccine from 1 September
- Expansion provides direct protection to pupils and indirect protection to wider community
- Getting flu vaccine helps protect you and your loved ones, while reducing pressure on the NHS

All secondary school pupils in England will be offered a free flu vaccine from September for the 2023 to 2024 season, the government has confirmed.

An initial list of groups eligible for this year's vaccine was first announced in May, with a note that a decision on secondary school pupils would follow at a

later date.

Now, the government has confirmed it is expanding the programme to over 3 million pupils in secondary school years 7 to 11, who will be offered the vaccine as a nasal spray through their school's vaccination programme from 1 September.

The expansion gives direct protection to pupils receiving the vaccine and provides indirect protection to more vulnerable groups by reducing the spread of the virus.

Health Minister, Maria Caulfield, said:

“Expanding the offer of flu vaccination to all secondary school pupils this winter will provide millions of young people with extra protection.

Importantly, this will also reduce the risk of transmission to more vulnerable

groups, including the elderly, reducing hospitalisations and freeing up bed capacity across the NHS.

Last winter we saw the devastating impact this illness can have, so it is important all pupils take up the offer of the flu vaccine to protect themselves and their loved ones from falling unwell.”

The decision to expand the programme is in line with a long-standing recommendation from the



Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI), which highlights the benefits of directly protecting school aged children from flu, and the indirect benefits to the wider population.

NHS school age immunisation services (SAIS) will be undertaking the vaccinations from September during the autumn term.

All primary school children and infants aged 2 and 3 will also be offered the flu vaccine, as previously announced in May.

Eligible groups are urged to take up the offer from September before the flu season begins, to give themselves the best possible protection in winter.

NHS Director of Vaccinations and Screening, Steve Russell, said:



“Last winter we saw how quickly flu can spread within communities, so I’m pleased to see the flu vaccination offer being extended to secondary school children in the autumn term.

The vaccine offers vital protection against flu which can cause nasty symptoms, and I would urge all young people and parents to make sure they join millions of others who get vaccinated each year to take up the offer when they can - it’s quick, easy and offered in schools, so there’s really no reason to delay when you receive the offer.”

Dr Mary Ramsay, Head of Immunisation, UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), said:

“Getting the flu vaccine offers the best protection against the virus. It is important everyone eligible takes up the offer, including secondary school pupils as they can fall very sick. Last year we saw some teenagers hospitalised with flu.

Expanding the vaccination to secondary school pupils will help to reduce flu from being spread, protecting their friends and family and easing the burden on the NHS.”

Schools Minister, Nick Gibb, said:

“Following the disruption caused by the pandemic, it’s important that children are able to attend school as much as possible.

We know that school attendance levels drop over the winter months due to illness, which is why today’s announcement will not only protect children’s health but also their education.”

Most children are offered a nasal spray vaccine which is quick and easy to administer and offers the best protection for children. A small number of children cannot have the nasal spray because of medical conditions or treatments. They can be offered protection through an injected vaccine instead.





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New jobs “passport” for injured or disabled veterans

July

From: Department for Work and Pensions

New support scheme to help smooth the way for injured or disabled ex-military to return to work.

- Adjustments Passports provide support for those left with disabilities after serving, boosting their job prospects by removing barriers to starting and progressing in work
- Hundreds of Armed Forces service leavers’ set to benefit, unlocking a pool of talent for employers and businesses while helping to grow the economy

New Adjustments Passports will support hundreds of sick and disabled Armed Forces leavers’ to start and stay in work, delivering on a key Government priority to remove barriers to the labour market and grow the economy.

The scheme, announced by the

Department for Work and Pensions and the Ministry of Defence today [Tuesday 11 July], will help those leaving service with an injury, disability or health condition move more smoothly into employment.

The passport provides a transferable record of any workplace adjustments the service leaver may need, such as changes to working hours or specialist equipment, making it easier for them to transition into work, progress and move between jobs.

Crucially, with this new document all of this can now be done without the need for reassessment, which can often be a barrier to disabled people and those with health conditions staying in work.

Currently, service leavers’ can receive a copy of the passport and guidance via the Careers Transition Partnership armed services exit process. The passport will be available for download on GOV.UK by

the end of the week.

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

“We know that for people who require workplace adjustments, receiving the right support at the right time can be difficult, especially for service leavers’ starting a civilian job for the first time.

I am thrilled that the Adjustments Passport will address this difficulty, giving service leavers’ the confidence that their needs will be met,



and removing the need for multiple assessments.

Sustained, rewarding employment boosts wellbeing, and I am proud that we will be supporting people who have served our country to transition back to civilian life and start, stay and succeed in work.”

Minister for Defence People, Veterans and Service Families, Dr Andrew Murrison MP, said:

“It’s our duty to support people whilst they transition into civilian life. The service leavers’ Adjustments Passport will help those that need workplace adjustments by simplifying the process and enabling potential employers to provide the right support.

Ex-service personnel bring a wealth of skills and experience to the workplace which is why they are in demand. This Adjustments Passport is another step in realising their full potential at work.”

Minister for Veterans’ Affairs, Rt Hon. Johnny Mercer MP, said:

“Stable, long-term employment is key to veterans’ success after they leave service. That is why this Government is introducing a new Adjustments

Passport, which will remove unnecessary bureaucracy, making it easier for sick or disabled veterans to get back into work.

It is just the latest example of how colleagues across government are making the UK the best place in the world to be a veteran.”

The Passport will benefit employers as well as service leavers’ with big employers already recognising the potential of hiring from this group.

Tesco Group Chief Product Officer and Executive Sponsor of the Armed Forces Network, Ashwin Prasad, said:

“We’re proud of our Gold Covenant Award status, which recognises our work to support veterans’ – thousands of whom we’re delighted to call Tesco colleagues.

We are committed to working with DWP to build upon our Armed Forces Covenant Gold Award and we’ll continue to support those leaving the Armed Forces as they re-enter civilian work life – offering them a number of adjustments to make the transition as smooth as possible.”

The Passport will provide clear, helpful advice on the various types of funding and support which may be available to

support employers with recruitment and retention.

It has been developed learning from Health Adjustments Passport piloted for Universities, and from closely working with Armed Services stakeholders – testing and shaping the document to suit their needs.

As all of the information about their workplace needs will be recorded on the passport, it removes the need for a service leaver to undergo an Access to Work assessment, helping the service leaver to receive in-work support more quickly.

The Adjustments Passport is available to all Armed Forces service leavers’ on a voluntary basis, with service leavers choosing to take up the offer if they feel it would benefit them. It can be accessed via the Careers Transition Partnership or GOV.UK.



All systems are go for new space degree apprenticeship

July

From: Department for Education and The Rt Hon Gillian Keegan MP

Government launches new opportunity to launch an exciting career in space engineering

A new degree apprenticeship in space engineering will open up more opportunities for young people to build rewarding careers in the space industry and train up the talent the sector needs to grow, Education Secretary Gillian Keegan announced.

From spacecraft manufacturing to testing satellites, apprentices on the new Level 6 Space Systems programme will have a leading role in the development of complex, high value space hardware and ground support equipment.

The new apprenticeship will offer infinite opportunities for people to work in the UK's world-leading space

industry, including for global aerospace companies, space agencies or institutions including universities and technology research and development laboratories.

