

News story: Plans to cut harmful pollution from domestic burning set out

Proposals to promote cleaner domestic burning and cut harmful pollution by prohibiting the sale of the most polluting fuels have been laid out in a [government consultation](#) published today.

The burning of wood and coal in the home is the largest single contributor to particulate matter pollution – identified by the World Health Organization as the most damaging air pollutant.

Particulate matter is formed of tiny particles that can get into the body, lodging in major organs, causing short- and long-term health problems. Domestic burning contributes 38% of particulate matter pollution, compared with 16% from industrial combustion and only 12% from road transport.

The government therefore plans to ensure that, in future, only the cleanest fuels are available for sale. Delivering a commitment in the government's [Clean Air Strategy](#), the consultation proposes preventing 8,000 tonnes of harmful particulate matter from entering the atmosphere each year by:

- Restricting the sale of wet wood for domestic burning
- Applying sulphur standards and smoke emission limits to all solid fuels
- Phasing out the sale of traditional house coal

At the same time, the government will ensure only the cleanest stoves are available for sale by 2022. Together this will bring benefits for consumers and householders as burning cleaner fuels and using these devices produces less smoke, soot, and more heat.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

Everyone has a role to play in improving the air we breathe, and reducing pollution from burning at home is a key area where we can all take action.

While we will never be able to eliminate all particulate matter, by switching to cleaner fuels, householders can reduce the amount of harmful pollution to which they unwittingly expose themselves, their families and the environment, while still enjoying the warmth and pleasure of a fire.

The government's Clean Air Strategy – welcomed by the World Health Organization who said it was “appreciating actions taken by the United Kingdom government to protect its citizens from this silent killer” – also set out proposals to tackle air pollution from a range of other sources

including:

- Publishing new guidance for farmers, advisors and contractors to help them reduce ammonia emissions and invest in infrastructure and equipment
- Working with international partners to research and develop new standards for tyres and brakes to enable us to address toxic non-exhaust emissions of micro plastics from vehicles which can pollute air and water. A call for evidence was launched last month.

This is in addition to our £3.5 billion plan to reduce nitrogen oxide emissions from road transport.

Many consumers are unaware of the impact on their health or the environment from burning solid fuels, or indeed which fuels are the cleanest to buy. Our recent research suggests that over half of people surveyed did not consider that the burning of solid fuels and wood in their home might have an impact on their health or the environment.

The government recognises households have installed wood-burning stoves and is not seeking to prevent their use, or installation, or considering banning domestic burning, but it is keen to encourage people to switch to cleaner fuels.

A simple way to identify clean, quality wood fuel is to look for the Defra supported 'Ready to Burn' logo on fuels. Consumers can also take action by buying the most efficient stove and regularly servicing their appliance. The Burnright website has lots of helpful tips on how to minimise the impact of burning on air quality, as can your local chimney sweep during their regular visit. Householders can also swap their supply of traditional house coal to a cleaner alternative.

The consultation closes on 12 October.

[Form: Materials facility combined waste returns spreadsheet](#)

Use this materials facility (MF) combined waste returns spreadsheet for sites notified as MFs to the Environment Agency under the [Environmental Permitting \(England and Wales\) Regulations 2016, Schedule 9](#).

The spreadsheet includes MF sampling data and waste tonnage data.

Please do not open the spreadsheet directly from this page. Save it to a folder by right-clicking, select 'save as' and then open it from where you saved it.

Submit your return by email to national-operator-returns@environment-agency.gov.uk.

Deadlines for submission are the same as for [waste tonnage returns](#).

If you have any questions about MF regulations, including requests to notify, email MFRegs@environment-agency.gov.uk.

See [guidance on MF sampling](#).

[Open consultation: Air quality: using cleaner fuels for domestic burning](#)

We want to know what you think about our proposals for helping householders move to cleaner fuels for domestic burning. The changes we propose include only allowing the sale of cleaner solid fuels. These proposals apply to England only.

Domestic burning is the single largest source of harmful particulate pollution in the UK. Many people do not realise that there are cleaner alternatives, such as dry wood instead of wet, or low-sulphur smokeless fuel instead of coal.

