

Press release: UK leads the charge in eradicating scourge of modern slavery

- UK to protect up to 800,000 people in fragile and conflict-affected parts of Africa by providing families with alternative livelihood opportunities and protecting children from exploitation.
- Support for Prime Minister's Call to Action from international community underlined by endorsement from 77 states, increasing from 37 this time last year.
- UK, US, Canada, New Zealand and Australia commit to eradicating modern slavery from global supply chains.

The UK will continue to lead the fight against modern slavery at the UN General Assembly (UNGA), galvanising international action to stamp out this vicious scourge and launching a range of projects to tackle child slavery across Africa and Asia.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt will today [Monday 24 September] announce new protections for vulnerable children at risk of falling prey to traffickers. A UK backed project with UNICEF will provide up to 400,000 girls and boys in Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan at risk of slavery with birth registration documents and other measures to shelter them from forced labour and underage marriage.

The UK will commit extra support, taking the UK spend to over £200 million, to help create jobs, strengthen law enforcement and improve recruitment practices so people do not become victims. It will also provide vital protections for those who do. UK aid is working to wipe out slavery, which costs the UK's economy an estimated £4.3 billion a year, and prevent onward trafficking to the UK's shores.

Speaking ahead of the meeting in New York, Ms Mordaunt said:

"From the clothes we wear to the food we eat, the insidious virus of modern slavery is infiltrating all aspects of our daily life without us even realising. Not only does it have a huge cost to the global and the UK's economy, it is a shameful stain on our global conscience that must be eradicated for good.

"No one nation can banish this borderless crime alone. The international community must collaborate to dismantle predatory trafficking networks, support victims, strengthen justice systems and create sustainable alternative livelihoods."

The UK alongside the US, Canada, New Zealand and Australia will build on the success of the Prime Minister's Global Call to Action, with four new principles for governments across the globe, designed to tackle modern slavery in global supply chains. As a collective the UK along with the other

countries recognise the leveraging potential of their combined purchasing power – totaling more than \$600bn – to significantly prevent forced labour in public and private sector supply chains, a crime which entraps an estimated 25 million people worldwide.

Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability Victoria Atkins, added:

“Denying people their freedom and basic human rights through modern slavery is a global tragedy. We as governments, businesses and citizens must do all we can to stop it.

“The UK and our partners are going further, showing leadership and setting out these new principles designed to drive out slavery from the supply chains which we will all benefit from.”

The UK’s leading stance sends a strong message that those doing business with the UK are required to act responsibly. With more than 60 per cent of forced labour victims in the private economy, Ms Mordaunt will also insist businesses step up efforts to eradicate the scourge of slavery from their supply chains. By galvanising their support, the UK hopes to enhance transparency and drive out modern slavery from the global economy.

In the year since the Prime Minister Theresa May launched the global Call to Action, 77 states have now endorsed it. This has increased from the 37 who joined last year. Today Ms Mordaunt will rally remaining members to do the right thing and join the global fight to eradicate these crimes which entrap over 40 million victims worldwide.

As children make up a quarter of modern slavery victims our additional support will:

- Equip up to 400,000 vulnerable people in conflict ravaged parts of Africa with skills training and alternative livelihood opportunities. Our support will improve law enforcement and assist conflict-affected families in countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo.
- Tackle the worst forms of child labour through a major new programme across six countries in Asia. Working in partnership with UNICEF, the International Labour Organisation and the Institute of Development Studies, UK support will reduce the vulnerability of children to forced labour in hazardous industries such as agriculture and clamp down on the trafficking of children into commercial sex work. Interventions that tackle the drivers of child labour will be rolled out including cash transfer support for families affected.
- Educate children against the perils of trafficking, assist social workers and help reintegrate victims back into society along dangerous trafficking and migratory routes in east Africa. As well as support to Africa and Asia to tackle trafficking at source, we are continuing to shine a spotlight on this crime domestically:
- We are doing more than ever to catch and convict offenders. The UK is transforming the law enforcement and criminal justice response to these crimes, resulting in almost 900 active police investigations in 2018 compared

to 188 in 2016.

