

[Press release: Penny Mordaunt praises Scottish aid workers](#)

The International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt today (Thursday 8 May 2018) praised the heroic efforts of Scottish aid workers delivering life-saving assistance to people that have fled violence in Burma and are now sheltering in neighbouring Bangladesh.

Visiting the British Red Cross offices in Glasgow today, she spoke to Scottish aid worker Kenny Hamilton, from Glasgow and currently stationed in Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh.

Mr Hamilton leads a sanitation project building safe toilets and overseeing the treatment and safe disposal of human waste to help prevent the spread of deadly diseases.

The risk of a cholera outbreak in Cox's Bazar is extremely high and will increase further with the looming monsoon season, which is expected to flood camps and could contaminate around half of the clean water sources.

Earlier this week, Ms Mordaunt [announced fresh UK aid support for people living in Cox's Bazar](#) to provide medication, sturdier shelters, food, clean water and support for women to give birth safely.

Speaking at the British Red Cross offices in Glasgow, the International Development Secretary said:

With the devastating cyclone and monsoon season looming over the crowded camps in Cox's Bazar, hundreds of thousands of vulnerable people are in danger of landslides or of falling ill with potentially fatal diseases.

The UK is leading the way to provide vaccinations, strengthen shelters and deliver food and clean water to those that have been forced to flee their homes because of brutal violence and persecution.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent continue to play a vital role in the response to this crisis and Scottish aid workers are among those remarkable humanitarians delivering life-saving assistance to the men, women and children who have suffered so much.

The Red Cross and Red Crescent have already provided emergency support to 254,000 people – backed by UK aid – including fresh water, jerry cans and

hygiene kits.

A 24 hour surgical field hospital with 100 beds, including 40 isolation beds, is operating opposite one of the largest makeshift camps, staffed by Bangladeshi doctors and midwives with international medical and support staff.

British Red Cross aid worker Kenny Hamilton said:

Our priority is water hygiene, health promotion and making existing sanitation facilities more robust for the upcoming monsoon season. UK aid support will help our response effort to limit the impact of the rains both in terms of potential damage to infrastructure from landslides and promoting hygiene.

To do this we are decommissioning unsafe latrines and building new, safe, sustainable ones that will be cleaned on a regular basis. We are not only making these latrines safer to protect against disease, but also for women and vulnerable people by building them in appropriate areas and making sure they are properly lit and dignified.

As the monsoon season sets in, it is more imperative than ever that cleaning happens regularly so that people can go to the toilet safely and to protect against the spread of disease.

From the onset of the crisis the UK has been a leading donor, and this week's announcement of an additional £70 million of humanitarian support will help ensure hundreds of thousands of persecuted people who have fled neighbouring Burma will be better protected during this dangerous time.

UK aid supported work to prepare the Cox's Bazar camps for the monsoon season began in January, when the UN estimated 102,000 men, women and children were living in areas at risk of flooding and 12,000 people were at risk from landslides.

Notes to editors

1. The UK Government has contributed £129 million to the crisis since 25 August 2017. As part of this, £70 million announced on Monday 7 May is a new package of support, not previously allocated to this humanitarian programme.
2. UK support totalling £4 million is enabling the Red Cross Red Crescent to provide up to 200,000 vulnerable people with food, healthcare, water and sanitation in response to the crisis in Bangladesh.
3. This crisis resonates with the British public who have shown remarkable generosity raising £25.9 million for the Disasters Emergency Committee

(DEC) Appeal. This includes £5 million which has been matched pound for pound by the UK Government.

4. There are approximately 941,000 people living in Cox's Bazar camps. Of these 681,000 are new arrivals since August 2017.
5. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Red Cross Movement is the world's largest humanitarian network. The Movement is made up of 190 individual National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, working through 17 million volunteers who are dedicated to the Fundamental Principles of Humanity, Neutrality, Impartiality, Independence, Voluntary Service, Unity and Universality.

General media queries

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[News story: Boost in support for children with additional needs](#)

New measures to boost support for children and young people with additional needs have been announced today (10 May), setting out the next steps in the government's drive to give every child the tools to fulfil their potential.

[Data](#) published today shows more than 98% of Statements of Special Educational Needs (SEN) were reviewed by the 31 March 2018 deadline, as part of the introduction of new Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans.

These new plans provide tailored support for children and young people with additional needs, bringing together their education, health and social care needs for the first time.

The Department for Education has also confirmed three new contracts to boost support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families, to build on the progress being made to tackle inequalities in the education system that will ensure Britain is a country that works for everyone.

Minister for Children and Families, Nadhim Zahawi said:

We want every child to have the support they need to unlock their potential, no matter what challenges they face. Today's data shows that almost all of SEN statements were reviewed on time, which is testament to the hard work of councils their partners and families all over the country to give children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) the support they deserve.

The new contracts we are announcing today, worth more than £25 million, will build on the progress we have seen over the last four years to make sure children, young people and their families have access to excellent support to help guide them through the new system.

We are also putting in place new measures to improve the SEND training available to school staff, including tools to develop the role of early years SEND coordinators – building on a commitment set out in our Early Years Workforce Strategy.