[Press release: Minister announces '10 Prisons Project' to develop new model of excellence](#)

- A new approach to improve standards and security will be piloted in 10 of the most challenging prisons
- The focus will be on reducing violence through radically increasing security against drugs and challenging all abusive behaviour
- There will be additional investment in leadership and dedicated resources to tackle drugs, security and building issues
- Good practice will be spread across the prison estate – ultimately reducing reoffending and future of victims of crime

The project will focus on challenging violent and disruptive behaviour and includes £10 million funding to fight drugs, improve security and, crucially,

boost leadership capabilities through new training. The 10 will serve as models of excellence for the rest of the estate to follow.

Specifically, these 10 prisons have struggled with acute problems, including high drug use, violence and building issues. While the governors and staff at the prisons – Hull, Humber, Leeds, Lindholme, Moorland, Wealstun, Nottingham, Ranby, Isis and Wormwood Scrubs – have dealt with these challenges, this project will provide them with the resources and support to make decisive, lasting progress. It will be up and running in all 10 prisons by the end of the year – and tangible results will be expected within the following 12 months.

Under the programme, governors at each prison will be provided with new scanners capable of detecting packages inside bodies, and sniffer dogs trained to detect new psychoactive substances. Further investment will go into repairing basic infrastructure such as broken windows.

Management will train and support staff to set the highest expectations for prisoners and challenge disruptive and violent behaviour fairly, consistently and firmly to restore order and control. This investment is in addition to the £30 million package announced by the Justice Secretary, David Gauke, in July. That included £16 million to tackle acute maintenance needs in the estate, plus £7 million for safety and security measures and the same amount again for securely monitored in-cell telephones.

The new £10 million package of investment will:

- Curb the flow of drugs and phones into prisons – £6 million has been designated to tackle drug supply by enhancing physical security at the jails; with investment in drug-detection dogs, body scanners, and improved perimeter defences.
- Improve safety and decency – there will be a focus on standardising residential areas inside the prisons. £3 million will support this through targeted improvements to the fabric of each establishment, ensuring that living conditions meet new standards of decency and cleanliness that are to be drawn up as part of the plan.
- Develop new standards of leadership – £1 million will fund bespoke training programmes and interventions to give governors the support they need to drive improvement at their prisons. They will have the opportunity to call on former officers and governors who will share best practice from their years of experience. A staff college model, inspired by the military, will be developed for Governors. More junior uniformed staff will be given the support and confidence to challenge disruptive behaviour.

Geographical clusters of prisons in Yorkshire, the north Midlands and London have been selected for the project, to ensure a targeted approach to tackling the supply of drugs from organised crime in those areas.

These measures are part of a much wider strategy to tackle the most pressing threats to security in prisons. At the heart of this is a £100 million investment in the frontline which has seen more than 3,500 additional prison

officers recruited so far, with the majority already on the landings.

Prisons Minister Rory Stewart said:

With more than 20,000 prison officers, 84,000 prisoners, and over 100 prisons, it is vital we set challenging standards so prisons are places where offenders can turn their lives around.

With the right leadership on the ground, and support from the centre, these 10 prisons will pave the way for a new approach, a new ethos and a new direction. We need to make these prisons calmer, more orderly places and in the end that comes down to challenging and managing prisoners consistently, firmly and fairly. And we will put our support and training behind our prison officers to make that happen.

“No-one can hope to change an entire system overnight. But through these vital improvements to 10 prisons, we can set a course for the rest of the estate to follow – leading us to a system that truly rehabilitates, cuts reoffending and ultimately keeps the public safer.

Notes to editors

- The £30 million package announced in July included an overall £7 million investment in safety and security. This will fund a range of new security measures, including airport-security style scanners, improved searching techniques and phone-blocking technology, along with a new digital tool will enable prisons to build a more detailed picture of the kind of risk an offender is likely to present – including the likelihood of involvement in organised crime.
 - It included £16 million to improve the fabric of prisons, targeting establishments with the most pressing maintenance issues and ensuring that they are brought back up to acceptable standards. This is on top of the existing maintenance budget.
 - Also £7 million on in-cell telephones for more prisons. Currently most prisoners queue for public phones on the landings, which can be the trigger for violence or fuel demand for illicit mobile phones. Some of our modern prisons have in-cell phones with strict security measures, meaning calls to family can take place in private. Prisoners will continue to pay to make these calls.
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Press release: New UK help to protect millions at risk from deadly airstrikes in North West Syria

The UK government will help protect and assist civilians in North West Syria amid warnings that more than 2.9 million people in Idlib and surrounding areas are at risk of deadly attacks by the Asad regime and its backers.