- The UK is significantly increasing support for identified victims, particularly children and is rolling out Independent Child Trafficking Advocates across the UK to help them to rebuild their lives.
- Thanks to our world leading legislation, thousands of businesses have published modern slavery statements and companies have changed practices that were driving demand for modern slavery.
- In July, the UK Government announced an independent review of its landmark Modern Slavery Act to ensure our world-first legislation keeps in step with this evolving crime.

Notes to Editors:

- A year ago, the Prime Minister launched a global Call to Action to eliminate the borderless scourge of forced labour, modern slavery and human trafficking, while doubling the UK's aid spending on modern slavery to £150 million. Just one year on, 77 states have endorsed this Call to Action and the UK has gone above and beyond its original commitment, increasing UK aid support by over a third to £200m, to tackle the root causes of slavery in key source and transit countries across Africa and Asia.
- The economic and social costs of modern slavery report estimates that it costs the UK up to £4.3 billion a year. Each instance of the crime is estimated to cost around £330,000, including the cost of support, lost earnings and law enforcement but most significantly the physical and emotional harms suffered by individuals, who are often exploited over months and sometimes years.
- The Prime Minister emphasised on her recent Africa visit, the UK will work in partnership with the Nigerian government to tackle slavery in key trafficking hotspots. With Nigeria as the fifth largest source country for trafficking into the UK, our support will prevent exploitation in the region and combat slavery here at home.
- As part of its spending increase, the UK will launch several programmes to tackle child slavery across Africa and Asia. This includes:
 - o £10 million UK aid package to protect up to 400,000 boys and girls at risk of slavery in the Horn of Africa and along dangerous migratory routes in Sudan and Ethiopia. Partnering with UNICEF, UK support will provide birth registration services so children can legally prove their identity and be sheltered from forced labour, military service and underage marriage. Our support will also educate children against the perils of trafficking, assist social workers and help reintegrate victims back into society.
 - o £12 million package to equip up to 400,000 vulnerable people in conflict ravaged parts of Africa with skills training and alternative livelihood opportunities. Our support will educate children on the disguised risks of trafficking, improve law enforcement and support conflict-affected families in countries such as the DRC.

o £26 million aid package to tackle the worst forms of child labour through a major new programme across six Asian countries. Working in partnership with UNICEF, the International Labour Organisation and the IDS, UK support will reduce the vulnerability of children to bonded labour in hazardous industries like agriculture and clamp down on children being trafficked into commercial sex work. Evidence-based interventions that tackle the drivers of child labour will be rolled out, such as social protection and cash transfer support for families affected.

- £5 million programme to scale up our work with the Government of Bangladesh to eliminate the worst forms of child labour in the country. Our support will help build an evidence base of what works and pilot innovative approaches to protect the most vulnerable, initially focusing on tea estates, domestic work and hazardous industrial work in Sylhet.

- The United Kingdom and the United States of America along with Canada, New Zealand and Australia will today announce they have agreed four new international principles which will provide a practical framework for governments to tackle human trafficking and modern slavery in global supply chains. This group of five countries will meet annually to coordinate their efforts.

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[Notice: The National Trust 28006 & 29459: application made to abstract water and impound water](#)

The Environment Agency consult the public on certain applications for the abstraction and impoundment of water.

These notices explain:

- what the application is about
- which Environment Agency offices you can visit to see the application documents on the public register
- when you need to comment by

Speech: We may be losing the fight against famine in Yemen

Thank you very much indeed Madam President and thank you to you for scheduling this important briefing today.

Thank you to the Under-Secretary-General, and to pick up one of your points, Mark thank you very much for everything your work has to do on the ground but also all the other UN agencies. I was very struck by what you said about how large scale the relief effort is and also how it's Yemenis helping Yemenis and I think that's important. It was a very sobering briefing, coming on top of sobering briefings that we've had before. I was very struck by your phrases about lives on the line and how close we are to famine and that we may even be losing the fight. This is obviously extremely serious news. This is grave distress inflicted on the people of Yemen. We are following the escalation military fighting around Hodeidah city very closely.