The apprenticeship is the first of its kind at degree-level. Applications open in September, and apprentices will start work for Airbus and begin their degree training with delivery partners across the UK in September 2024. The curriculum was developed with the University of Leicester, and will be delivered with Space Park Leicester, where students will have access to specialist facilities and world-class expertise in space mission development.

Education Secretary Gillian Keegan said:

“Apprenticeships can take you anywhere at any level – even space. Today we are launching our newest degree apprenticeship – in space systems

engineering. This will provide the opportunity to be at the forefront of the UK's world-leading space industry as it continues to grow.

I approved the first space apprenticeship in my previous role as Minister for Skills and Apprenticeships, so I'm very proud to formally launch this new degree-level



apprenticeship. As a degree apprentice myself, I know they are a great way for people to gain the skills and experience businesses truly value.

Mine kickstarted a career that took me around the world in international business. And today you can do almost anything through an apprenticeship - from nursing, digital, construction, corporate sustainability and much more. At the end of it you'll not only have a degree from one of our top universities, but years of business experience, and no student debt."

Degree-level apprenticeships have grown in popularity with more than 188,000 starts since they were first introduced in 2014/15. They give people from all backgrounds the chance to gain the skills and workplace experience needed to build rewarding careers in a wide range of key sectors - such as nursing, science or engineering - while gaining a degree qualification from one of the UK's world-leading universities. They offer a high-quality alternative to a traditional 3-year degree, with apprentices earning a median salary of over £34k after completion without incurring tuition fees.

The Government has also asked the Office for Students to invest up to £40



million over the next two years to help higher education providers offer more high-quality degree apprenticeships opportunities.

This follows plans to enhance UCAS services so students can search and apply for apprenticeships alongside traditional degrees, allowing them to see the full range of options available for the first time.

The apprenticeship will support the UK's space sector to grow, supporting the Government's ambition to inspire the next generations of space scientists, engineers, and entrepreneurs, as set out in the National Space Strategy.

Professor Anu Ojha OBE, Engagement,

International and Inspiration Director at the UK Space Agency, said:

"Space technology is vital for our daily lives, for monitoring and tackling climate change, connecting people across the world, and growing our economy. Space capabilities underpin so many of the fundamental architecture of our 21st century way of life – they are no longer a "nice to have" but a "must have".

That's why we need more people than ever before to join our thriving space sector, with thousands of space jobs across the UK in some of the world's most innovative companies and universities. This new degree level apprenticeship will help generate the stars of the future who will have a critical role in helping the UK reach its full potential."

Ben Bridge, Chairman, Airbus Defence and Space UK said:

"As a leading industrial partner to the British government we recognise the importance of growing domestic capability and talent. Airbus has always been committed to cultivating early careers and increasing opportunities in the growing space

ecosystem.

Alongside our existing early careers programmes, this degree level apprenticeship will equip people with the skills and qualifications to further their careers in the vibrant UK space sector and help us create the industry leaders of tomorrow."

Jennifer Coupland, chief executive of IfATE which supported expert employers to develop the apprenticeship, said:

"This will put rocket boosters under the degree apprenticeship programme.

It's an inspiring example of employers designing a world class training programme that will help shift the economy onto a high-skills footing. Space Systems Engineer apprentices can reach for the stars."

Professor Nishan Canagarajah, President & Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leicester, said:

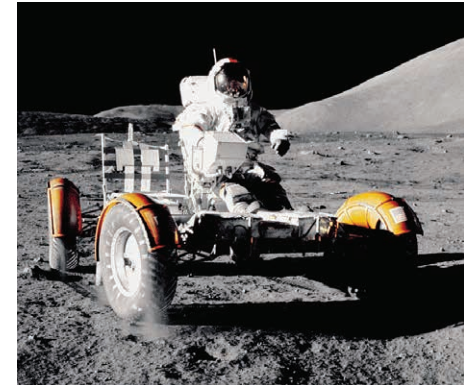
"The University of Leicester is committed to providing this exciting new Level 6 Degree Apprenticeship, which thanks to the employer trailblazer group has expanded the options open to employers and young people with a completely new

kind of degree offer.

Some of the most important space sector employers in the UK and globally have worked together, often hand-in-hand with competitors, to design a training programme that addresses their current and future skills needs, including delivery of training in new technologies and techniques that are set to transform the industry."

The new Space Systems Engineer degree apprenticeship follows the approval in 2020 of a Level 4 Space Engineering Technician apprenticeship,

which was designed to help young people gain the technical skills needed to kick start a career in space.



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Tax cut for 38,000 British pubs

August

From: HM Treasury

Over 38,000 UK pubs and bars have seen a tax cut on the pints they pull from today (1 August 2023) as the government's historic alcohol duty changes take effect.

- tax paid on pints and other drinks on tap in over 38,000 UK pubs is now up to 11p cheaper than their supermarket equivalents



- the new Brexit Pubs Guarantee will keep it this way for good

- alcohol duty now simplified so drinks are taxed by strength, lowering duty on supermarket shelves for many UK favourites including bottles of pale ale, pre-mixed gin and tonic, and prosecco

The duty paid on drinks on tap in pubs will be up to 11p lower than at the supermarket. The changes are designed to help pubs compete on a level playing field with supermarkets, so they can continue to thrive at the heart of communities across the UK. The Brexit Pubs Guarantee announced in the Chancellor's Spring Budget secures the pledge that pubs will always pay less alcohol duty than supermarkets going forwards.

It comes as other landmark changes to the alcohol duty system also come into effect today, which see drinks taxed by

strength for the first time and a new relief – named Small Producer Relief – to help small businesses and start-ups create new drinks, innovate and grow.

Today's changes have automatically lowered the duty in shops and supermarkets on many of the UK's favourites including certain bottles of pale ale, pre-mixed gin and tonic, hard seltzer, Irish cream, coffee liquor and English sparkling wine, amongst others.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak said:

“I want to support the drinks and hospitality industries that are helping to grow the economy, and the consumers who enjoy the end result.

Not only will today's changes mean that the price of your pint in the pub is protected, but it will also benefit

thousands of businesses across the country.

We have taken advantage of Brexit to simplify the duty system, to reduce the price of a pint, and to back British pubs.”

Jeremy Hunt, Chancellor of the Exchequer, said:

“British pubs are the beating heart of our communities and as they face rising costs, we’re doing all we can to help them out. Through our Brexit Pubs Guarantee, we’re protecting the price of a pint.

The changes we’re making to the way we tax alcohol catapults us into the 21st century, reflecting the popularity of low alcohol drinks and boosting growth in the sector by supporting small producers financially.”

The three alcohol duty changes that have taken effect today are only possible thanks to the UK’s departure from the EU and the guarantees set out in the Windsor Framework. The previous duty system was complex and unfair but now that the UK is free to set excise policy to suit its needs, the government has brought about common-sense reforms in order to support wider UK tax and public health objectives.

Brexit Pubs Guarantee

Over 38,000 UK pubs will benefit from lower alcohol tax on the drinks they pour from tap from today. This is because the government has expanded Draught Relief, which effectively freezes or cuts the alcohol duty on the vast majority of these drinks. This is to protect pubs, who are often undercut by supermarket competitors.

It means that the duty they pay on each drink poured from draught, such as pints of beer and cider, will be up to 11p cheaper than in supermarkets. The government has pledged that the duty pubs and bars pay on these drinks will always be less than retailers, known as the Brexit Pubs Guarantee.



