

## [Press release: Minister for Asia visits Maldives to discuss future cooperation](#)

Foreign & Commonwealth Minister for Asia and The Pacific Mark Field makes his first official visit to Maldives today (7 October).

During his trip to Malé, he will meet with President-Elect Ibrahim Mohamed Solih to congratulate him on his victory in last month's elections, and discuss ways in which we can work together in support of shared values and interests.

He will also hold talks with Foreign Minister Mohamed Asim and politicians from across the political spectrum.

The Minister will also meet with leading Maldivian lawyers and hear from civil society representatives how the UK has supported efforts to enhance democracy and human rights in Maldives.

Commenting on his visit, Minister Field said:

I am delighted to be making my first visit to Maldives, especially at such an important moment in the country's history.

I am looking forward to discussing with a range of Maldivians, including President-Elect Solih, how the UK can support Maldives on its journey to consolidate and strengthen its democracy.

### **Further information**

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## [Press release: FCO statement on denial of Hong Kong visa for FT reporter](#)

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## [Government response: Clinical waste operator breaches environmental permits](#)

Healthcare Environmental Services, which services the NHS and operates six sites across England, has been found in breach of environmental permits by the Environment Agency (EA) .

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) is leading on the government response whilst the EA is taking enforcement action against the operator.

An Environment Agency spokesperson said:

The Environment Agency has found Healthcare Environmental Services to be in breach of its environmental permits at sites which deal with clinical waste. We are taking enforcement action against the operator, which includes clearance of the excess waste, and have launched a criminal investigation.

We are supporting the Government and the NHS to ensure there is no disruption to public services and for alternative plans to be put in place for hospitals affected to dispose of their waste safely.

### **Further briefing:**

- The Environment Agency has found Healthcare Environmental Services in breach of its environmental permits at 4 of its 6 sites which deal with clinical waste – by having more waste on site than their permit allows and storing waste inappropriately.
- We are taking enforcement action against the operator to clear the excess waste from their sites and bring the company back into compliance with their permits.
- As part of our enforcement activity, we have partially suspended the company's permit at one of their sites. This will prevent them from accepting any more incinerator-only waste in order for them to clear the

backlog of waste on-site. We are also progressing with enforcement action at the other non-compliant sites.

- We are supporting the government and the NHS to ensure there is no disruption to public services and alternative plans are put in place for hospitals affected to dispose of their waste safely.
- The offending sites are not accessible to the general public and there is no risk to public health or the environment.
- It is the company's responsibility to clear its sites and operate legally. As the regulator, we have set out a timeline for clearance of the waste and are carrying out regular inspections at each of the company's sites to monitor the situation.
- There is industry wide agreement that overall there is sufficient incineration capacity. Incinerator shutdowns do occur for maintenance, but this is mostly planned and companies should have contingency plans in place. We have recently carried out an audit of permitted sites dealing with clinical waste which indicate a high level of compliance in this sector – the majority of sites are operating at the expected level or above.
- The Environment Agency has taken a range of action with the company to bring their sites back into compliance but they have repeatedly breached permits and continued to operate unlawfully. As a result, in addition to our enforcement activity to clear the sites, the EA has launched a criminal investigation.

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## **Government response: Clinical waste operator breaches environmental permits**

Clinical waste operator breaches environmental permits – GOV.UK

Environment Agency responds to permit breach



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