

Road workers transform school yard into dream playground

Pupils were treated to a stage, den area, bug hotels and even a mud kitchen in the playground makeover at Cooper Perry Primary School by the team working on the M6 junctions 13 (Stafford) to 15 (Stoke-on-Trent) upgrade.

During torrential rain, workers cleared the heavily over-grown site at the school in Seighford, near Stafford, leaving them a blank canvas to work on and the following week, in glorious sunshine, set about creating the perfect playground.

The volunteers all gave up their time and made use of anything on the M6 works site that could be recycled into play equipment such as cable reels, tyres, netting and pallets which were transformed into tables, tunnels and a den.

Highways England spokesperson Nick Wells said:

We know that, whilst the motorway upgrade will ultimately increase capacity and bring more reliable journeys, the works can cause disruption for people in the local communities in the meantime.

That is why we are committed to giving something back to the community whenever we can and in this instance I think the volunteers, who gave up their own time for the project, have surpassed themselves.

It is wonderful to see the children enjoying themselves in their new-look playground and making use of the recycled equipment. We are delighted the team were able to help and bring such big smiles to the pupils' faces.

Cooper Perry reception class teacher Vicky Batten said:

The children were delighted with the transformation of their outdoor learning area. Clare and her team volunteered many hours to recycle and reuse equipment from their site that they no longer needed for the children to use and enjoy.

We are so grateful for the time and thought that was given to create such a wonderful learning environment for the children and know that they will have many hours of enjoyment as they explore and play with it all. Thank you so much.

The pupils also created their own cards and a scrap book to say thank you to

the team for all of their hard work. Clare Bird, of contractor Kier, led the team of volunteers. She said:

What a brilliant project to be involved with. The team and I worked really hard transforming the school yard using upcycled materials, making an area the children can have fun from using their imaginations on stage to cooking up a mud feast. We also built planters and bug hotels so the children can enjoy gardening.

It was so nice to receive the cards and the teacher said the children are engaging and playing more with each other since the yard transformation which is lovely to hear.

Taking part in the makeover were volunteers from Highways England, Kier, JAJV (Jacobs Atkins Joint Venture) and ArB Tree Care.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[More leading businesses join vaccine uptake drive](#)

- Asda, lastminute.com and FREE NOW among the latest companies to offer rewards to vaccinated people
- Move will further bolster national effort to boost vaccine uptake for younger people
- Young people urged to come forward for both doses as soon as possible to support the cautious return to normal life

More of the country's leading businesses from a variety of industries have pledged their support for the UK's world-leading COVID-19 vaccination programme by offering incentives to vaccinated customers.

Asda, lastminute.com, National Express, FREE NOW taxis and Better leisure centres will be offering discounts to people who get a COVID-19 vaccine, joining the national effort to protect the country as it continues its

cautious return to normality.

The companies will be joining Uber, Bolt and Deliveroo, which committed last month to backing the vaccination programme by providing exclusive offers to those who have received a jab.

The new businesses and rewards will include:

- Asda – will offer £10 vouchers for their clothing brand George to 18 to 30 year olds who spend over £20. These will be offered at the vaccine pop-up clinics located in Old Kent Road in London, Watford & Birmingham;
- lastminute.com – will offer over-18s £30 gift cards towards holidays abroad to all young people getting vaccinated through their website;
- Better leisure centres – will offer over 16s a £10 voucher to use on any Better membership and a free three-day pass at any of their 235 leisure facilities across the UK;
- FREE NOW – will provide up to £1 million in free taxi rides for over-18s attending their vaccine appointment each way from today [Sunday 15 August] until the end of September; and
- National Express Buses (Midlands) – will offer 1,000 people 5-day unlimited travel saver tickets which can be used within 90 days. Tickets can be claimed by sharing vaccine booking references in the company's app.

Deliveroo has also revealed further details of their support, which will include thousands of £5 vouchers to those who get the vaccine, distributed in the coming weeks. Bolt will be offering £10 vouchers for 10,000 rides from next week in Birmingham and Leicester, and Uber will be announcing further details shortly around their drive to help students get vaccinated ahead of term time.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Sajid Javid said:

It is fantastic to see more companies backing the phenomenal vaccine rollout and joining the public as they do everything they can to continue protecting their loved ones, themselves, their community and this country.

