

Press release: New hurricane preparedness plans for British Overseas Territories in Caribbean

The Government has today (Wednesday 4 July) announced new measures to make sure British Overseas Territories in the Caribbean have the support they need in the event of a repeat of the devastating hurricanes which hit the region last year.

Government departments have been putting plans in place to bring together humanitarian, military support and diplomatic work under a joint unit coordinated by the Foreign Office.

These include:

- Royal Fleet Auxilliary (RFA) Mounts Bay, a Navy ship deployed to the region since 2017, will remain in the vicinity of the Caribbean throughout the hurricane season this year and also for 2019.
- Experts have been deployed to the region to lead negotiations on a number of commercial contracts, in advance of peak hurricane season, to deliver essential recovery needs.
- Military reconnaissance and analysis in the Overseas Territories, building links and familiarity with local and regional disaster management personnel, and conducting professional analysis of selected critical infrastructure.
- Plans for a multi-national coordination cell in the Caribbean to coordinate partner countries and organisations to make sure efforts aren't being duplicated across the region and to make immediate responses more efficient. The UK has coordinated meetings between representatives from the USA, Canada and the Netherlands and the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) to ensure a joined up approach to hurricane preparedness.
- Emergency humanitarian supplies in the form of over 1000 collapsible jerry cans, 1000 hygiene kits and up to 1000 shelter kits have been pre-loaded onto RFA Mounts Bay, which will remain in the region for the hurricane season and be on hand to provide life-saving emergency assistance as required.
- DFID has also fielded a preparedness mission to the region from 5 – 17 June to coordinate UK preparations with both national and regional institutions.
- DFID has well established programmes in the poorer Commonwealth countries of the Caribbean and, in addition to humanitarian assistance, is supporting reconstruction efforts in the hurricane-affected islands of Dominica and Antigua and Barbuda.
- The UK has also helped ensure all islands affected by the hurricanes last year are now insured under the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Fund (CCRIF). DFID helped establish the CCRIF which provided over \$50m of quick payouts to hurricane affected Caribbean countries and

territories in 2017. This year, the UK has supported BVI and Montserrat to join as new members. This means that all of the islands affected last year are now covered.

Foreign Office Minister for the Overseas Territories Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon said:

Last year's hurricanes hit Caribbean British Overseas Territories and the wider region with devastating effect, uprooting lives and damaging local economies. The UK has provided critical support and help with recovery efforts and I have seen for myself the huge impact that this has had already. The UK continues to work closely with the governments of the Overseas Territories in their recovery efforts and in helping to rebuild their economies.

Moreover, we have also been working hard with key partners across the region to ensure an even more effective and strategic response in the event we see a repeat of last year's hurricane season.

International Development Minister, Lord Bates said:

The scale of last year's hurricanes was unprecedented and the UK aid mission was huge, covering small islands stretching more than 1,000 miles apart, where buildings and roads had been destroyed.

Britain continues to stand by those people whose lives were devastated. Not only have we been working with the islands' governments to make sure they are more resilient to natural disasters but we are also well prepared to respond and provide humanitarian relief if a hurricane hits again.

Minister for Armed Forces Mark Lancaster said:

Our Armed Forces are committed to supporting our Overseas Territories, and we have worked alongside our colleagues across Government to ensure we are fully prepared in the event of a natural disaster or other crisis. RFA Mounts Bay, which played a vital role during the 2017 hurricane crisis, remains ready in the Caribbean and will be supported by specialist forces from the UK if required.

£72m was immediately committed in September to help the Overseas Territories Anguilla, BVI and the Turks and Caicos Islands. In November, the Prime Minister committed a further £70m for reconstruction efforts and £300m of UK loan guarantees.

Foreign Office Minister for the Overseas Territories Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon

visited Anguilla, the Cayman Islands and Montserrat as part of a regional tour to discuss hurricane preparedness in May and will visit the region again later this month.

Hurricane preparedness was one of the key topics of discussion at the Joint Ministerial Council with the Overseas Territories in June.

Notes to editors:

A written ministerial statement on hurricane preparedness can be found [here](#).

Further information

[Open consultation: Fisheries white paper: sustainable fisheries for future generations](#)

Leaving the European Union provides an opportunity move away from the Common Fisheries Policy, to create a sustainable, responsible and responsive policies. We want to know your thoughts on the future of fisheries.

Some of the proposals outlined in this paper will apply to the whole of the UK, while some apply to England only.

[News story: Leeds confirmed as site of HS2 eastern leg rolling stock depot](#)

- Transport Secretary confirms depot to maintain and service high speed trains will be constructed east of Leeds after a public consultation
- Leeds Council, the University of Leeds, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and Leeds City Enterprise Partnership all welcome news of the depot
- HS2 will see Yorkshire become a thriving hub for training future engineers

The government has [confirmed that the new HS2 rolling stock depot will be constructed in Leeds](#), driving forward local regeneration and creating up to 125 skilled jobs, ensuring Yorkshire benefits from the arrival of HS2.

With a crucial role in enabling 24-hour maintenance of the brand new high-speed trains, set to deliver faster journeys for passengers on the East Coast mainline, the depot will act as a catalyst for prosperity and productivity on the enterprise zone site and will attract new investment for the region.

The new site builds upon HS2's commitment to create more than 100,000 new jobs and 2,000 apprentices, with the National Colleges for High Speed Rail in Doncaster and Birmingham able to train 1,200 students a year at full capacity. In addition, the University of Leeds' new Institute for High Speed Rail and System Integration will train postgraduate engineers through MSc and PhD places, helping to provide a flow of skilled experts into the industry.