This tax reduction is part of a wider shake up of the alcohol duty system which also comes into effect from today – the biggest in 140 years.

A simpler, more modern alcohol duty system

The alcohol duty reforms were announced at the Autumn Budget in 2021. The reforms pledged to modernise and simplify a duty system that had not been changed in 140 years, only possible as the UK has left the EU.

The key changes are:

- all products taxed in line with alcohol by volume (ABV) strength, rather than different duty structures for different drinks
- fewer main duty rates, from 15 to 6, to make it easier for businesses to grow and operate
- there will be lower taxes on lower alcohol products – those below 3.5% alcohol by volume (ABV) in strength – a huge growth area in the drinks industry
- all drinks above 8.5% ABV will pay

the same rate regardless of product type

This will mean that many UK favourites will see duty reductions. Irish cream will drop by 3p, cans of 5% ABV ready-to-drink spirit mixers by 6p, Prosecco by 61p and 500ml 3.4% pale ale by 20p a bottle.

New tax relief to encourage small producers to make new drinks

The UK alcoholic drinks market reached just under £50 billion in 2022, up 6% year on year and is expected to continue to grow – sales are forecast to reach £60.9 billion in 2026. The UK government is laser-focused on continuing this burgeoning success.

The government is introducing Small Producer Relief effective from today, which replaces and extends the previous Small Brewers Relief scheme.

This allows small businesses who produce alcoholic products with an ABV of less than 8.5% to be eligible for reduced rates of alcohol duty on qualifying products. The new tax relief scheme promotes innovation in the drinks sector, giving small producers the financial freedom to experiment with new types of drink and grow their business. It also supports the modern drinking trend

of lower alcohol beverages.

Barry Watts, Head of Policy and Public Affairs, Society of Independent Brewers

“These are the most significant changes to the alcohol duty system for generations which will have far reaching implications for what we order in the pub and what appears on the shop shelves. It is the culmination of five years of consultation on the future of Small Breweries’ Relief – a scheme that has made the huge growth of craft breweries possible over the past twenty years. These changes will finally address the “cliff edge” which was a barrier to small breweries growing and build on the scheme’s success by applying it to other alcoholic products below 8.5%.

A key part of the new system is the draught duty relief is a gamechanger for the sector and allows for the first time a different duty to be paid for what is sold to our pubs. This will hopefully over time encourage more people to support their pub which is at the heart of our local communities.”

James Hayward, Director and Head Brewer at Iron Pier Brewery, Gravesend

“As a small brewery with a focus on cask ale, we welcome the new draught duty relief, alongside the revision of the small producers relief, which has in the past proved a restriction to growth over 5,000hl per annum. The idea that beer sold in pubs can now pay a lower rate of duty than supermarkets is a good one and will hopefully lead to further changes to protect the pub and its role in society. The previous Small Brewers Relief was successful in creating a diverse brewing industry in the UK, and to see that extended to other producers will hopefully have a positive effect on other beverage producers as well.”





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School children and hospital patients set for higher quality food under new government plans

August

From: Cabinet Office, Crown Commercial Service, Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, Alex Burghart MP, and The Rt Hon Mark Spencer MP

A new agreement for procuring food and drink has been announced by the Crown Commercial Service.

- Crown Commercial Service agreement will support food producers, including SMEs, in accessing public sector food contracts

- Plans to drive up standards of food and drink available to the public sector including schoolchildren and hospital patients

- Initial stages of the agreement are estimated to attract £100 million worth of spend

New plans revealed today will help schools, hospitals and other organisations buy higher quality food and drink at better value for the taxpayer.

A single online portal will make it easier for public sector customers and small businesses by offering a simplified route to markets - opening up access to a range of food and drink suppliers for the public sector.

This has the added benefit of creating more choice for customers, while improving standards and providing better access to locally-sourced produce. Public

sector procurement teams will also have the option to add their preferred SME suppliers to the agreement.

All suppliers available through the portal will have to adhere to the updated Government Buying Standards for Food, which the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) are set to update in due course.

Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office, Minister Alex Burghart, said:

“Delivering better value for the taxpayer and driving up food and drink standards are key priorities for government.

This new system will deliver better quality food to our schoolchildren and care home residents, while creating a level playing field to help small



businesses win more contracts from the public sector.”

The government’s ambition is to further embed Government Buying Standards (GBS) to food and catering served through all public sector organisations. The framework will increase compliance with the GBS further.

This delivers a centralised option for purchasing food and drink and will be made available for the public sector across the UK. The agreement will enable public sector organisations to source healthy and high-quality produce in a consistent way - all their food and drink needs will be available in one place, providing a holistic approach to the ordering, fulfilment, consolidation and delivery of food produce.

By harnessing the collective buying power of customers across the public sector, the agreement is expected to significantly reduce costs and therefore help combat food inflation.

Crown Commercial Service (CCS), the UK’s largest public procurement organisation and part of the Cabinet Office, has worked with DEFRA to develop the new agreement. As part of that process, CCS has engaged extensively

with SMEs to ensure the UK’s business community has directly fed into the plans.

Mark Spencer, Food Minister, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs said:

“The UK produces world leading quality food and drink, demonstrating excellence in animal welfare and sustainable production standards.

This is an exciting opportunity for the public sector to lead by example, showcasing our great food and drink and supporting small businesses. We look forward to working with CCS on the agreement.”

Simon Tse, CEO of Crown Commercial Service said:

“We’re delighted to be working alongside Defra to introduce better quality, seasonal and nutritious food into schools, hospitals and prisons.

As we continue to level up and grow the economy, this food solution will support public sector bodies in purchasing good quality food and help local and small businesses compete for public sector contracts for the first time, opening up economic opportunities across the

country.”

Crown Commercial Service has engaged with food suppliers and industry bodies from across the UK to develop its procurement strategy for the new agreement, which is expected to be open for business in Spring 2024.

The initial contract value is estimated to attract £100 million worth of spend over the 4 year contract period, which is a small proportion of the annual £2.1 billion public sector food spend. Public sector buyers are free to choose to buy from other buying organisations who provide food products through frameworks in a similar way.



UK Space Agency funding for technologies to monitor the Earth

August

From: UK Space Agency, Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, and George Freeman MP

Funding for satellite Earth Observation technologies, which are critical to improving humanity's understanding of our planet and its climate, is now available.

The £15 million UK Space Agency funding will support the research and experimental development of space-based instruments, aimed at supporting a range of environmental services, which could include meteorology, climate

monitoring, environmental management, agriculture and urban planning, and improving scientific knowledge.

The UK is already a world leader in Earth Observation (EO) tools, technologies, and data use. This funding will help to accelerate the development of promising UK EO technologies which could be flown on satellites in the next few years.

The National Space Strategy in Action report, published in July, set out the government's plans for how the UK will remain at the forefront of EO technology and know-how for commercial and public services.

Minister of State at the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology George Freeman MP, said:

“Earth Observation technology is critical to tackling the fundamental challenges of our age – from monitoring climate

change to responding to humanitarian disasters – and so we owe it to the future of our planet to harness the UK's world-leading skills in this field.

This pivotal technology doesn't stop there and from ensuring the safety of bridges to enabling our farmers get the best from their land, this £15m investment will boost our economy and drive forward our ambition to make the UK a science superpower.”