The new measures include:

- A contract worth £20million with the Council for Disabled Children, in partnership with Contact, to provide families and young people with SEND with impartial advice, support and information about the services and support on offer.
- A £3.8million [contract](#) with Contact, in partnership with KIDS and the Council for Disabled Children, to promote and develop strategic participation by young people and parent carers.
- A SEND school workforce [contract](#) with nasen and University College London (UCL), on behalf of the Whole School SEND consortium, worth £3.4million over two years – to bring together schools, voluntary organisations and experts so that schools can deliver high-quality SEND.

Alongside these new contracts, the Department has developed new tools in partnership with nasen and Action for Children to create a [job description](#) and [specification](#) for Level 3 Early Years Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs).

This delivers on a commitment set out in the government's [Early Years Workforce Strategy](#) and will boost the profile of this important early years role to make sure children with additional learning needs get the right support from the earliest opportunity.

[News story: Call for evidence on](#)

[assessment of qualifications in centres](#)

We have today (10 May 2018) launched a call for evidence on the assessment of qualifications in centres (schools, colleges, training providers, etc.).

We have recently been reviewing the quality of centre-based assessment judgements in vocational and technical qualifications. We need to be sure that assessment is fair and consistent whenever and wherever it is delivered, so that both standards and public confidence in regulated qualifications are maintained.

The evidence we have suggests that not all organisations' controls are as robust as they need to be. We are also aware that there are practical problems for awarding organisations in remaining compliant with our rules when assessment is delegated to centres.

We are therefore inviting awarding organisations, centres and other interested parties to inform our ongoing work to build a detailed picture of practice across the sector. We will use these responses to decide whether our rules are right on this point and, if not, how they might be changed. If we decide to change them, we will consult formally.

[Respond to our call for evidence](#)

[Press release: M5 Oldbury viaduct repair project approaches key milestone](#)

The project involves concrete repairs and waterproofing along a two-mile section of the ageing viaduct in the West Midlands.

Work on the southbound carriageway, between junctions 1 and 2, is approaching completion and in the coming weeks the entire operation, involving more than 500 workers, transfers to the northbound carriageway.

Already more than 5,000 separate repairs have been carried out on the southbound carriageway, 3,500 more than anticipated.

The majority of work is scheduled to continue until autumn 2018, with other work continuing into spring 2019.

Highways England senior project manager, Zbigniew Twarowski, said:

The scale of this project is vast and has involved a large number of repairs.

On top of that we've had one of the harshest winters in years, which has added to the challenges.

We will not know the full extent of the repairs needed on the northbound carriageway until work there is under way.

We appreciate the level of disruption this project involves and I'd like to thank motorists, businesses and residents for their patience. Meanwhile, our teams are working as hard as they can to get the job done.

At more than £100 million, M5 Oldbury is believed to be the largest concrete repair project, by value, ever carried out in Britain.

Much of the work takes place underneath the viaduct and so workers cannot always be seen on the surface itself.

To keep the motorway open, a contraflow system is in place with traffic currently using the northbound carriageway with two lanes operating in each direction, along with a 30mph speed limit. Traffic is anticipated to move to the southbound carriageway in June.

Slip roads at junctions 1 and 2 are being kept open to ease effects on the local network.

However, as part of the work, a number of closures of the southbound off-slip at junction 2 are planned, for more information check the [Highways England Roadworks Finder](#).

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.

News story: Tough new rules to protect UK's critical infrastructure come into force

New measures to protect the nation's critical infrastructure and digital services from cyber attacks and computer network failure come into force today.

Bosses of firms in health, water, energy, transport and digital infrastructure will now be expected to have robust safeguards in place against cyber threats and report breaches and network outages to regulators within 72 hours or they face fines of up to £17 million.

The new law announced by Digital Minister Margot James will help reduce the number of damaging cyber attacks affecting the UK.

The National Cyber Security Centre, set up by the government in October 2016 as part of GCHQ, has already responded to more than 950 significant incidents, including WannaCry.

It will also give new regulators powers to assess critical industries and make sure plans are in place to prevent attacks.

The regulator will have the power to issue legally-binding instructions to improve security, and – if necessary – impose significant fines.

The legislation will also cover other threats affecting IT such as hardware failures and environmental hazards.

Margot James, Minister for Digital and the Creative Industries, said:

It's vital that we put in place tough new measures to strengthen the UK's cyber security and make sure we are the safest place in the world to live and be online.

Organisations must act now to make sure that they are primed and ready to stop potential cyber attacks and be resilient against major disruption to the services we all rely on.

Fines would be a last resort and will not apply to operators which have assessed the risks adequately, taken appropriate security measures and engaged with regulators but still suffered an attack.

Incidents must be reported directly to the appropriate regulator. Where an incident has a cyber security aspect, organisations should contact the NCSC for support and advice. The NCSC will also act as the Single Point of Contact between the UK and EU Member States.

As the UK's technical authority on cyber security, the NCSC is supporting competent authorities and has developed a set of 14 cyber security principles, as well as [supporting guidance](#), to improve the cyber security of operators of essential services.

Ciaran Martin, Chief Executive of the NCSC, said:

These new measures will help to strengthen the security of the UK's infrastructure.

By acting on the National Cyber Security Centre's expert technical advice and reporting incidents, organisations can protect themselves against those who would do us harm.

The UK government is committed to making the UK the safest place to live and do business online, but we can't do this alone. Every citizen, business and organisation must play their part.

The NIS Directive is an important part of the Government's five-year £1.9 billion National Cyber Security Strategy to protect the nation from cyber threats and make the UK the safest place to live and work online. It will ensure essential service operators are taking the necessary action to protect their IT systems.