

Press release: Welsh Secretary to outline his vision for a “Western Powerhouse”

The time has come to maximise the many strengths of a natural economic region that has been frustrated by tolling for over 50 years, Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns will say today when he delivers a speech on his vision for the “Western Powerhouse” concept at the Policy Forum Wales seminar in Newport.

Speaking to an audience of leaders from local government, education, private and academic sectors from both sides of the Severn Estuary, the Welsh Secretary will lay down the gauntlet and challenge the experts to come forward with their ideas on how to bolster existing relationships and develop new partnerships across the nations.

At the end of 2018, one of the greatest economic barriers to Wales’ prosperity will be consigned to history when the UK Government removes the tolls to use the Severn Crossings.

Companies on both sides of the border are already benefitting from the removal of VAT on the tolls in January.

When the tolls are abolished completely, the UK Government wants to see businesses pool their expertise to deliver the ideas and projects that will not only benefit the cities of Swansea, Cardiff, Newport, Bristol and Bath but the wider South Wales and South West England regions as well.

Opening the Policy Forum for Wales seminar, Alun Cairns will say:

The cities on the western side of the UK are individually strong, but collectively, we are not strong enough.

We need to light the blue touch paper and make a real step change to the way businesses, people and industry from the cities and towns from both sides of the Severn work together when the tolls are removed.

And I’m not talking about one city taking the lead, but a collection of cities, of communities, of businesses, sufficiently close to each other that, combined, they can take on the world.

Able to provide jobs and opportunities to the many people who live in or are looking to invest in this region.

So we need to seize the opportunity to create an economic region on the Western side of the UK that can compete with the Northern Powerhouse, the Midlands Engine and with the economy of the South

East.

He will also lay down the challenge to business leaders to come forward with ideas on how the 'Western Powerhouse' can become a reality.

He will say;

This is not a marketing campaign or a one-off event. It's got to be a serious, long-term strategy to make this part of the UK greater than the sum of its parts.

For far too long, the physical barrier of the Severn tolls have prevented businesses and people in Wales and the South West from working together in a way that they could have been.

Whilst differences to our own cross-border region exist, it is clear that we can learn lessons and benefit from each others' experience.

This has got to be driven by you, the experts. It's got to be about your attitude and about your ideas.

Press release: Government invests £5m to increase places for disadvantaged children in youth organisations

- 5,500 places to be created for young people to join uniformed youth groups
- Funding will support expansion and development of new groups

A new £5 million fund will increase places in uniformed youth groups to reach vulnerable young people and allow for expansion in deprived areas, Minister for Civil Society Tracey Crouch announced.

An estimated 5,500 spaces will be created in groups such as police cadets, Scouts, Guides and faith-based organisations to help reduce waiting lists for these in-demand local clubs.

The fund will help organisations open new groups in deprived areas across England and allow more children to benefit from weekly activities, camps or volunteering programmes – helping to boost their wellbeing, mental health and life skills.

In addition, the Uniformed Youth Fund, will provide more opportunities for adults to get involved in projects and volunteer their time in order to grow and sustain groups in their community.

Tracey Crouch, Minister for Sport and Civil Society, said:

Organisations like the Guides and Sea Cadets play a key role in so many childhoods. They create lasting friendships and teach important life skills such as teamwork and resilience.

This fund strengthens our support for young people by ensuring that even more children have access to these groups and are helped to reach their full potential.

Samantha Hyde, Director at Youth United Foundation, said:

We are delighted to be able to expand our important work with children and young people living in some of the most deprived regions in the country, providing them with the opportunity to join a uniformed youth group and, as a result, gain a range of life-changing skills and experiences.

We strive to increase opportunities in areas and communities where there are least provisions and the most need, to ensure that young people of all backgrounds are able to succeed.

The Fund will be distributed and managed by Youth United Foundation, a member organisation for uniformed youth groups.

The Fund will also lay the foundations for groups to continue to expand and tackle waiting lists beyond the current financial year.

The announcement follows the recent Civil Society Strategy where the government promised to work alongside uniformed youth groups to consider how they can expand in disadvantaged areas.