The Earth Observation Technology Programme funding, delivered by the Centre for Earth Observation Instrumentation (CEOI), is part of a £400 million package announced in November 2022 to support the UK's Earth Observation sector.

Harshbir Sangha, Missions and Capabilities Delivery Director at the UK Space Agency, said:



“Satellite technology is essential to our daily lives, helping us to monitor climate change and protect our environment, manage our resources, respond to global humanitarian disasters and support sustainable development.

This funding will help catalyse investment across the sector to support a range of innovative projects, from developing new sensor technologies to using the data for improved understanding of climate change.”

The £15 million funding will cover Pathfinder projects of up to £75,000, Fast Track projects of up to £250,000, and Flagship projects of up to £3 million.

Pathfinder and Fast Track projects will support new and innovative ideas for technology development, including early-stage research and lab-based experimental hardware.

Flagship projects will develop technologies further, including testing instruments in relevant environments such as vacuum chambers and airborne demonstration flights.

Chris Brownsword, Director of the Centre for Earth Observation Instrumentation, said:

“This call for grant proposals is the 16th the CEOI has released on behalf of the UK Space Agency and represents a significant increase over past funding opportunities. It will continue to support innovative new technology developments, paving the way for future novel UK developed instruments, but importantly will also provide significantly larger grants to make a step change in the pace of technology development.

It has been recognised that previous CEOI calls have had major impact across the entire UK Earth Observation community; bringing together academia and industry to develop UK owned technologies. We are excited to see what successes this new call can facilitate.”

Since 2016 the Earth Observation Technology Programme has provided £20 million in funding across a total of 57 projects. These include a next Generation Synthetic Aperture Radar for Oceanography led by the National Oceanography Centre with Airbus, a Compact Infrared Imager and Radiometer led by the University of Oxford, and a Laser Heterodyne Radiometer led by RAL Space.

This funding opportunity is the latest in a series of technology development

activities the UK Space Agency has issued under its Earth Observation Technology Programme. Since 2016 this programme has provided £20 million in funding across a total of 57 projects, with many of these now progressing on their roadmaps towards flight on commercial, societal and research space missions.

These include a next Generation Synthetic Aperture Radar for Oceanography led by the National Oceanography Centre with Airbus, a Compact Infrared Imager and Radiometer led by the University of Oxford, and a Laser Heterodyne Radiometer led by RAL-Space.



New building requirements for separate male and female toilets

August

From: Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities , The Rt Hon Kemi Badenoch MP, and Baroness Scott of Bybrook OBE

Government confirms measures to reverse the rise of gender-neutral toilets as part of wider efforts to protect single sex spaces.

- Government accelerates plans for separate male and female toilets in new non-domestic private and public buildings
- Builds upon action to protect and enhance single sex spaces
- Changes will also encourage the provision of self-contained, private toilets to ensure there are appropriate facilities for all

The government has announced today it is acting to bring forward changes to regulations that will mean all new non-domestic public and private buildings will

be required to provide separate single-sex toilets for women and men and/or a self-contained, private toilet as a minimum.

The change comes amid dignity and privacy concerns from women and elderly people who feel they are being unfairly disadvantaged as publicly accessible toilets are increasingly being converted into gender neutral facilities.



Concerns over the rise of neutral gender facilities has meant that public have been forced to share cubicle and hand-washing facilities, leading to increasing waiting in shared queues, decreased choice and a limitation on privacy and dignity for all.

New regulations and guidance will mean women, who may need to use facilities more often because of pregnancy or sanitary needs, will now be guaranteed appropriate facilities either through a separate single-sex space or through a self-contained, private toilet.

The action taken today builds upon the government's commitment and wider approach to the protection of single sex spaces.

In addition to single sex toilets becoming the default and minimum for new non-residential buildings and



places undertaking major refurbishment, the guidelines will encourage the consideration of self-contained toilets, which are a fully enclosed toilet room with a wash hand basin for individual use.

This new approach will help to maximise privacy and dignity for of all, which will be explicit in the guidance.

A new short technical consultation to shape the changes has opened.

Kemi Badenoch, Minister for Women and Equalities, said:

“It is important that everybody has privacy and dignity when using public facilities. Yet the move towards ‘gender neutral’ toilets has removed this fundamental right for women and girls.

These proposals will ensure every new building in England is required to provide separate male and female or unisex

facilities, and publish guidance to explain the difference, protecting the dignity, privacy and safety of all.”

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Faith & Communities, Baroness Scott, said:

“It is extremely important women can feel comfortable when using public facilities, so we are taking action to restore dignity and privacy at the centre of all future provision.

These proposals will mean separate toilets for men and women, as well as self-contained toilets for those that need them, become a requirement for every new building across England.”

A previous call for evidence on increasing the accessibility of toilets for men and women gathered over 17,000 responses and represented a full range of views – generally calling for greater consideration in the range of toilets to preserve dignity, access, equality, and privacy for all.

The changes will be made through building regulations and guidance. The aim of the new requirements will ensure that:

- separate single-sex toilets facilities are

provided for men and women and/or

- self-contained, private toilets are provided where space allows to ensure privacy and safety

- mixed sex shared facilities are not an option, except when lack of space allows only a single toilet

Changing the rules for single sex and/or universal toilets to be required would have positive equality outcomes for those who may not currently feel safe while using toilet facilities.





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Colorado potato beetle larvae confirmed in Kent

August

From: Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs and Animal and Plant Health Agency

Growers, farmers, processors and the public are asked to remain vigilant after the Animal and Plant Health Agency confirmed findings of Colorado potato



beetle larvae in Kent.

On Friday 11 August Defra and the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) confirmed the finding of a single adult male Colorado beetle within the 1km surveillance zone in Kent. This provides evidence of the value of our rigorous inspection activities to date.

No additional colony has been detected and given the estimated age of the beetle it's likely that this specimen probably dispersed from the original site. Surveillance for any possible undetected colonies will continue within the 1km zone.

We are actively following up public reports, all of which have been negative for Colorado beetle. We wish to encourage continued vigilance from industry and the public and will update the plant health portal with any further press notices.

This finding follows beetle larvae which

was identified in a field in Kent earlier this summer, on Tuesday 11 July. This was confirmed by Defra and the APHA as Colorado potato beetle (*Leptinotarsa decemlineata*).

Confirmation was made following laboratory diagnosis of samples taken by APHA's Plant Health and Seeds Inspectorate. It is the first time an outbreak of the beetle has been confirmed in the UK since 1977, although they are endemic in large parts of Europe.

APHA is working closely with the affected grower to eradicate the pest from the site, including performing a 1km survey to determine whether there are further cases beyond the immediately infested area.

If not eradicated, Colorado potato beetles are a significant threat to potato crops. The adult beetles and

larvae feed on the foliage of potato and other plants in the nightshade family and can completely strip them of their leaves if they are left uncontrolled. However, they are not a threat to human or animal health.

UK Chief Plant Health Officer Nicola Spence said:

“Following a report, our experts have identified the presence of Colorado beetle larvae in a potato field in Kent.

We are responding swiftly through our eradication programme, involving ground surveillance to look for beetles and larvae

at the outbreak site and surrounding area.

Whilst this pest does not pose a threat to human health, we encourage all growers, farmers, processors and the public to remain vigilant and report any sightings, especially in Kent.”