Chris Grayling, Transport Secretary, said:

Constructing this vital depot in Leeds underlines how the benefits of HS2 drive prosperity right across the UK, with Yorkshire playing a crucial role in maintaining the new high speed trains and delivering significantly better journeys for passengers.

The depot will act as an economic catalyst, creating skilled jobs, boosting the local economy by unlocking regeneration opportunities and driving continued investment.

This ensures Leeds will not only see immediate benefits when HS2 arrives but will see Yorkshire become a thriving hub for training the engineers that HS2 and future major projects will need.

The arrival of HS2 in Leeds will also be vital to the success of the South Bank redevelopment, one of the largest proposed regeneration projects in Europe, which could provide 12,000 new homes and support up to 40,000 jobs across the city region.

Professor Lisa Roberts, Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research and Innovation at the University of Leeds said:

The location of the HS2 rolling stock depot, combined with the new advanced testing facilities to be built as part of the University's Institute for High Speed Rail and System Integration are a significant step forward for UK high speed rail capability.

They position Leeds city region as a global centre for high speed rail research and development, so we're working closely with HS2 to ensure our facilities are aligned with its needs and those of industry, so all sides can deliver for the country.

The chosen location for the depot reflects proposals put forward during [a public consultation on the site](#), and will help ensure HS2 has fewer environmental impacts in the region by reducing the distance empty trains travel to and from Leeds station for overnight stabling.

Confirming the depot site in the Aire Valley also reduces the impact of HS2 on the village of Crofton, where the depot site was previously proposed.

Councillor Judith Blake, Leader of Leeds City Council, said;

I welcome the news that the HS2 depot will be located at Gateway 45 in Leeds.

It's now important that through our continued work with HS2 and the Department for Transport that we finalise the proposals for the University of Leeds' Institute for High Speed Rail, which will be world leading in its field, and underpin the continued success of the Leeds City Region Enterprise Zone.

Taken together, both of these facilities located at Gateway 45 will make Leeds and the region a global centre for advanced rail and high speed technology, further strengthening the economy.

Leeds City Council are already working with our partners across Leeds city region to ensure that people will have the right skills and be ready to take advantage of the skilled jobs and other opportunities these developments will bring.

[News story: Major health benefits from strengthening and balance activity](#)

An [evidence review commissioned by Public Health England and the Centre for Ageing Better](#) has found that muscle and bone strengthening and balance activities continue to have great health benefits for all adults, including older adults aged 65 years and over.

In older adults, poor muscle strength increases the risk of a fall by 76% and those who have already had a fall are three times more likely to fall again. Strengthening and balance activities not only help to prevent this, but also help improve your mood, sleeping patterns, increase your energy levels and reduce the risk of an early death.

Activities found to have the most benefit for muscle and bone strengthening include:

- ball games
- racket sports
- dance
- Nordic walking
- resistance training (usually training with weights, but including body

weight exercises which can be performed anywhere)

The review underlines the importance of the UK CMO's guidance that all adults need to undertake strengthening and balance activities suitable for them at least twice per week in order to maintain and improve health.

For those at risk of falls or fracture, supervised structured exercise is also recommended at a pace that suits the individual to help maintain independence and support healthy ageing.

Dr Alison Tedstone, Head of Diet, Obesity and Physical Activity at PHE, said:

Alongside aerobic exercise such as brisk walking, all adults should be aiming to do strengthening and balancing activities twice per week. On average we're all living longer and this mixture of physical activities will help us stay well in our youth and remain independent as we age.

It can also help ease those difficult or life-changing moments like pregnancy, menopause, onset of or diagnosis of disease, retirement and recovery from hospitalisation.

Jess Kuehne, Senior Engagement Manager, Centre for Ageing Better added:

It's clear that we need to give equal weighting to activities that boost muscle and bone strength and improve balance rather than simply focusing on aerobic exercise.

There is significant potential to make savings to health and social care services if we do more to promote muscle strengthening and balance activities and recognise their role in helping to keep people healthy and independent for longer, particularly as they age.

Current statistics show that falls are responsible for around 95% of all hip fractures, costing the NHS over £1 billion per year.

For employers and the economy, musculoskeletal health conditions are the second most common cause of sickness absence in the UK, accounting for 30.8 million days lost in work.

By building on aerobic activities such as brisk walking, strengthening and balance activities such as dancing or tennis can help adults to prevent these health problems and enjoy ageing well.

Statement to Parliament: HS2 Phase 2b eastern leg rolling stock depot location announcement

I would like to update the house on plans for the HS2 Phase 2b eastern leg rolling stock depot. I am today (4 July 2018) confirming the depot should be located at a site in the Aire Valley, adjacent to the M1, to the east of Leeds. This decision is laid out in today's publication of the [HS2 Phase 2b eastern leg rolling stock depot consultation response](#).

It was originally proposed that the depot be sited near Crofton, east of Wakefield. Due to operational and community concerns after the M18 / eastern route decision was announced, I asked HS2 Ltd to review alternative options for the depot site. The east of Leeds site was identified and [a consultation seeking views on this proposed location](#) was launched on 17 July 2017 and ran until 12 October 2017. The consultation revealed broad support for the new location.

This decision has been made with local development plans on the wider site in mind. HS2 Ltd will continue to work with stakeholders to support local regeneration proposals on the wider site.