For more information please call the DCMS press office: 0207 2112210

Notes to editors:

Youth United Foundation Network collectively work with 1.5 million young people and is formed of 11 uniformed youth organisations, including: Army Cadets Force, Boys' Brigade, Fire Cadets, Girls' Brigade, Girlguiding, Jewish Lads' and Girls' Brigade, Royal Air Force Cadets, St. John Ambulance, Sea Cadets, The Scout Association and Volunteer Police Cadets.

Youth United Fund's mission is to give every young person, regardless of economic or ethnic background, the opportunity to join a uniformed youth group.

News story: Government announces new measures to boost funding for small businesses

- New laws will make it easier for small businesses to access invoice finance, providing a £1bn long-term boost to the economy
- The new laws form part of the government's modern Industrial Strategy, building an environment in which small businesses can thrive

Small Business Minister Kelly Tolhurst will today (Monday 10 September) put forward new laws to arm small businesses against unfair contracts that stop them raising money from unpaid invoices.

Currently a small supplier's contract with a larger company may prevent it from securing invoice finance from providers such as banks and other investors.

Under the new proposed laws, any such contractual restrictions entered into after 31 December 2018, with certain exceptions, would have no effect and could be disregarded by small businesses and finance providers, which will help stop larger businesses from abusing their market position.

The new measures are expected to provide a long-term boost to the UK economy estimated to be worth almost £1bn.

Small Business Minister Kelly Tolhurst said:

The UK's 5.7 million small businesses are the backbone of our economy and central to our modern Industrial Strategy, with more than 1,000 starting up every day.

These new laws will give small businesses more access to the finance they need to succeed and will help ensure they have a level playing field from which to set fair contracts with the businesses they supply.

The proposed laws come as a number of larger businesses stop their suppliers from assigning 'receivables' – the right to receive the proceeds from an invoice. This assignment is essential for invoice finance to operate.

Restrictive contract terms are often used by larger businesses to maintain a hold over their suppliers, with small suppliers often unable to negotiate changes to the proposed contract because they do not have enough power in the

marketplace.

- The legal changes are set out in the draft 'Business Contract Terms (Assignment of Receivables) Regulations 2018'.
- The estimated current value of the stock of invoice finance to SMEs is approximately £9.5 billion.
- Restrictions on invoice finance for SMEs in contracts agreed on or after 31 December 2018 will simply not have any legal effect in this way, so the changes introduced by the government involve no compliance or reporting burden to businesses. Contracts can be expected to evolve over time to reflect the regulations.
- Invoice finance allows a business to raise funds by assigning their right to be paid (known as 'receivables') to a finance provider in exchange for funds, typically representing 80% of the value of the invoices. The initial advance is received within a few days and the balancing 20% (less fees and charges) is paid when the customer settles the invoice. Invoice finance is not borrowing, because the supplier is receiving an advance against a future payment. Some purchase contracts include terms that prohibit assignment, which prevents (or inhibits) access to invoice finance. Suppliers sometimes accept these contracts because of their weak negotiating position. It is these contract terms that the regulations will address.
- The Regulations would apply to SME suppliers and contain exceptions for certain types of contract, such as contracts for financial services, contracts with consumers and contracts connected with the sale of a business.

[Press release: Public Health England and Drinkaware launch Drink Free Days](#)

A YouGov poll has found that one in five of UK adults are drinking above the [Chief Medical Officer's low risk drinking guidelines](#) and more than two thirds of these say they would find cutting down on their drinking harder to do than one or more other lifestyle changes – improving their diet, exercising more, or reducing their smoking, if they were smokers.

Working together for the first time, Public Health England and alcohol education charity [Drinkaware](#) are today (10 September 2018) jointly launching a new campaign 'Drink Free Days' to help people cut down on the amount of alcohol they are regularly drinking.

The campaign will be encouraging middle-aged drinkers to use the tactic of taking more days off from drinking as a way of reducing their health risks from alcohol.

The more alcohol people drink , the greater their risk of developing a number

of serious potentially life limiting health conditions, such as high blood pressure and heart disease, as well as 7 types of cancer.

Regular drinking also increases the amount of calories consumed and can contribute to weight gain and obesity.