The support announced today (Friday 17 August) by Minister for the Middle East Alistair Burt will provide emergency assistance and vital medical support for people sheltering in Idlib. This includes support for four health centres and two mobile health teams, which will travel around the area treating the most vulnerable people.

The Minister also announced that UK aid is backing an innovative new technology which provides civilians with early warnings to save lives in communities bombarded by airstrikes. The technology, which has been developed by civilian technology company Hala Systems, works by detecting aircraft using remote sensors and machine-learning algorithms, before sending early warnings to civilians through air raid sirens and social media alerts. Thanks to UK support, it has already warned more than 2 million people and is estimated to have reduced casualties by up to 27% in areas under heavy bombardment.

The Minister added that the UK is supporting the UN and other partners on an emergency response plan ahead of an anticipated escalation in the conflict.

Speaking today, Minister for the Middle East Alistair Burt said:

The UK is extremely concerned about escalating military action by Asad and his backers on almost 3 million civilians who have sought shelter in Idlib and surrounding areas. These are people who have suffered through more than 7 years of fighting; many have already been displaced multiple times.

Today's UK aid package will make sure the most vulnerable can get the medical treatment, food, water and support they so desperately need. But this is not enough. That's why we're also funding an innovative early warning system that is proven to reduce civilian casualties from airstrikes.

A humanitarian catastrophe in Idlib is avoidable. The UK supports the urgent diplomatic efforts being made by Turkey and the UN. We call on the Syrian regime and its backers, Russia and Iran, to uphold the ceasefire they have agreed, and to respect international humanitarian law. They should also be clear: we will respond

appropriately if the Asad regime repeats its appalling use of chemical weapons.

The North West of Syria has become a refuge for around 1.9 million displaced people that have fled fighting throughout the country, bringing the region's total population to around 4 million, 2.9 million of whom are living in Idlib and surrounding areas.

There have already been at least 37 attacks on health facilities in the Idlib region so far this year and civilians, aid workers and medical staff fear for their safety.

The influx of civilians has stretched scarce resources in the region and tens of thousands are living in tents in crowded camps, with demand for humanitarian assistance being greater than ever before.

Today's UK aid package will also:

- support four health centres and two mobile health clinics in Idlib by providing doctors, nurses, midwives, medicine and medical equipment to treat people fleeing fighting;
- provide psychological support to protect women and children suffering from trauma, distress and other mental health conditions;
- provide 3200 dignity kits for women and 5000 kits for children in Idlib;
- provide support staff to ensure the most vulnerable people can access essential services and are legally protected, including by helping them access civil documents such as birth and marriage certificates; and
- provide one-off cash transfers to the most vulnerable families fleeing into Idlib so that they can essentials such as food, water and fuel for heat.

The brutal Syrian civil war, now in its eighth year, has already cost an estimated 400,000 lives, with over 11 million people displaced by conflict and causing a severe shortage of food, clean water and healthcare.

Britain has been at the forefront of the response to the Syria crisis and already we have delivered 27 million monthly food rations, 10 million relief packages, 10 million vaccines against deadly diseases and 12 million medical consultations for those in need in Syria.

- Today's package of UK aid support for North West Syria is part of a wider £10 million new allocation for the UK's response to the Syria crisis. For security reasons, we cannot name all of our partners delivering aid in Syria.
- Through the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund, alongside our international partners, the UK has supported Hala Systems, a social enterprise focused on developing innovative technical solutions aimed at helping protect civilian communities caught in conflict, including in Syria.

- The UK is a leading donor in the humanitarian response. To date we have committed over £2.71 billion in humanitarian funding to the region.
- For more information on the UK's humanitarian response to the Syria crisis, visit:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/factsheet-the-uks-humanitarian-aid-response-to-the-syria-crisis>
- Alistair Burt is a Minister of State at both the Department for International Development (DFID) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO).