

# [News story: Cleaner journeys as government commits £11 million to greener buses](#)

Local authorities and bus companies in Bristol, York, Brighton, Surrey, Denbighshire and Wiltshire have been [awarded the funding](#) under the government's 'Low emission bus scheme' to help them buy 153 cleaner buses.

The successful bidders will use the funding to buy new electric and gas buses, and to install stations to fuel or charge them.

The government is determined to clean up air in towns and cities across the country, and today's (28 August 2017) investment in green buses comes after our [air quality plan](#) was published last month.

Transport Minister Paul Maynard said:

Low emission buses are an important part of our plans to make motoring cleaner and improve air quality across the country.

New greener buses will be more comfortable for passengers, they are cost efficient and are good for the environment.

I am pleased to announce this latest group of successful bidders, which should make a real difference to air quality in towns and cities across the country.

The successful bidders are:

- Denbighshire County Council, Wales – £500,000 for 4 electric buses to be used on services in mid-Denbighshire
- City of York Council – £3.3 million for 24 electric buses to be used on park and ride services in York
- South Gloucestershire Council – £4.8 million for 110 gas buses for services around Bristol
- Surrey County Council, Guildford – £1.5 million for 9 electric buses to be used on park and ride services in Guildford
- The Big Lemon, £500,000 for 3 electric buses to be used in the Brighton area
- Go South Coast / Wiltshire County Council – £500,000 for 3 electric buses to be used on park and ride services around Salisbury

The government's support for low emission buses is one part of a £600 million package of measures from the Office for Low Emission Vehicles by 2020, plus £270 million announced in the 2016 [Autumn Statement](#) to support the roll out of low emission cars, taxis and buses and supporting infrastructure.

This follows an initial £30 million awarded to bus companies and local councils in July 2016 under the 'Low emission bus scheme' to help put over 300 more low emission buses on the country's roads.

Later this year, the government will also publish plans for a second round of the 'Low emission bus scheme' with a view to putting even more of the cleanest buses on our streets.

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## [News story: Career break returner programmes launched to help people back to work](#)

New initiatives to help people return to work after career breaks have been launched today by the Minister of State for Apprenticeships, Skills and Women Anne Milton.

The returner programmes – part of the [£5 million fund announced in this year's Budget](#) – are formal schemes offered by employers to provide training and support to people who have taken time out of the workplace. The Government Equalities Office will be establishing four new returner schemes across the public sector.

They will be open to women and men, with the aim of giving people who have taken career breaks the opportunity to refresh their skills and build professional networks.

According to research by PwC, addressing the career break penalty could provide a £1.7 billion boost to our annual economic output. For female professionals, that could increase the annual earnings of that group by an average of £4,000 per woman.

Later this year, returners will be able to apply to programmes for social workers, allied health professionals, and civil servants.

It is part of the government's work to support parents and carers returning to work, build home-grown skills, and close the gender pay gap.

Minister of State for Apprenticeships, Skills and Women Anne Milton said:

We want to help people who are looking to get into work, which is why we are going to do more to help people get back into work after a career break.

Millions of us need to take time out from our careers, but it can be really hard to return. This is bad for the people affected, and

the businesses who miss out on their talents. Women in particular find the routes back into employment closed off after taking time out to start a family.

These returner programmes will make it routine for women to go back to the workplace and get on with their careers. It ultimately should also help us to tackle the gender pay gap. I think it's important that the public sector leads by example and introduces programmes to support people returning to the workplace.

Working alongside the Local Government Association, Health Education England and Civil Service HR, the Government Equalities Office will look to establish returner programmes for:

- **Civil servants:** Civil Service HR will launch an initial returner programme for 50 returners across the UK this October. Returners will be offered paid placements between six weeks to six months, which will include a bespoke learning and development opportunities.
- **Social workers:** The Local Government Association (LGA) will build on the success of its Come Back to Social Work pilot and this November will partner with three regions across England to offer placements to 100 social work returners. The placements will include tailored training and development to prepare them to return to practice.
- **Allied health professionals:** The Department for Health will build on the existing nurses scheme and run a returner programme with Health Education England for 300 allied health professional returners across England, including physiotherapists, podiatrists, dietitians, and radiographers. The placements will include education, re-training and tailored support with the aim of returners ready to practice within six to 12 months.
- **Teachers:** GEO will also work with the Department for Education to explore a returner programme for teachers.

The government will also be working with business groups to identify how to boost further the opportunities for women returning to work.

The career returner programmes also form part of the government's work to tackle the gender pay gap, which is at a record low of 18.1%. By next April, the government is requiring all employers with 250 or more staff to report their gender pay gap and bonus gap.