This truly is a national effort and we would not be where we are today – with over 47 million people vaccinated – without the support of the NHS, volunteers, businesses and the people of the UK themselves as we continue to build the wall of defence through every jab given.

With over 84,000 lives already saved and 23 million infections prevented by the vaccines, get the jab as soon as possible and take advantage of these excellent offers – whether that's for taxi rides, gym passes, or trips away with family and friends.

Zoe Matthews, Vice-President of George said:

Asda was the first supermarket to offer a dedicated vaccine clinic in the UK and we're proud to have offered 90,000 vaccines through our three vaccine centres since January. In keeping with our commitment to doing all we can to support the vaccination programme against COVID-19 we're delighted to be offering £10 off any George purchase over £20 to young people who visit one of our three vaccine centres for their COVID-19 jab. It's our way of saying thank you to them for doing their bit to keep our communities safe – and means they can look great as well as feel great about doing the right thing.

Andrea Bertoli, CEO of lastminute.com Group, said:

We know this summer has been difficult for everyone, so we're delighted to be partnering with the government's young people's vaccination scheme.

Since the pandemic started we've committed to helping people travel safely, and the vaccination programme has had a big impact on doing so – especially in the UK which has been leading the way in the numbers of fully vaccinated people.

Now we're helping the government and young holidaymakers go the extra 'air' mile this summer. At lastminute.com, we've always prided ourselves on helping to inspire people to go somewhere they've longed for.

And in this summer of spontaneous travel we hope a lot of people, who thought holidays might not be possible, can finally get away with friends and family for a lastminute.com holiday on a sunny beach.

Joseph Rham, Commercial Director at Better said:

As soon as we heard about the campaign to incentivise young people to get vaccinated, we wanted to get involved. As the UK's largest operator of municipal leisure facilities, we know the value of regular exercise on our mental and physical health and this has been further highlighted during the pandemic. We also know that having all adults double vaccinated plays a crucial role in our battle against COVID-19, so we wanted to help.

We hope that by offering free passes and discount vouchers to our 235 gyms, leisure and sports centres across the UK, we will encourage many more young people to take up their vaccine.

Mariusz Zabrocki, General Manager at FREE NOW, said:

From festivals to spending time with our loved ones the vaccine will restore many of the freedoms that have been limited or lost over the past two years in order to save lives and protect the NHS. Since the pandemic started FREE NOW has sought ways to play our part in the fight-back against the COVID-crisis from providing a way for drivers to still make a living at the height of lockdown, offering free transport to key workers, partnering with the NHS to deliver vaccines to the elderly vulnerable and giving away free PPE kits. We therefore thought it was the right thing for us to also support the UK's vaccination programme with our offer of up to flm in free trips to and from vaccination centres.

Chris Gibbens, Commercial Director for National Express Buses, said:

The NHS is doing such a fantastic job giving out vaccinations to protect our communities and we are proud to do what we can to support the fight against the virus.

This September 18-30 year olds who book their jabs can claim a 5 day ticket bundle – on us – so they can hop onboard our brill buses and safely enjoy getting back to normal.

Teenagers within three months of turning 18 can now book their vaccine appointment online through the National Booking Service or by calling 119. Vaccination sites across the country are working hard to complete the rollout with more than 300 sites already offering the jab to 16 and 17 year olds, including GP teams who began vaccinating eligible teens last week.

Children aged 12 to 15 who are clinically vulnerable to COVID-19 or who live with adults who are at increased risk of serious illness from the virus are also being contacted by the NHS and invited for their vaccine. A total of X doses have been administered in the UK, with X people receiving a first dose (X%) and X people receiving both doses (X%).

The latest data from Public Health England (PHE) and Cambridge University shows that vaccines have saved around 84,600 lives as well as preventing 23.4 million infections and 66,900 hospitalisations in England up to 6 August.

Data from PHE also shows COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective against hospitalisation from the Delta (B.1.617.2) variant, the dominant strain in the UK. The analysis shows the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is 96% effective and the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine is 92% effective against hospitalisation after two doses.