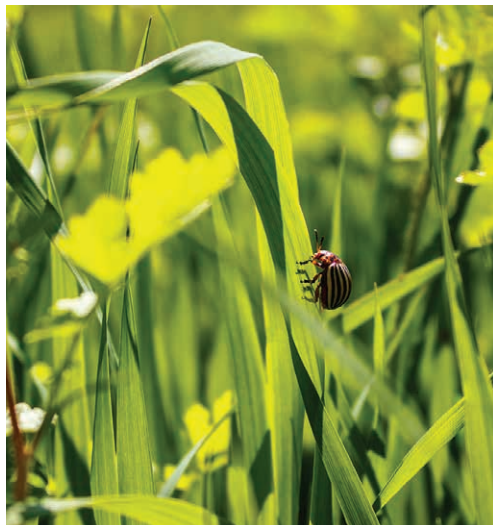
The beetle is not endemic to the UK and is currently regulated as a Great Britain quarantine pest, with import and movement restrictions in place for susceptible host material. APHA is obligated to act upon the current findings and eradicate this pest to support our efforts to maintain this status. Statutory Notices will be issued to ensure the containment and eradication of this pest is undertaken.

Farmers and growers in particular are being encouraged to remain vigilant for signs of the pest. The beetle is bright yellow or orange with black stripes and is usually between 8.5-11.5mm in length and 3mm in width. Its larvae are a reddish brown in colour, round and globular, and up to 15mm in length.

Although distinctive in appearance, there are several beetles that are frequently mistaken for them. The Colorado potato beetle plant pest factsheet provides more information about the beetle's life cycle

and provides information on how to differentiate it from some of our native and introduced species.

The beetles are occasionally imported into the UK from continental Europe as ‘hitchhikers’ on non-host plant material, such as leafy vegetables, salad leaves, fresh herbs and grain and are reported to the UK Plant Health Service who act on the findings. In the past 70 years, there have been two outbreaks of Colorado potato beetles in the UK, one in 1976 and one in 1977. Both outbreaks were eradicated shortly after detection.



NHS doctors to receive pay rise this month

September

From: Department of Health and Social Care

Around 150,000 NHS doctors in England, including doctors in training and consultants, will start to receive their pay rise this month, backdated to April 2023.

- Accepting the recommendations of the independent pay review bodies in full means first year doctors in training will receive a 10.3% pay increase, with the average junior doctor getting 8.8%, and consultants will receive 6%
- This award is final and the Health and Social Care Secretary has urged the BMA to call off strike action and end disruption to care

This month, around 150,000 NHS doctors will start to receive a pay rise after the government accepted the recommendations of the Independent Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration's (DDRB).

As part of the award, doctors covered by the review body, which includes doctors in training, consultants, specialty and associate specialist (SAS) doctors and dentists, will receive their pay rise backdated to April. This pay rise balances the need to keep inflation in check while giving staff significant pay increases.

First year doctors in training will receive

a 10.3% uplift. This means basic pay for a first year junior doctor will increase from £29,300 to £32,300. For a junior doctor in core training with 3 years' experience, it will increase from £40,200 to £43,900.

Pay scales for consultants are also increasing by 6%, meaning starting basic full-time pay will rise to £93,600. Taken together with on-call payments





and other activities, the average consultant's NHS earnings will increase to £134,000 a year. This is in addition to their 4.5% pay rise last year and significant pension reforms, which saw the annual allowance for tax-free pension saving increasing by 50% to £60,000 and removing the £1 million lifetime cap.

Some staff will also benefit from performance pay, overtime, pay progression and pay rises from promotion, alongside the pay uplift.

Health and Social Care Secretary Steve Barclay said:

"I hugely value the work of NHS staff, and we're giving junior doctors, consultants and senior NHS staff a fair pay rise as recommended by the independent pay review bodies - which is above what

most in the public and private sectors are receiving.

We have worked at speed to ensure they will start receiving this in their pay packets this month. I've been clear this pay award is final and I urge the British Medical Association (BMA) to end its callous and calculated strike action - these are only serving to lengthen waiting lists, harm patients and put more pressure on their colleagues."

The government is funding this pay award through prioritisation within existing departmental budgets, with frontline services being protected. More borrowing would add pressures on inflation at exactly the wrong time, risking higher interest rates and higher mortgage rates.

More widely, and alongside the pension tax reforms announced at budget, the government is implementing new retirement flexibilities to help retain experienced doctors, while making it easier and attractive for

retired staff to return.

From 1 April 2023, restrictions were lifted on the amount of work that staff can do if they return to service after retirement, and allowed staff who retire and return to re-join the scheme and build more pension. From 1 October 2023, a further partial retirement option for staff will be introduced, which will allow them to claim a portion of their pension benefits but continue working and building further pension.

This means more clinicians to provide appointments, ease winter pressures and deliver care to patients, as well as the retention of crucial knowledge and experience to ensure patients are receiving first-class care.



Thousands more beds to help rough sleepers off the streets

September

From: Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Felicity Buchan MP

£34.6 million awarded across London and over 70 other areas to support rough sleepers.

Funding to provide up to 4,300 additional beds to help people off the streets has been announced as the government marks the anniversary of its landmark

Rough Sleeping Strategy.

The cross-government Rough Sleeping Strategy – backed by £2 billion and building on significant action already taken by the government – was announced in September 2022.

To mark its anniversary, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) has today announced new Rough Sleeping Initiative allocations totalling £34.6 million. This money will go to areas most in need of support to help get people off the street more quickly; provide more move-on accommodation; help people keep their tenancies; and provide tailored support.

This funding is on top of the original allocation of up to £500 million over 3 years, announced earlier this year, which has already helped to provide 14,000 beds for rough sleepers and 3,000 staff to provide tailored support across England.

This includes helping individuals find work, manage their finances and access mental and physical health services.

The government has a manifesto commitment to end rough sleeping in this parliament. This means rough sleeping is prevented wherever possible and, where it cannot be prevented, it is a rare, brief and non-recurring experience.





Minister for Rough Sleeping Felicity Buchan said:

“One year on from the launch of our ground-breaking strategy we remain as committed as ever to ending rough sleeping.

The full weight of government remains behind this very important pledge, and this can be seen in today’s funding boost to provide thousands more beds and hundreds more support staff into the heart of communities where they are most needed.”

Rough Sleeping Initiative 2022-25 funding forms just one part of a wider package of support for rough sleepers and falls within the £2 billion this government has committed to spend over 3 years to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping. The

wider package of support includes:

• **Homelessness Prevention Grant:**

In excess of £1 billion flexible funding is being provided over 3 years to support councils to offer financial support for people to find a new home or to work with landlords to prevent evictions.

• **Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme:**

This £433 million scheme will deliver 6,000 homes for people with histories of sleeping rough or those at risk of sleeping rough.

• **Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme:**

Announced earlier this year, this new £200 million programme aims to deliver up to 2,400 homes, with funding for the

necessary wrap-around support tailored to individual needs for 3 years

• **Rough Sleeping Drug and Alcohol Treatment Grant:**

We are providing funding of up to £186.5 million over this spending review period for substance misuse treatment. This investment has expanded these vital services to an additional 20 areas, bringing the total to 83 areas and 5 cross-London projects.