Statistics show that the gender pay gap for women in their twenties is less than 7 per cent, but widens to 25% for women in their forties. The Institute for Fiscal Studies has found that women who take time out of work earn less

when they return, receiving around 2 per cent less for every year spent out of paid work.

The new programmes will help develop best practice on what works to support career returners back to work most effectively. The Government Equalities Office has also launched a [public call for evidence](#) to allow individuals and employers to contribute to its understanding of how best to support people returning to work, particularly within the private sector. The call for evidence will run for eight weeks, concluding on 29 October. It will be an opportunity for returners, employers and the wider public to inform the government's future plans on returners.

Minister of State for Health Philip Dunne said:

Former allied health professionals have the talent and experience the NHS needs so we absolutely want to encourage them to return to work.

A new programme run by Health Education England will offer returners tailored education and re-training, so they feel confident and supported to return to providing outstanding patient care.

Professor Lisa Bayliss-Pratt, Director of Nursing and Deputy Director Education and Quality at Health Education England said:

Health Education England is extremely pleased to be able support AHPs back into our NHS as we know they contribute expert skills across the whole health and care system. Clinicians of all backgrounds returning to practice have a vital role to play in our NHS, as they tend to be more experienced and highly skilled.

In our work with AHPs, HEE will seek to build on our successful "Come Back to Nursing" campaign focused on nurses who have left the nursing profession but would come back if the right training and support was available. Over 2445 nurses have successfully completed a returner programme ready for employment on the front line to provide care and support for patients.

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**[Press release: British public to have their say on how UK aid is spent as](#)**

# government supports largest ever round of charity appeals

Britons can have an even greater say on how UK aid is spent helping the world's poorest, International Development Secretary Priti Patel announced today, as she launched the largest ever round of UK aid-supported charity appeals to back the causes which matter to the British public.

With old pound coins going out of circulation in mid-October, the UK public are invited to get rid of their old change by donating to a variety of charity appeals, which will be match-funded by UK aid, doubling the amount their favourite causes receive.

[UK Aid Match](#) brings charities, the British public and the UK government together to collectively change the lives of some of the world's poorest and most vulnerable people.

This year, more than 20 charities from across Britain have been selected to run UK Aid Match appeals and implement high-quality projects in developing countries. For every £1 donated to a charity appeal, the government will also contribute £1 of UK aid to help these projects go further in changing and saving lives.

The extra funding raised by the appeals will boost support to millions of the world's poorest through work which includes clearing landmines, ensuring people have enough food and water to survive, and protecting women and girls from the risk of violence.

International Development Secretary Priti Patel said:

The overwhelming generosity of the UK public in times of crisis is one of the things that makes Britain truly great. By matching pound for pound donations to charities of all sizes from across the country, we can champion a wide range of causes close to people's hearts.

Old pound coins are due to get out of circulation in October so by getting rid of old change, the public can help to double the amount great causes receive, ensuring their support goes even further.

Look out for the UK Aid Match logo – which features the Union flag – on charity appeals from now until Spring next year. It shows that the UK government will match your donations, providing a boost to some of the very best projects and make a real and lasting difference to those in need. And for millions in the world's poorest countries, it's a badge of hope that help is on its way from the British people.

The first appeal to launch in this round of UK Aid Match is Action Against Hunger's [#HealthyMumsHealthyKids](#) appeal, which runs from 2 September until 2 December 2017. Diners at more than 400 venues including Hawksmoor and Pho can make a voluntary donation when they pay their bill.

The appeal will support mums-to-be and children in Senegal where one in five children are stunted and 30% of all child deaths are due to malnutrition. Support for this programme will ensure adolescents, pregnant women and children get the right food they need to avoid a lifetime of damaging effects from poor nutrition.

Action Against Hunger has previously received UK Aid Match support which helped people in Niger, Burkina Faso and Liberia address malnutrition by providing agricultural tools and seeds enabling them to grow their own food in their backyard gardens.

Other appeals due to launch in September include World Child Cancer, Concern Worldwide, Hope and Homes for Children, Mine Advisory Group (MAG), Hope for Children and Build Africa, who are based in regions across the UK including Belfast, Wiltshire and Manchester.

UK Aid Match is designed to provide opportunities for the UK public to engage with international development issues and have a say in how UK aid is spent, whilst boosting the impact of the very best civil society projects to reach the poorest people in developing countries.