Vaccines Minister, Nadhim Zahawi said:

Over 70% of young people aged 18 to 29 have now had their first jab – another superb milestone in our historic vaccination programme.

A big thank you to all the companies who are helping us to protect the country – I urge everyone to get the jab and get shopping with these excellent discounts.

The government is working closely with the NHS to make it as easy as possible to get a vaccine, including through ‘grab a jab’ pop-up vaccine sites across the country, such as London-based nightclub Heaven, as well as football stadiums and festivals up and down the country.

Advice and information on the benefits of vaccination have been shared at every opportunity, including through a range of partnerships with industries catering for predominantly younger audiences.

This work has included partnerships with high-profile entertainment and sports personalities on short films encouraging people to get the jab, such as film stars Jim Broadbent and Thandiwe Newton, and football figures Harry Redknapp and Chris Kamara. The government has also partnered with dating apps and social media platforms.

People can make an appointment through the national booking system either online or by calling 119, and can use a vaccination centre, walk-in centre, or one of the pop-up vaccinations centres that are now in shopping centres, workplaces and high streets.

Vaccinated people are far less likely to get COVID-19 with symptoms and even more unlikely to get serious COVID-19, to be admitted to hospital, or to die from it and there is growing evidence that they are less likely to pass the virus to others.

YouGov polling also shows the UK continues to be one of the top nations where people are willing to have a COVID-19 vaccine or have already been vaccinated. ONS data published on 9 August shows that more than 9 in 10 (96%) adults reported positive sentiment towards the vaccine, and vaccine hesitancy for those aged 18 to 21 has almost halved from 9% to 5%. The statistics also showed hesitancy has decreased for those aged 16 and 17 from 14% to 11%.

Vaccines are available free of charge and from thousands of vaccine centres, GP practices and pharmacies. Around 98% of people live within 10 miles of a vaccination centre in England and vaccinations are taking place at sites including mosques, community centres and football stadiums.

Notes

Asda:

- Asda will provide £10 George vouchers at their vaccine clinics on the

Old Kent Road in London, Watford and Cape Hill, near Birmingham – £20 minimum spend and includes sale products and clothing brands.

- Vouchers will be provided to customers directly at the three existing sites, but redeemable in any Asda store selling George – but not online.
- Expiry date is 31 October.

Better leisure centres:

- The offer will run from 23 August until the end of September.
- It will be available through the GLL website or online with simple proof of vaccination.

FREE NOW:

- The company will be investing £1 million in free rides to and from vaccination appointments, which will run until the end of September 2021 and is free nationally.
- They will cover the cost of a journey each way to vaccination clinics up to the value of £20 per person (£10 each way) across all modes: black cabs, private hire and eScooters. Users will have to upload appointment details to the app or on the website.
- The scheme is based on a pilot earlier this year where FREE NOW partnered with the NHS to give free rides to nurses providing vaccines to the elderly vulnerable in care homes.
- The offer will be available nationally in the cities FREE NOW operates in which are: Brighton, Edinburgh, London, Manchester, Nottingham, Oxford, Reading, Derby and Leicester.

[UK Government Minister meets with energy firm over Cambo](#)

News story

Minister David Duguid on fact-finding mission to discover more about proposed oil field off the coast of Shetland



UK Government Minister for Scotland David Duguid will tomorrow (Tuesday 17 August) meet with Siccar Point Energy in Aberdeen to discuss the proposed Cambo oil field off the west coast of Shetland.

An exploration licence for the field was granted in 2001 and the Oil and Gas Authority is considering whether to approve extraction of oil there.

Minister Duguid said:

I'm eager to learn more about the proposed Cambo field. As we transition to cleaner, low-carbon and renewable energy, demand for oil and gas is declining and will continue to do so, even with new fields such as Cambo. But until that transition is made, as the UK Government is pioneering with the North Sea Transition Deal, sources like Cambo are still required.

The Independent Climate Change Committee advises that we will continue to need oil and gas in the coming years as it is still vital to the production of many everyday essentials, including medicines.

It is far preferable for the UK's needs to come from our domestic supply, supporting our own workers, rather than relying on imports whose sources may not be responsibly recovered.