Evidence from behavioural science suggests that simple and easy ways of helping people to change their behaviour are the most effective, which is why Drinkaware and PHE have chosen to focus on Drink Free Days.

Pre-campaign research also found that the concept resonated strongly with people and was seen as clear to follow, positive and achievable.

Duncan Selbie, Chief Executive at Public Health England, said:

Many of us enjoy a drink – but whether it’s a few in the pub after work a couple of times a week, some beers on the sofa watching the football or regular wine with our dinner – it’s all too easy to let our drinking creep up on us.

While the link with liver disease is well known, many people are not aware that alcohol can cause numerous other serious health problems, such as high blood pressure, heart disease as well as several cancers. It’s also an easy way to pile on the pounds.

About 10 million people in England are drinking in ways that increases the risks and many are struggling to cut down. Setting yourself a target of having more drink free days every week is an easy way to drink less and reduce the risks to your health.

Commenting, Drinkaware Chief Executive Elaine Hindal said:

The more you drink, the greater the risk to your health. It’s really that simple.

But an increasing number of people, particularly middle aged drinkers, are drinking in ways that are putting them at risk of serious and potentially life limiting conditions such as heart disease, liver disease and some types of cancer.

That’s where this campaign comes in and we’re delighted to be joining forces with Public Health England for the first time to help give people that knowledge.

Having a few drink free days each week, will help reduce the risks to your health and improve your wellbeing.

This new partnership between Public Health England and Drinkaware is a fresh and bold step in our work to reduce alcohol harm. PHE’s One You digital platform has a strong track record on encouraging behaviour change;

Drinkaware is an independent educational charity with an extensive reach to the key audiences. Working together to help communicate the message that having drink free days will reduce the risks to your health is the first move in what we hope will be a long term partnership.

Former England and Liverpool footballer John Barnes is supporting the campaign which will be providing people with a range of tools and resources to help them cut back and make better choices about their drinking.

John said:

This is an important campaign highlighting how many of us don't realise that we are drinking in ways that could be harming our health and how we are struggling to moderate.

A beer here and a glass of wine there might not seem like much but the units can add up and so too can the health risks.

Having a few more days a week that are drink free is a great way of taking control of our drinking and making healthier choices for the future which is why I am supporting this fantastic campaign.

A dedicated website provides all the information, resources and apps to help support people, including the [One You Drink Free Days app](#) and Drinkaware's [Drink Compare Calculator](#).

Background

YouGov Survey

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from [YouGov](#). YouGov interviewed 8,906 UK adults aged 18 to 85 online between 14 May and 5 June 2018. This included a subset of 1,847 adults who drank over 14 units in the last week. Data has been weighted to be representative of the UK adult population according to gender, age, social grade and region.

Proportion of adults drinking above the lower risk guidelines

Research shows that middle-aged drinkers are more likely to be drinking more (above the 14 units lower risk guidelines) than the general population: [Adult Survey for England 2016 – Adult Health Trends \(table 10\)](#).

Campaign evaluation

PHE and [Drinkaware](#) will separately undertake full independent evaluations and peer review processes.

The public health burden of alcohol

Evidence review: this PHE review looks at the [impact of alcohol on the public](#)

[health and the effectiveness of alcohol control policies](#).

Alcohol consumption: advice on low risk drinking

[UK Chief Medical Officer's guidelines](#) on how to keep health risks from drinking alcohol to a low level.

Drink Free Days app

The [Drink Free Days app](#) is a simple and easy way to track the days you drink alcohol and the days you don't.

One You

Launched in March 2016, [One You](#) from Public Health England is the first nationwide programme to support adults in making simple changes that can have a huge influence on their health, could help prevent diseases such as type 2 diabetes, cancer and heart disease and reduce risk of suffering a stroke or living with dementia, disability and frailty in later life. It aims to inform, energise and engage millions of adults, especially those in the 40 to 60 'middle-aged' group, to make changes to improve their own health by eating well, moving more, drinking less and quitting smoking. One You also provides information on free health checks and how people can reduce their stress levels and sleep better.