## Notes to Editors

- This is the biggest round of UK aid match appeals ever with approx. 25 appeals across the whole UK and potentially £30m of funding available to be matched to appeals from September to end of March next year.
- UK Aid Match appeals will be highlighted on [www.gov.uk/uk-aid-match](http://www.gov.uk/uk-aid-match) and on DFID's social media channels as they are launched. UK Aid Match is funded from the international development budget, up to a total of £5 million per appeal.
- The first phase of UK Aid Match, launched between 2013 and 2016, funded 59 appeals. An estimated 3.6m people in the UK donated to match-funded appeals. A total of £120m went to 42 charities, operating in 22 countries and running projects including health, education and water, sanitation and hygiene which are expected to benefit 19 million people.
- Quotes from charities involved in UK Aid Match are available on request.
- The key requirements for the match funding scheme are that the organisation running the appeal is a UK-based non-governmental and not-for-profit organisation and that the appeal is set to raise at least £100,000, within a 3 month appeal period. Donations must be from people (not businesses) living in the UK and go towards an eligible international development project.
- For further information and guidance, please visit [www.gov.uk/uk-aid-match](http://www.gov.uk/uk-aid-match).

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## News story: World renowned RAF Red Arrows to tour Middle East

On a visit to Kuwait, Sir Michael will announce that the Reds will perform in the country as part of a wider regional tour, with a programme that will promote the United Kingdom's long-standing relations across the Gulf. The Defence Secretary will also review the campaign to defeat Daesh with commanders in the coalition headquarters in Kuwait.

Defence Secretary, Sir Michael Fallon, said:

This historic Red Arrows tour will be a visible demonstration of UK engagement across the globe, flying the flag to promote Britain in important capitals through the GREAT campaign.

Kuwait is a vital partner. I will be looking to strengthen our military relationship with more frequent joint exercises and I will be reviewing the next steps in the campaign against Daesh with commanders at the Coalition's headquarters in Kuwait.

At a time when the UK is negotiating a new, deep and special partnership with the European Union, it is continuing to look outwards globally. The tour will highlight the partnership with the British Armed Forces in each nation visited, as well as demonstrating that the UK is 'open for business', committed to peace and security, and a leading player on the global stage.

The UK was one of the first members of the coalition and has focussed on supporting Iraqi security forces and the Syrian opposition to defeat Daesh. British soldiers in Iraq have trained over 58,000 Iraqis in battle winning infantry, counter-IED, engineering and combat medical skills and the RAF have struck over 1,400 Daesh targets in Iraq and Syria as well as providing highly valued surveillance and reconnaissance, air-to-air refuelling and transport aircraft.

Ahead of the three year anniversary next month of UK involvement in the military campaign, the Defence Secretary review the progress with coalition Commander, US Lieutenant General Stephen Townsend and British Major General Rupert Jones, the Deputy Commander.

During the visit, the Defence Secretary will also announce a draft Defence Cooperation Accord which formalises the relationship with Kuwait and covers loan personnel and support to UK military personnel on training in Kuwait, which follows UK participation in exercise Desert Warrior earlier this year, the first time UK and Kuwaiti forces had exercised together for 15 years.

The Red Arrows tour will allow for further close cooperation with Kuwaiti and regional armed forces and promote opportunities for investment and trade with the UK, encourage government-to-government engagement to develop economic partnership, and showcase the excellence of STEM education with UK universities with displays in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, Bahrain and the UAE.

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## **Press release: Minister for Asia visits Singapore for talks on business, investment and the illegal wildlife trade**

Mark Field, minister for Asia and the Pacific at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, is in Singapore to further joint work on issues including security, trade and combating the illegal wildlife trade.

During the two day visit he will meet Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean to discuss the UK-Singapore relationship.

Mr Field will also attend the opening of the Lee Kong Chian Medical School, meet representatives from UK financial and professional services to discuss opportunities and challenges in South East Asia, and visit Lattice80, Asia's largest financial technology (FinTech) hub, to meet Singapore's top FinTech firms.

He will also visit Interpol's Global Complex for Innovation to learn about their work on tackling the illegal wildlife trade through crime networks.

The UK is a key player in the global effort to stamp out the illegal wildlife trade and will host the Illegal Wildlife Trade conference in London in March 2018. Singapore has been committed to helping this work.

Mark Field, minister for Asia and Pacific at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, said:

Singapore and the UK have deep historic links, and remain major partners on a wide range of issues. In 2015 alone the total UK trade with Singapore was worth nearly £1bn, the most of all the countries in the South East Asia region. We share values and collaborate on education, research, science and innovation.

I look forward to discussing the illegal wildlife trade during my visit. The UK is committed to tackling this crucial issue, and we



will continue to work with our international partners, non-Governmental organisations and the private sector to bring it to an end.

The minister's visit to Singapore is the final stage of a tour to Asia which has also included China, Hong Kong and South Korea.

Notes for Editors:

1. Mark Field MP was appointed Minister for Asia and the Pacific at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in June 2017. This is his first official visit to Singapore.
2. Singapore is the world's third largest global financial centre and conducted £10.9bn of trade with the UK in 2015.

**Further information**