

[Press release: PM call with NATO Secretary General: 22 January 2017](#)

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Prime Minister Theresa May spoke to NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and discussed the continued importance of the Alliance.

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

The Prime Minister spoke to NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg this afternoon.

They discussed the continued importance of the Alliance as the bulwark of our defence, and agreed on the need for the Alliance to continue to evolve to be able to effectively counter the biggest threats of the day, in particular terrorism and cyber attacks.

The Prime Minister said she would be taking these messages to Washington later this week where she is expected to discuss NATO with President Trump.

[News story: Boost for motorists as government proposes no MOT test for first 4 years](#)

New cars and motorcycles could no longer require an MOT for the first 4 years on the road under plans to save motorists more than £100 million a year.

Proposals unveiled today (22 January 2017) by Transport Minister Andrew Jones would extend the period before the first MOT test is needed from the current 3 years to 4.

The [government is consulting](#) on the plans which will bring England, Scotland and Wales in line with Northern Ireland and many other European countries

including France, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Denmark and Norway.

In 1967 the MOT-free period was reduced from 10 to 3 years. Now, safer technology and improved manufacturing means new vehicles stay roadworthy for longer.

Andrew Jones said:

We have some of the safest roads in the world and MOT tests play an important role in ensuring the standard of vehicles on our roads.

New vehicles are much safer than they were 50 years ago and so it is only right we bring the MOT test up to date to help save motorists money where we can.

It is a legal requirement that all vehicles are roadworthy, regardless of whether they have passed an MOT test and the content of the tests will not be changed.

More than 2.2 million cars each year have to undergo their first MOT test, which costs owners a maximum of £54.85.

In the last 10 years, the number of 3 or 4-year-old cars involved in accidents where a vehicle defect was a contributory factor has fallen by almost two thirds, from 155 in 2006 to 57 in 2015.

The most common reasons for cars to fail their first tests are faulty lights, according to the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA).

In addition, almost half of faults found during all MOT tests could be avoided by carrying out simple checks and maintenance, including replacing bulbs, checking tyres and oil as well as ensuring windscreen wipers work, and the DVSA is running an ongoing campaign to help motorists ensure their vehicles are safe at all times.

Subject to the public consultation, the changes could come into effect in 2018.

[Tyre checks](#)

[The steps you need to take when checking the tyres of your car](#)

[The steps you need to take when checking the oil levels of your car](#)

[Brakes, lights, indicators and horn checks](#)

News story: Government takes action on county line drug gangs

Drug gangs using mobiles and couriers to deal remotely in rural areas, including coastal and market towns, will have phones shut down, under new plans announced by the Home Secretary.

The so-called county lines operations involve urban dealers expanding their crack and heroin business into small town markets, operating remotely through the use of specific mobile phone numbers.

The gangs then exploiting children and vulnerable people as couriers to move drugs and money between the new market and their urban hub. The model means dealers can peddle class A drugs without having to visit their markets – cutting the risk of being picked up and arrested by local police.

Now the gangs face having their so-called 'deal lines' shut down by the police under new laws being proposed by Home Secretary Amber Rudd.

The use of dedicated mobile phone lines has been identified by the National Crime Agency (NCA) as a key tactic by the drug gangs.

To counter this, the government will table an amendment to the Digital Economy Bill tomorrow (Monday 23 January). If passed, the law will compel the relevant communications provider to disconnect a mobile, SIM card or phone number where it can be proved they are being used in connection with drug offences.

Home Secretary Amber Rudd said:

Gang violence, drug dealing and exploitation have a devastating impact on vulnerable young people, their families and local communities. And they have no place in a Britain that works for everyone.

Taking action to shut down these phone lines demonstrates this government's determination to crack down on gangs and sends a very clear message that we will not tolerate this despicable criminal activity.

The National Crime Agency published their second report into the county lines drug distribution in November last year. It found that over 70% of police forces in England and Wales are now reporting activity within their area.

Tony Siggers, NCA Head of Drugs Threat and Intelligence, and co-author of the county lines report, said:

Urban street gangs operating under the county lines model have become a nationwide problem that relies heavily upon anonymously acquired mobile phones, used as deal lines, branded to particular gangs and their reputation. The numbers have a high value in their own right to crime groups, who can't simply replace them quickly and start over, so taking them out of service is a powerful disruptive tool.

These lines are at the very heart of high volume drug supply, which in turn leads to the daily exploitation of young and vulnerable people. A typical line will likely generate in the region of £2,000 to £3,000 per day. Due to the high number of lines, this has the potential to aggregate to over £2 million per week in illicit revenue.

We welcome the proposal to table an addition to the Digital Economy Bill to disrupt these lines. The proposed legislation will add significant value to law enforcement initiatives to combat gang activity and remove confidence in their operating model.

The government is working with key partners, including law enforcement, local authorities and the voluntary sector to bring a new focus to tackling county lines gangs and to produce a coordinated response.

Last July, the government launched a new partnership with the Institute for Community Safety (ICS), providing funding to support communities facing new gang-related threats.

It brings together frontline professionals such as teachers, police officers and youth workers to identify problems in their local areas, then use this information to develop tailor-made plans to tackle gang violence and exploitation.