I wanted to pick up on your statement and just highlight four areas. I think the first is to reiterate again, I think everybody on the Council has done this but it bears repeating: all parties to the conflict must do everything possible to protect civilians, protect civilian infrastructure and to demonstrate in practical terms their commitment to upholding International Humanitarian Law. I was extremely concerned to hear about the armed groups in the humanitarian facilities. I think the Council should demand that they leave. These facilities need to be kept for the protection of civilians. All parties have responsibilities under International Humanitarian Law and the Council looks to them to discharge those responsibilities to the full.

I think the second point is obviously around the flow of food, fuel and medical supplies into and throughout Yemen. It's critical that all parties facilitate this, that they work with OCHA and your partners on the ground. It's also important that civilians can move freely and safely so that those who can travel can get out of harm's way as necessary. We have been deeply concerned by reports that military action is making the Hodeidah-Hajjah road unsafe. This will hamper the flow of supplies on from Hodeidah to Northern Yemen. It's vital but onward supply routes remain operational. And I just want to echo what you said, this can't just be done through humanitarian assistance. We absolutely need the commercial route and the commercial supplies to be open and flowing. So this means that the Hodeidah and Saleef ports need to remain open and it means the mills and the storage facilities need to be protected so that the food supply is safe.

I wanted to echo what Mark said about urgent action on stabilizing the economy. Nearly since the end of July, the Yemeni Rial has depreciated over 20 percent. This has halved the buying power of the people for food and other staples – half in comparison with a year ago – so this is obviously

increasing the vulnerability of families even to meet the basic needs and humanitarian aid as we heard is over-stretched and even that isn't enough because there are 29 million Yemenis liable to need our help. So we need to collectively think further about how best the Council can help stabilise the humanitarian situation by helping stabilise the economic situation or by dealing with the relevant UN and other agencies and countries who can help in order to do that. But I think I would like to call on all sides to cooperate even more intensely with OCHA and the UN agencies on the ground to try and help steady this.

And I wanted to end where Mark ended, on the political situation. I won't rehearse the reasons why the Geneva talks the Special Envoy Martin Griffiths who is now trying to reconvene political talks. I'm sure that our ministers who are here next week for the UN General Assembly High Level Week will want to have a lot of conversations about Yemen in the margins of High Level Week and I think that will be important. But let me end by calling on all sides once again to get behind the process that the Special Envoy is leading and urge them all to find the flexibility it will require for the sake of the Yemeni people.

Thank you Madam President.

Press release: Record £15.6 million underpayment identified for workers on the minimum wage

- Record £15.6 million of underpayment identified for more than 200,000 workers
- Employers fined unprecedented £14 million for not meeting legal obligations
- More than 600 employers named in 2017/18 as part of 'naming' rounds
- Ramped up efforts by HMRC to crackdown on underpayment and boost compliance

Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) achieved record enforcement results this year, identifying £15.6million of underpayments.

The number of workers identified as underpaid was double that in 2016/17 and the highest number since the National Minimum Wage came into force.

In every case, the government instructs employers to repay their workers and enforces the return of the missing cash.

The rise in cases follows increased efforts by HMRC to promote compliance and improve employer awareness of the minimum wage.

Business Minister Kelly Tolhurst, said:

We are dedicated to stopping underpayment of the minimum wage. Employers must recognise their responsibilities and pay their workers the money they are entitled to.

The UK's lowest paid workers have had the fastest wage growth in 20 years thanks to the National Living Wage and today's figures serve as a reminder to all employers to check they are getting their workers' pay right.

Over the past year, 56 employers took advantage of a HMRC pilot scheme where employers were encouraged to come forward outside of an investigation. This resulted in nearly £250,000 in arrears being declared for just under 700 workers.

The year also set a new record for penalties issued by the government, with £14 million in fines issued to employers.

More than 600 employers who were found to have underpaid their workers the minimum wage were named in 2017/18. This is the largest number in any single year since the scheme began in 2014.

This year, the social care, retail, commercial warehousing and gig economy sectors have been prioritised by HMRC for enforcement of the minimum wage. This is alongside employment agencies, apprentices and migrant workers. These sectors are where non-compliance with National Minimum Wage is believed to be more widespread.

