

News story: Industrial action

September 2018: Rory Stewart statement



Prisons Minister Rory Stewart said:

Prison officers do vital and important work and we urge them to return to their duty stations, in line with their obligations to the law and the prison service.

It's irresponsible for the POA to encourage their members to take this unlawful action. We are deploying our contingency plans but, by not turning up for work, these prison officers are putting their fellow staff and inmates at risk.

Yesterday we doubled the prison sentence for anyone who assaults prison officers. We've also increased pay, provided tools such as body-worn cameras to increase security on the landings, and are investing £40 million to improve the estate and tackle the drugs problem which is fuelling much of the violence. And we've now got 3,500 new officers to help ease the burden.

We are taking the action that needs to be taken.

- [The Assaults on Emergency Workers Bill](#) received Royal Assent this week which will increase the maximum sentence for assaults against prison officers to double from six to 12 months in prison.
- We are rolling out body worn cameras, 'police-style' handcuffs and restraints, and trialling PAVA incapacitant spray to ensure prison officers have the tools they need to do the job safely.
- In July we announced a £30 million investment including £16 million to improve conditions for prisoners and staff and £7 million on new security measures, including airport-security style scanners, improved searching techniques and phone-blocking technology. This also includes £1 million on a digital tool which assesses information from various law enforcement databases to create a central 'risk rating' for each prisoner.
- Also in July we announced a £9 million investment to clamp down on drugs

supply and consumption at HMP Holme House, with a major emphasis on tackling addiction.

- In August we announced another [£10 million would be invested in 10 difficult prisons](#) to curb the flow of drugs and phones, while also improving conditions as those jails and improving leadership. This will tackle drug supply by enhancing physical security at the jails; with investment in drug-detection dogs, body scanners, and improved perimeter defences.
- We will seek an injunction to bring this action to an end.
- We absolutely refute the allegation that we did not follow all the normal procedures for informing the POA about the urgent Notification at HMP Bedford.

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[News story: Bridging Payments for Environmental Stewardship customers](#)

We are making bridging payments to farmers and land managers to ensure all those who claimed for 2016 and / or 2017 will have received at least 75% of their payment for those years by the end of September.

All eligible Environmental Stewardship (ES) agreement holders who claimed for 2016 and 2017 payments and have not yet received 75% of their claim for those years will receive a bridging payment by the end of September.

A bridging payment is an interest-free loan to customers in advance of their full year payment. Customers will receive 75% of the current estimated value of their ES revenue claim. When the full payment is processed and made, the amount paid through the bridging payment will be held back.

Where a 50% advance payment has already been made to a claimant, customers will receive a 25% top up when bridging payments are made.

Letters and emails are being sent to farmers and land managers awaiting payments this week, with a reminder to make sure bank account and contact details on the [Rural Payments Service](#) are up-to-date so that bridging payments can be made successfully.

Customers do not need to do anything to receive the payment, as Natural England will check records to identify eligible customers entitled to bridging payments.

Payment for environmental work undertaken is a government priority as set out in the Agriculture Bill published earlier this week. These payments are

important to customers, and an improvement plan to the delivery of Environmental Stewardship and Countryside Stewardship payments is underway, with the Rural Payments Agency taking charge of delivery of both schemes from 1 October.

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Press release: UK showcases climate change efforts at global summit

Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister Mark Field and the Foreign Secretary's Special Representative for Climate Change Nick Bridge are attending the Global Climate Action Summit in San Francisco on 13-14 September 2018. Governments, businesses and civil society have come together to discuss efforts to reduce carbon emissions and to transition to low carbon economies.

Throughout the summit, the UK has showcased a range of national and international commitments to tackle climate change, from driving the development of the zero emissions transport sector, to our support for small states and vulnerable communities to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

The Powering Past Coal Alliance has also announced ten new members from across the US, Europe, and Australasia. Jointly initiated by the US and Canada, the coalition of 74 governments, businesses, and other organisations is committed to ending the use of unabated coal power within the timeframe of the Paris Agreement.

Minister Mark Field said:

Climate change is a global problem and one that needs to be tackled at every level, from international, to national and local governments, and with a huge role to play for businesses and individuals.

The UK is looking beyond our strong record on climate action at home. We are working across the world to help reduce emissions and create a safer, more prosperous future for all people. We also want to help UK businesses capitalise on the growing investment opportunities as countries transition to clean, low carbon economies.

Nick Bridge, the Foreign Secretary's Special Representative for Climate Change said:

We are delighted that ten new members have this week joined our international alliance to end the use of unabated coal power. Rapidly decreasing our dependency on coal is crucial to meeting our global Paris Agreement commitments.

The UK has committed to ending unabated coal power generation by 2025 and we want to help other countries and organisations who share the same ambition.

Earlier this month, Minister Field attended the Pacific Islands Forum [3-6 September] where climate change was top of the agenda as an issue urgently facing small islands. The UK is one of the largest contributors of international climate finance and in the four years to 2020 will be giving developing countries over £5.5 billion to help them mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

The visit also follows the UK-hosted international Zero Emissions Vehicle Summit [11-12 September] which brought together government and industry leaders to drive forward the development of the ultra low and zero vehicle emission market, in order to reduce emissions and improve air quality. In July, the Government set out its ambition for at least half of new cars to be ultra low emission by 2030. All new cars and vans will be effectively zero emission by 2040.

The first ever Green Great Britain Week will be held from 15 October, designed to highlight the opportunities that clean growth offers and raise awareness of how business and the public can tackle climate change.

Further information

- Follow Foreign Office Minister Mark Field on Twitter [@MarkFieldUK](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

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