• **Housing First Pilots:**

Our manifesto committed to pilot Housing First in 3 urban areas with contrasting challenges: Greater Manchester, West Midlands and Liverpool City Region. The programme was initially allocated £28 million of government funding, but in



May 2022, they secured an additional £13.9 million in funding to drive forward the programme's legacy.

• Accommodation for Ex-Offenders:

This supports prison leavers at risk of homelessness into private rental tenancies. Over £42 million is being provided to local authorities in England, helping people with rental deposits, landlord incentives, and dedicated support staff, supporting 2,750 ex-offenders into their own homes in the private rented sector

• The Night Shelter Transformation Fund:

A £13 million commitment over 3 years, aimed at small- to medium-sized faith and community organisations, providing accommodation and support to people who are homeless or sleeping rough.

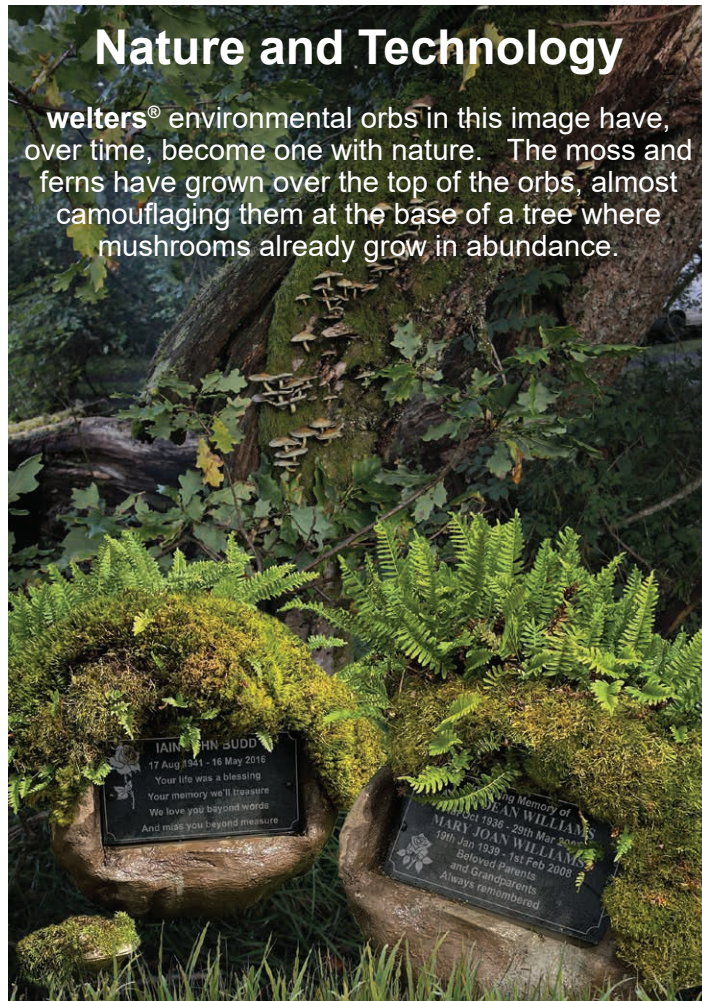
• Voluntary & Community Sector Capacity Fund:

£7.3 million funding to boost working across statutory, commissioned, and non-commissioned services and increase the capacity and skills of the sector through workforce support and training.



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.



Major national strategy to reduce number of tragic suicides

September

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

Government pledge to reduce England's suicide rate within 2 and a half years with launch of new national suicide prevention strategy.

- Action to aid specific groups at risk of suicide, including children and young people, middle-aged men, autistic people, pregnant women, and new mothers
- More than 100 measures being taken including a national alert system to combat emerging methods of suicide and refreshed guidance for first responders

Thousands more people approaching a crisis will get the support they so desperately need and fewer loved ones will go through the heartbreak of losing a friend or relative to suicide, as the government launches a new national

strategy to rapidly reduce England's suicide rate.

The Suicide prevention strategy for England: 2023 to 2028 delivers a firm commitment to see the number of suicides in England decrease within 2 and a half years at the very latest.

The NHS Long Term Workforce Plan sets out an ambition to grow the mental health workforce by 73% by 2036 to 2037, and the workforce already continues to grow to help cut waiting lists - one of this government's top 5 priorities. In March 2023, there were almost 9,300 more mental health staff working than the previous year.



Health and Social Care Secretary Steve Barclay said:

“Too many people are still affected by the tragedy of suicide, which is so often preventable.

This national cross-government strategy details over 100 actions we'll take to ensure anyone experiencing the turmoil of a crisis has access to the urgent support they need.

It's imperative we support people earlier to prevent them reaching the lowest point, while tackling emerging methods of suicide and eradicating harmful material online.

We're working at pace to achieve this, and we continue to invest billions of pounds to transform and improve our nation's mental health services, and - most importantly - save lives.”

Over 100 measures have been outlined in the strategy aimed at saving lives, providing early intervention and supporting anyone going through the trauma of a crisis. This includes:

- a new national alert system to notify relevant authorities - like schools, universities, and charities - of emerging methods of suicides and risks, and any required actions that can reduce access or limit awareness
- fresh guidance issued to first responders, recognising new and emerging methods, and how such incidents should be dealt with
- near real-time surveillance of trends in tragic suicides to be introduced on a national scale this year - enabling more timely and targeted actions
- a government pledge to collaborate with countries around the world to target and stop suppliers of dangerous and lethal



substances at the source

Last month, the government launched a £10 million Suicide Prevention Grant Fund, calling on the voluntary sector across England to apply for funding to continue supporting tens of thousands of people experiencing suicidal thoughts. It comes alongside an expected spend of £13.6 billion this year alone to transform the country's mental health services so millions of people can quickly access NHS support.

The government is committed to ensuring children and young people receive the mental healthcare they deserve. It is going further and faster to achieve that.

Tens of millions of children in schools across England will have access to a dedicated mental health support team by the end of March 2025, with at least half of school pupils set to receive such support. Mental health support teams intervene where a mild-to-moderate mental health issue is identified, and ensure children and young people are both protected and supported.

As part of its ongoing work with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Authority (MHRA), the government will explore whether

regulatory change is required to decrease how many tablets like paracetamol can be sold to a customer or patient at once.

Minister for Mental Health Maria Caulfield said:

"The impact of suicide on individuals and loved ones is devastating.

This strategy will bolster the work this government is already undertaking to reduce the number of suicides and help us intervene, where needed, as early as possible.

An extra £2.3 billion is going into our mental health services each year, which will help an additional 2 million people access vital NHS-funded mental health support by 2024."

Professor Sir Louis Appleby, Chair of the National Suicide Prevention Strategy Advisory Group, said:

"The strategy makes a new commitment to bring down the unacceptable figure of over 5,000 suicides per year in England. It stresses the need for safer services and supportive communities.

It acknowledges the bereaved families whose campaigning has turned personal tragedy into benefit for others.

It gives the message that suicide can affect any of us and there is a role for all of us in prevention.”

The new national alert system on emerging methods or risks will mean anyone who comes into contact with potentially dangerous new methods of suicide will have a direct link into central government to report it for consideration and discussion at the already-established cross-sector emerging methods working group.

Through this, alerts will be circulated to all authorities who should be aware and may be required to take mitigating action. If the method in question is being used predominantly by children or young people, for example, every single school and headteacher in the country will receive a government alert. This one-page alert will lay out the risks and give clear instruction about how to react to safeguard those who could be affected.