Penny Ciniewicz, HMRC Director General of Customer Compliance, said:

HMRC is committed to ensuring that workers receive the wages they are legally entitled to, irrespective of their employer's size or business sector, and today's figures highlight our success over the last year.

If anyone thinks they are not receiving at least the minimum wage, they can contact the Acas helpline on 0300 123 1100 in confidence or submit a query online through our complaints form.

Low Pay Commission Chairman Bryan Sanderson said:

All workers are entitled to be paid at least the minimum wage, so it is good to see increased focus on enforcement bearing fruit and securing more arrears for more workers.

Awareness of the minimum wage is vital for workers and employers alike, and strong enforcement is critical to its success.

Funding for minimum wage enforcement has reached record levels, rising to £26.3 million in 2018/19 from £20 million in 2016/17.

For more information about your pay, or if you think you might be being underpaid, get advice and guidance at www.gov.uk/checkyourpay. Workers can also seek advice from workplace experts [Acas](#).

1. The report can be found here: [National Living Wage and National Minimum Wage: government evidence on compliance and enforcement, 2018](#).

2. Details of the 2017/18 businesses named in the government's naming scheme can be found here:

3. Employers who pay workers less than the minimum wage have to pay back arrears of wages to the worker at current minimum wage rates and face financial penalties of up to 200% of arrears, capped at £20,000 per worker.

4. National Living and Minimum Wage rates:

Date	25 and over	21 to 24	18 to 20	Under 18	Apprentice
April 2018	£7.83	£7.38	£5.90	£4.20	£3.70

[Press release: £500,000 awarded to organisations helping to tackle causes of the gender pay gap](#)

Five organisations in England have been awarded £489,050 from a new government start-up fund to help people who have taken lengthy career breaks to care for others get back into work, the Minister for Women Victoria Atkins announced today (22 September).

In the UK, nine out of ten potential returners are women. Studies have shown that time out of work and fewer years of full-time work are two of the reasons women struggle to progress at work – contributing towards the gender pay gap.

The five grant recipients from a £1.5 million government start-up fund will support parents and carers back into the workplace through training, refreshing skills and facilitating work placements.

They will also work directly with 79 employers from a range of sectors including law, finance, tech, retail, communications, advertising and marketing.

Minister for Women Victoria Atkins said:

For too long, taking time out of work to care for others has cut short careers and brilliant, talented women are unable to re-enter industries which will not support them to return. This is a huge loss not only to those individuals, but to our economy and businesses all over the country.

We are investing in returners to work – giving them the opportunity to refresh and grow their skills and encouraging employers to change their outdated recruitment processes. By taking action on this issue we can grow the economy and achieve true equality in our workplaces.

McKinsey research found that if women stay in the labour market, work in more productive sectors and work longer hours, there is the potential for £150 billion to be added to the annual GDP in 2025.

This pilot funding will demonstrate to companies that government means business – and inspire them to take their own steps to encourage returners with a vast array of skills back into the jobs market.

The support will help people with caring responsibilities from across the country to return to work – boosting the economy and helping to tackle the gender pay gap.

Launched on 4 March 2018, the government guaranteed £1.5 million to get people with caring responsibilities back into work. £1,010,950 more funding will be awarded this autumn.

Notes to editors:

Winning organisations:

Changing Lives: £95,000

Changing Lives is a national charity that provides specialist support to vulnerable people and families. With our grant they will help 80 returners in the North East who have complex needs such as: homelessness, sexual exploitation, addictions, mental and physical health problems, long-term unemployment and poverty.

Women Returners: £110,000

Women Returners is a social consultancy supporting returners. They are the established experts in this area, have supported over 50 employers to develop their own returner programmes and developed our Best Practice guidance.

Our grant will allow them to support 100 returners through workshops and training in the legal sector in the North West and Leeds. They will also reform the recruitment and support practices of 12 law firms to enable them to target returners in the future.

St Helens Chamber: £187,000

St Helen's Chamber is a chamber of commerce that places emphasis in the role the private sector can play in supporting the broader community, particularly in an area of high unemployment.

Our grant will support them to engage 120 returners through career coaching using a pop-up classroom. They will equally engage employers in the local area to identify suitable job opportunities and broker recruitment.