Not producing our own oil and gas through the energy transition not only risks the economy and jobs but also security of energy supply.

Working with the UK Government, industry is committed to responsibly managing supply through the energy transition – while developing technology, innovation and expertise that will be critical to Net Zero and fighting climate change in line with our aims at COP26 in Glasgow in November.

- The UK is the only G7 country to have agreed a landmark deal to support the oil and gas industry's transition to green energy by 2050 while at the same time supporting 40,000 jobs.

- The UK Government has ended support for fossil fuels overseas and is designing a climate compatibility checkpoint which will ensure any future licenses will only be granted if they are aligned with the UK's climate change objectives.
- The UK is a world leader in the global effort to tackle climate change and we were the first major economy to legislate to end our contribution to climate change by 2050. We have now set in law a new highly ambitious climate change target, to cut emissions by 78% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels.
- The review into the future of offshore oil and gas licensing concluded that a formal climate compatibility checkpoint, building on current practice, will be established. This will help ensure that any future licenses are only awarded on the basis that they are aligned with the government's broad climate change ambitions, including the UK's target of reaching net zero by 2050. The climate compatibility checkpoint is currently being designed and will be announced by the end of 2021. We will seek input on the design of the checkpoint in due course.
- The checkpoint will form one additional layer of scrutiny to existing regulatory mechanisms for assessing the environmental impact of oil and gas field developments. Such projects are already subject to an environmental impact assessment, with a public consultation, and are subject to scrutiny from the Oil & Gas Authority (OGA) before consent. The OGA's new Strategy imposes net zero considerations in the consents process, and full carbon costing in decision making.

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UK donates COVID-19 vaccines to Malawi

This is the first tranche of the 100 million vaccines the Prime Minister pledged the UK would share within the next year at last month's G7 in Cornwall, 80 million of which will go to COVAX, a scheme that ensures equitable, global access to Covid-19 vaccines.

The consignment arrived into Malawi on Saturday, 14 August 2021, through Kamuzu International Airport. Malawi's Health Minister Hon Khumbize Kandodo Chiponda received the vaccines on behalf of the Malawi Government.

Speaking during the handover ceremony, British High Commission Charge d'Affaires, Fiona Ritchie, said:

At this time when Malawi continues to be heavily impacted by Covid-19, evidenced by high levels of cases, hospitalisations and deaths, we're doing this to help the most vulnerable, but also because we know we won't be safe until everyone is safe. The UK's donation is the outcome of the pledge that G7 leaders made to vaccinate the world and end the pandemic as a matter of urgency.

Minister of Health, Hon Khumbize Kandodo Chiponda said:

We are very grateful for the UK Government's donation of 119,040 doses of Oxford-AstraZeneca Vaccines which will support the Covid-19 response. This will help us realise our goal of vaccinating around 3.8 million Malawians, particularly frontline workers and the most vulnerable, so we can put this pandemic behind us and focus on growing the economy.

UNICEF Malawi Acting Representative Tedla Damte said:

As Governments and the COVAX facility partners work hard to make COVID-19 vaccines affordable and accessible to all countries, we must do our part- get the vaccine to protect ourselves, our families, our communities and our children from this deadly and disruptive pandemic. Together we can end COVID-19.

WHO Representative for Malawi, Dr. Nonhlanhla Dlamini said

Our WHO experts have reassured us that for all of the variants of concern, including the Delta variant, the vaccines remain effective against severe disease and death. This is a very good sign. I'm urging our frontline workers and all priority groups to come forward and get their jabs.

The UK helped establish COVAX in 2020, providing a total of £548 million to fund vaccines for lower income countries. The scheme has delivered more than 152 million vaccine doses to over 137 countries and territories, including in 83 lower-middle income countries. Sixty- five per cent of the initial vaccine doses have been Oxford-AstraZeneca. COVAX aims to deliver 1.8 billion vaccines to lower-income countries around the world by early 2022.

The UK provided £90 million to support the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine: £25m on the initial research and development, and £65m to scale up manufacturing.

Guidance: COVID-19: guidance for hostel services for people experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping

Information on coronavirus (COVID-19) for commissioners and providers of hostel services for people experiencing homelessness and rough sleeping.