Change on a national scale is vitally important. Female deaths by suicide are heartbreakingly increasing at a higher rate than male deaths. It's imperative



such trends are captured as early as possible and preventative measures put in place to save lives.

The government will therefore work much more closely with the police to use its data about ‘suspected’ suicides, as well as with the Office for National Statistics, to get an indication of trends much more quickly. The government will publish a monthly report on its near real-time findings.

Steve Mallen, co-founder of Zero Suicide Alliance, said:

“The publication of the new national suicide prevention strategy is perfectly timed to coincide with World Suicide Prevention Day, which reminds everyone everywhere that suicide prevention is everyone’s responsibility.

The new strategy was prepared in

consultation with sector leaders, diverse interest groups and people with lived experience, making it a collaborative resource impacting the whole population. In addition, the inter-departmental co-operation and alignment across government in preparing the new strategy was essential and greatly welcomed.

With the accompanying action plan and oversight, there is a clear intention to save lives and improve wellbeing.”

The strategy also contains measures for specific groups of people. Sadly, middle-aged men, for example, have had the highest rates of suicide of any other group since 2010. Men need appropriate support when experiencing the agony and turmoil of a crisis.

To support them, the strategy therefore includes an action to ensure employers in largely male industries like construction and manufacturing have appropriate support in place for employees, such as mental health first aiders.

In the UK, suicide is sadly the leading cause of direct deaths 6 weeks to a

year after the end of pregnancy.

To further understand possible links between these factors and suicide and self-harm, the government is working with various partners to sponsor a project led by the charity Tommy's and Sands Maternity Consortium, which will engage people who have had suicidal thoughts or self-harmed and present with certain risk factors during the perinatal period.

Robert Wilson, Head of the Sands and Tommy's Joint Policy Unit, said:

“We know how important it is to make sure the right support is available for women and birthing people during their pregnancy journey, including as they plan for pregnancy.

This is especially true where someone has a mental health condition that could put them at greater risk of harm. In order to better understand how care and support can be improved, the Sands and Tommy's Joint Policy Unit is leading a project that will explore people's experiences of suicide and self-harm, and risk factors during the perinatal period.

We are grateful to the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Health and Wellbeing Alliance for sponsoring this

work.”

Unprecedented action is already being taken to improve the nation's mental health and provide appropriate support:

- a £150 million investment up to April 2025 to better support people experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, mental health crises. This will support the roll-out of mental health ambulances and delivery of over 160 projects - including alternatives to A&E - to ensure people can receive specialist care in appropriate spaces and help ease pressure on the NHS

- the government has worked with big business, including online suppliers and manufacturers of certain potentially dangerous substances, to significantly reduce access to them, with major online suppliers also removing substances from sale to individuals

- we are also tackling harmful material that encourages self-harm or suicide through the Online Safety Bill, and continue to work with multiple agencies to ensure appropriate messaging and labelling is used

- In addition to the legislation, the Department for Science, Innovation

and Technology, alongside the Department of Health and Social Care, will explore further opportunities to address online harms, including harmful content shared in pro-suicide websites and forums

- we are investing £2.3 billion extra a year into mental health services, and have set out our aim in the NHS Long Term Plan for an additional 345,000 children and young people to access NHS-funded mental health support by 2024

- the Department for Education is engaging experts and those with lived experience to review relationships, sex and health education guidance to determine whether suicide and self-harm prevention will be included as an explicit part of the curriculum to support young people





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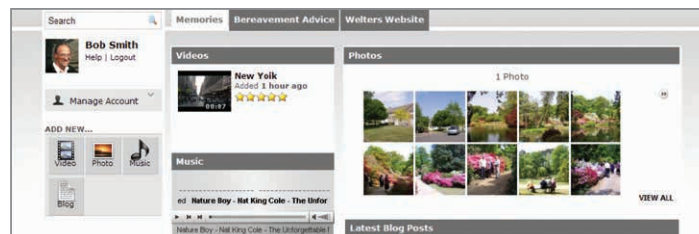


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New plans to bring online TV channels under Ofcom content rules

September

From: Department for Culture, Media and Sport and
The Rt Hon Lucy Frazer KC MP

Internet-based TV channels on smart TVs could be brought in line with existing Ofcom content rules on traditional TV

- Law change would ensure children and vulnerable viewers remain protected and enable audiences to complain to Ofcom
- New review announced into the future of TV distribution - including Freeview, satellite, cable and online - to ensure audiences can tune in for decades to come

More online TV channels could be required to follow Ofcom content rules to ensure young and vulnerable audiences are protected from harmful programming, under plans announced by the Culture Secretary at the Royal Television Society Cambridge Convention this afternoon.

In a wide-ranging speech, Lucy Frazer set out her plan to maximise the potential of the TV industry to seize the opportunity presented by the infinite choice on offer in today's media landscape, and to ensure fair competition amid an increasingly fierce global battle for viewers.

Figures show that more than seven in ten UK households now have a smart TV, through which audiences can access up to 900 unregulated and mostly internet-based TV channels via innovative new services such as Pluto TV, Samsung TV Plus, LG Channels and Amazon Freevee.

These channels are not currently required to meet the same world-leading standards

expected of traditional broadcasters. While some channels follow rules on inappropriate or harmful material voluntarily set by the companies who run them, UK viewers cannot complain to Ofcom if they are concerned by a programme, and Ofcom has no powers to issue fines or other sanctions if a channel broadcasts harmful material.

That's why, as part of the Culture Secretary's mission to modernise broadcasting rules for the digital age, a consultation has been launched on proposals to bring unregulated TV channels into scope of Ofcom's Broadcasting Code, which is already followed by terrestrial and satellite channels.

Alongside new content rules on the streaming services in the draft Media Bill, the reforms would level the playing field with traditional broadcasters while preserving the greater choice offered by these exciting new services. It will



assure audiences that what they see on TV follows a similar set of rules regardless of how they tune in, and maintain the UK's longstanding tradition of media freedom.

A new research and engagement programme looking at the future of TV in the UK was also unveiled. The work will help ensure audiences continue to have access to world-class TV - regardless of how technology changes in the coming decades - and support the industry to navigate and seize the opportunities ahead. It will also help inform long-term policy decisions on extending the current commitment to keep Freeview on air until at least 2034.

In a speech today at the Royal Television Society Cambridge Convention, Culture Secretary Lucy Frazer said:

“Here in the UK our TV is genuinely world leading... Many of the most celebrated shows of this golden era have been made here in the UK, written here in the UK, and shot here in the UK.

We recognise that internet provided TV is growing... But while this shift is an exciting one, it's our job to look at those channels that fall outside our existing regulations.

That's why we are going to consult on whether we need to extend regulation to these unregulated channels... any

change to regulations must strike a balance between protecting people - particularly the young and vulnerable - while protecting freedom of speech, and not unduly burdening the TV industry.”

The Culture Secretary also reinforced the government's commitment to bringing forward a Media Bill that will expand opportunities for public service broadcasters to take advantage of the digital age. She also set out her mission to support the TV industry through the one million new jobs promised in the Creative Industries Sector Vision and tax reliefs on productions, and to protect freedom of expression whether that's through cutting-edge drama or documentaries which shine a light on controversial topics.

