

Press release: Next generation of leaders to join fight against plastic pollution

Young people across the country will join together to tackle plastic pollution through a new partnership between the UK Scouts and Government.

Harnessing the enthusiasm of the UK's girl and boy Scouts, the Government will create and distribute a new Plastics and Marine Environment Activity Pack to help them in efforts to slash the amount of single-use plastics in our oceans.

Recognising the need for global action, this toolkit will be supported by a new international exchange programme, allowing Scouts from the UK and Kenya to visit one another and learn how important the issue of plastics is in different parts of the world.

The announcement was made by the Prime Minister during her visit to Africa this week, where she also pledged almost £40,000 for a new Girl Guides and Scouts Plastic Challenge Badge. This will help an estimated 50,000 young people in Kenya and two further African countries, to better understand the importance of reducing plastic consumption.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

Plastic pollution is one of the greatest environmental challenges of our time and we all have a role to play in turning the tide on single-use plastic in our oceans.

This new partnership will help mobilise Scouts to take action and inspire a new generation of leaders in kick-starting behaviour change towards single-use plastics.

The new partnership will build on the work the Scouts are already doing as part of their A Million Hands programme which gives young people the chance to take action with issues they care about.

This summer Scouts have been working with the Canal & River Trust to collect plastic and other litter from canals and rivers across the country. By doing this they have already built better outdoor spaces to bring communities together all across the UK.

Tim Kidd, UK Chief Commissioner for The Scouts said:

As Scouts, we're committed to helping tackle some of the biggest challenges of our time. We have always had a strong connection to

the environment, and so taking action on plastic pollution is an obvious cause for our young people to champion.

I'm proud of the role our young people will play in taking a stand against single use plastics.

Speaking to Scouts and Guides with the Prime Minister in Kenya today, Head of UN Environment, Erik Solheim, said:

The environment has already paid a heavy price for our addiction to single-use plastics. We simply can't allow that cost to extend to the next generation.

That's why this support from the UK government to create and launch a plastic pollution badge with the Guides and Scouts is such an inspiring step in the right direction. This global partnership allows us to not just fight plastic pollution on the beaches, but to invest in the young minds that will preserve the planet for future generations to come.

Today's announcement is the latest step in the Government's ongoing fight against plastic, both at home and abroad.

This includes a world-leading ban on microbeads in rinse-off personal care products which harm marine life, and plans to ban the sale of plastic straws, stirrers and cotton buds and introduce a deposit return scheme to drive up the recycling of drinks bottles and cans, subject to consultation.