About Drinkaware

[Drinkaware](#) is an independent charity which aims to reduce alcohol-related harm by helping people make better choices about their drinking. We achieve this by providing impartial, evidence based information, advice and practical resources; raising awareness of alcohol and its harms, and working collaboratively with partners..Follow them on Twitter @drinkaware.

About PHE

[Public Health England](#) exists to protect and improve the nation's health and wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. We do this through world-leading science, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships and providing specialist public health services. We are an executive agency of the Department of Health and Social Care, and a distinct organisation with operational autonomy. We provide government, local government, the NHS, Parliament, industry and the public with evidence-based professional, scientific expertise and support. Follow us on Twitter: [@PHE_uk](#) and Facebook: www.facebook.com/PublicHealthEngland.

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Press release: Home Office proposes extending stop and search powers

Police will be able to stop and search people they suspect of carrying a corrosive substance in public places, under Home Office proposals published [in a consultation](#) today.

This suggested strengthening of police powers will enable officers to better prevent acid attacks and is part of the government's efforts to tackle violent crime and protect the public.

The Home Office has also commissioned scientists at the government's Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) to develop a portable kit so that police can test suspected corrosive substances on the street. The kit, which is backed by police leaders, will enable officers to determine on the spot whether an individual is carrying a corrosive substance and take immediate action to help stop life-threatening acid attacks.

It follows the introduction earlier this year of the Offensive Weapons Bill, which will create a new offence of possessing a corrosive substance in a public place.

Existing powers allow police officers to stop and search an individual where they suspect the person is in possession of a corrosive substance and is intent on causing injury.

But the proposed extension of powers will enable police to search anyone they suspect is carrying a corrosive substance in a public place, enabling them to take better preventative action.

Minister for Policing and the Fire Service Nick Hurd said:

Acid attacks are appalling acts of violence that devastate lives and can have fatal consequences.

A bottle of acid can be as lethal as a knife or a firearm, and these new powers will enable police officers to prevent these despicable thugs from carrying out their terrible crimes.

The Home Secretary has been clear that stop and search is a vital and effective policing tool when used correctly. We will always

seek to give police the powers they need to crack down on violent crime and bring perpetrators to justice.

National Police Chiefs' Council lead for Corrosive Attacks, Assistant Chief Constable Rachel Kearton, said:

The use of acid to commit acts of violence is particularly abhorrent – perpetrators aim to leave their victims with horrific and life-changing injuries.

Tackling the scourge of acid attacks requires a coordinated approach across a number of different organisations and sectors. I support proposals to extend stop and search powers, so that they cover individuals suspected of carrying a corrosive substance in public without good reason.

Stop and search is ultimately a safeguarding power – we use it to prevent crime, identify those who intend to cause harm and disrupt serious and organised crime networks. Officers should be confident to use stop and search – proportionately and respectfully – because it's an important investigative tool.

The Home Office is also consulting on proposals to give police greater powers to stop and search people over the misuse of drones and laser pointers, both of which are on the increase.

The number of incidents of drones coming close to manned aircraft, which has potentially catastrophic consequences, rose to 93 in 2017.

Critical national infrastructure, sensitive sites, defence establishments, large-scale events and crowded public places face a potential threat of criminal or hostile drone activity.

The use of drones to smuggle contraband into prisons is also increasing.

Similarly, the misuse of laser pointers against vehicles is a growing concern. Since 2010, there have been more than 1,000 incidents of lasers being pointed at aircraft reported to the Civil Aviation Authority.

Shining a laser at a vehicle and dazzling or distracting the person in control became a specific offence under the Laser Misuse (Vehicles) Act 2018.

Extending stop and search powers to cover offences under the Laser Misuse (Vehicle) Act 2018 and Air Navigation Order 2016 and Prisons Act 1952 are intended to enable more effective enforcement, targeting those individuals who are intent on causing harm.

Mark Swan, Director at the UK Civil Aviation Authority, said:

Illegally-used drones and lasers are a very real safety risk to

aircraft, particularly during critical phases of flight, such as take-off and landing.

Laws are now in place to protect aircraft from both drones and laser pointers, and we support efforts by the police to enforce these laws.