Consultation on unregulated TV channels

Figures show that up to 74 per cent of UK households now have a smart TV,



through which audiences can access a growing number of unregulated and mostly internet-based TV channels, with a particularly rapid increase in the number of free ad-supported streaming television (FAST) channels. Shows are often watched in a similar way to traditional TV in that viewers browse through channels showing a continuous stream of programmes via an electronic programme guide (EPG) - or 'TV guide'.

These services have created an innovative way for audiences to enjoy shows highly tailored to a particular interest, such as World War TV or The Chat Show Channel, and some are dedicated to a single programme such as Come Dine With Me or Masterchef.

There is a growing number of at least 19 unregulated EPGs - including Samsung TV Plus, Pluto TV, LG Channels and Amazon Freevee. These services are easily accessible, with some available at the touch of a button on a TV remote control.

There is currently a fixed list of EPGs which are regulated by Ofcom's Broadcasting Code: Freeview, Freesat, Sky, Virgin Media, and YouView. This means that those watching programmes not shown on these EPGs cannot complain to Ofcom if they are

concerned by a programme and Ofcom has no powers to issue fines or other sanctions if a channel broadcasts harmful material

DCMS research found examples of potentially harmful content which could easily have been found by children or vulnerable audiences, including swearing and sexual content before the 9pm watershed.

Unregulated channels also don't have to follow Ofcom rules on ensuring subtitles, audio description and signing are available for people with disabilities, and are not required to ensure public service broadcasters are shown prominently in TV guides.

Given the landscape of changing technology and the increasing popularity of these services, the government has launched a consultation on how to use existing powers that allow it to update which EPGs are regulated in the UK. This will level the playing field with traditional broadcasters who are already required to follow Ofcom's Broadcasting Code.

In addition to new powers for Ofcom to draft and enforce new content rules for on-demand content already announced in the draft Media Bill, these reforms would assure audiences that the shows they see on TV meet the same set of high standards,

regardless of how they choose to tune in.

The proposals, subject to consultation responses from industry and the wider public, would extend the list of EPGs regulated by Ofcom to include only the most popular and easily accessible EPGs, available via a television set. The consultation makes clear that any regulatory change must strike a balance between protecting people - particularly the young and vulnerable - while protecting freedom of speech. It will also seek views on how any changes to regulation are not unduly burdensome on industry, respect media freedoms, and do not discourage competition and innovation.

Project launched to understand the future of UK's TV landscape

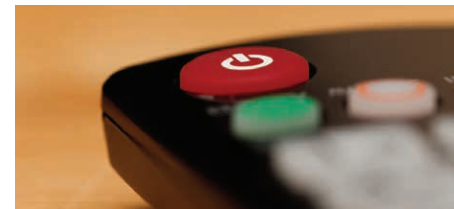
In her speech the Culture Secretary also launched a major research and engagement programme looking at how UK audiences will get their TV in the decades to come, as part of the government's commitment to ensure future audiences continue to have access to world-class shows.

The work will take a broad look at the future of TV distribution, including how changing viewing habits and technology will impact how programmes are brought to our screens over the next decade and

beyond, particularly in light of the rising popularity of streaming platforms and other internet-based forms of TV viewing.

It will look at all the technologies currently used to broadcast TV, including Freeview, satellite, cable, and online. As part of the project, the government has commissioned new research that will inform the government's long-term strategy for the UK's TV broadcasting landscape, ensuring audiences continue to be well-served regardless of how they are watching TV. Building on a commitment in the 2022 Broadcasting White Paper, Ofcom will also be publishing a call for evidence later in the autumn, that will inform this work.

The government will work in partnership with industry to fully realise the opportunities of the changing TV landscape, keeping the needs of audiences - particularly those who rely upon services like Freeview - front and centre.



Timber Harvesting - what is happening?

Article to follow in the next edition of Government World



Mass quantities of felled logs on cleared land



The remains of felled trees on now barren land





Felled logs in front of full grown trees



Transportation by rail for biomass and other uses



Transportation on rural roads



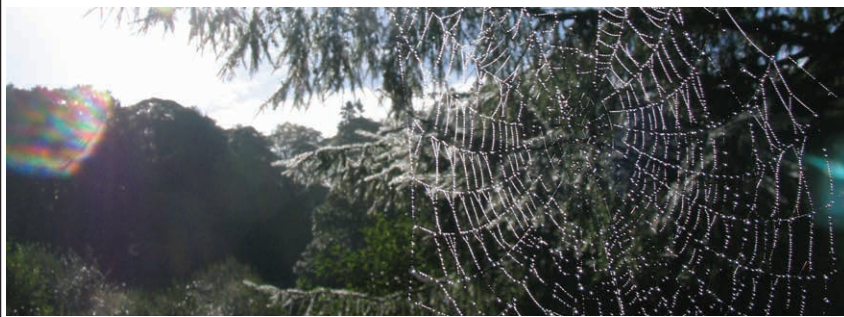
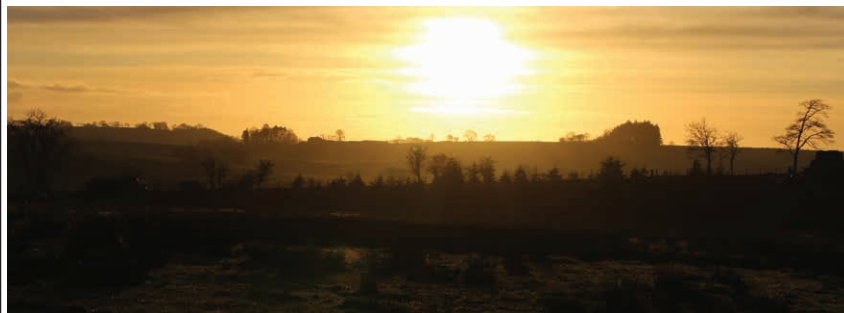
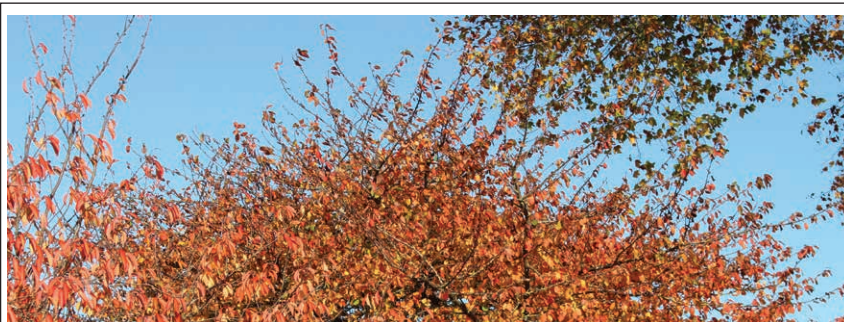
Logs being moved and stored for further use



Logs being prepared for cutting and shaping into planks for sale

Forthcoming articles under consideration

- Timber Harvesting - the impact of timber production in rural areas
- Local Authority bankruptcy - how many council in the UK have issued a section 114 notice?
- The introduction of new words to the English language. Who is responsible for sourcing and approving?
- Long COVID. How has COVID affected the general populous of the UK and the world at large?
- Flood defence additions to homes. Do they work or cause more problems?



considered by our Editorial Department for the Autumn edition as alternatives to the final chosen cover

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