Creative Equals: £65,000

Creative Equals is an organisation supporting returners in the creative sector. Our grant will allow them to run workshops for 30 returners and support them into roles with 15 employers that will have their recruitment and support practices reformed.

Back2businessship delivered by f1 Recruitment: £32,000

Back2businessship has a track record of getting returners back to work in the marketing, PR and communications sectors. This includes career changers, parents, carers, returners and flexible workers. With our grant and match-funding from our Employer Company Ambassadors, back2businessship will work with 25 employers in the Thames Valley, including SMEs, to target job opportunities for 40 returners in the technology, FinTech and financial services sector.

Quotes from winners

Stephen Bell, OBE, Changing Lives CEO, said:

We are delighted to have been successful in securing funding from the Returner's Fund. Here at Changing Lives we are dedicated to supporting those with multiple and complex needs to overcome the barriers they face. This fund will allow us to develop our Employment Services to empower women to move back into employment and fulfil their potential.

Ali Hannan, Creative Equals Founder and CEO, said:

We are so honoured to receive this fund, which will mean we can build more bridges back to work for creative women. It will mean we can scale up our returnship programme to accelerate the number of senior women, as currently only about 14% of Creative Directors in the UK are women, and just 1-2% are BAME women.

Without women curating, editing and director advertising and media, we believe work often fails to resonate with our powerful audience of female consumers (women make 85% of all purchasing decisions, yet 55% of mothers feel advertisers don't understand them).

At the moment, with out-dated portfolios, a biased recruitment sector, and a CV-gap, returning mothers find it difficult to regain their place on the career ladder.

In partnership with progressive agencies and companies in the sector who are committed to inclusion and diversity, we hope this will rebuild careers, close the sector gender pay gap (up to 45% in some advertising agencies) and reshape the future of advertising to reflect the audiences we serve.

Julianne Miles, Women Returners Managing Director, said:

We are delighted that this government funding will enable us to kick-start a much-needed initiative to enable legal professionals to resume their careers at a suitable level after an extended career break.

Women Returners, in partnership with The Law Society, will pilot Law Returners, a cross-company returnship in Manchester and Leeds in early 2019. The aim is to create a sustainable business-led model to apply across other regions.

Following the rapid growth of returnships in sectors such as financial services, telecoms and construction, we are excited to be extending a concept with proven success into the law sector in Northern England.

Liz Nottingham, founder of Back2businessship and Amanda Fone, co-founder Back2businessship and CEO of Delivery Partner fl recruitment & search ltd, said:

Back2businessship has been committed to helping women get back to their careers in marketing and communications since 2014.

We are thrilled that the funding from the Government Equalities Office (GEO), which will be match-funded by local corporate employers, including Oracle, will help us take our programme for marketing and comms returners to Reading and the M3/M4 corridor with a focus on the technology, FinTech, telecommunications and financial services sectors.

The Back2businessship programme not only re-orientates our returners back to the workplace but helps them find paid contract and permanent work as an outcome. Our hugely popular speed dating event will showcase the calibre and standard of our returners to local businesses.

Tracy Mawson, St Helen's Chamber Deputy Chief Executive, said:

Local businesses tell us that difficulties in recruiting staff is holding back their growth and making them reluctant to create new jobs.

We are delighted that through this project, we will be able to work with returners – in our view a valuable and untapped resource in the local labour market.

We are very excited about the prospect of supporting both businesses and returners to create new job opportunities.

Further information

- A further £1 million of funding will be awarded later in the year.
- The government is committed to building a society where gender has no bearing on a person's pay or opportunity, and is encouraging employers to take targeted actions to close the gaps in their organisations. Greater support for potential returners, combined with increased provision of flexible working and shared parental leave, are part of a range of measures that can eliminate inequality in the workplace.
- Returners are defined as people with existing work experience who have taken an extended career break for caring or other reasons and who are either economically inactive or now working in lower paid, temporary or part-time work or in home businesses or freelance roles.
- Returner Programmes are programmes targeted at people returning to work after a long break (typically 2 years or more). There are many forms of returner programme, including return to practice and retraining programmes.
- For more details, please call the GEO press office on: 0207 023 0600