

Self-driving revolution to boost economy and improve road safety

- government unveils plan to rollout self-driving vehicles on UK roads, sparking a transport revolution to improve road safety and better connect communities
- estimated 38,000 new jobs could be created in the UK from predicted £42 billion industry
- backed by £100 million to support industry investment and fund research on safety developments

UK roads could see self-driving vehicles rolled out by 2025 thanks to new government plans – backed by £100 million – which prioritise safety through new laws and create thousands of new jobs in the industry.

Some vehicles, including cars, coaches and lorries, with self-driving features could be operating on motorways in the next year, and today's (19 August 2022) plans set out new legislation which will allow for the safe wider rollout of self-driving vehicles by 2025. This enables the UK to take full advantage of the emerging market of self-driving vehicles – which could create up to 38,000 jobs and could be worth an estimated £42 billion.

The government's vision for self-driving vehicles is backed by a total of £100 million, with £34 million confirmed today for research to support safety developments and inform more detailed legislation. This could include researching the performance of self-driving cars in poor weather conditions and how they interact with pedestrians, other vehicles, and cyclists.

The government is also today confirming £20 million, as part of the overall £100 million, to help kick-start commercial self-driving services and enable businesses to grow and create jobs in the UK, following an existing £40 million investment. Successful projects could help see, for example, groceries delivered to customers by self-driving vehicles, or shuttle pods assisting passengers when moving through airports. £6 million will also be used for further market research and to support commercialisation of the technology.

Self-driving vehicles could revolutionise public transport and passenger travel, especially for those who don't drive, better connect rural communities and reduce road collisions caused by human error. Further in the future, they could, for example, provide tailored on-demand links from rural towns and villages to existing public transport options nearby. They could also provide more direct and timely services that enable people to better access vital services such as schools and medical appointments.

Vehicles that can drive themselves on motorways could be available to purchase within the next year, which users would need a valid driving licence for, so they can drive on other roads. Other self-driving vehicles, for example used for public transport or delivery, expected on the roads by 2025,

would not need anyone onboard with a driving licence because they would be able to drive themselves for the whole journey.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

The benefits of self-driving vehicles have the potential to be huge. Not only can they improve people's access to education and other vital services, but the industry itself can create tens of thousands of job opportunities throughout the country.

Most importantly, they're expected to make our roads safer by reducing the dangers of driver error in road collisions.

We want the UK to be at the forefront of developing and using this fantastic technology, and that is why we are investing millions in vital research into safety and setting the legislation to ensure we gain the full benefits that this technology promises.

The government is today consulting on a 'safety ambition' for self-driving vehicles to be as safe as a competent and careful human driver. This ambition would inform standards that vehicles need to meet to be allowed to 'self-drive' on the roads, and organisations, such as manufacturers, could face sanctions if standards are not met.

The new laws for the safe rollout of self-driving vehicles by 2025 will be brought forward when parliamentary time allows.

The legislation will build on existing laws, and state that manufacturers are responsible for the vehicle's actions when self-driving, meaning a human driver would not be liable for incidents related to driving while the vehicle is in control of driving.

Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said:

Self-driving vehicles have the potential to revolutionise people's lives, particularly by helping those who have mobility issues or rely on public transport to access the jobs, local shops and vital services we all depend on.

This funding will help unlock the incredible potential of this industry, attracting investment, developing the UK's growing self-driving vehicle supply chain, and supporting high-skill jobs as these new means of transport are rolled out.

AA president, Edmund King, said:

The automotive world is changing rapidly and so the government is right to embrace the positive changes offered by this new technology and back it by funding research and putting forward

legislation. Assisted driving systems, for example, autonomous emergency braking and adaptive cruise control, are already helping millions of drivers stay safe on the roads.

It is still quite a big leap from assisted driving, where the driver is still in control, to self-driving, where the car takes control. It is important that the government does study how these vehicles would interact with other road users on different roads and changing weather conditions. However the ultimate prize, in terms of saving thousands of lives and improving the mobility of the elderly and the less mobile, is well worth pursuing.

Today also sees the publication of the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation's (CDEI) Responsible Innovation in Self-Driving Vehicles report, which sets out proposals for a trustworthy approach to the regulation and governance of self-driving vehicles.

[UK commits millions to helping the world's most vulnerable on World Humanitarian Day](#)

- £36 million in UK funding committed to provide emergency care to those enduring conflict in Ukraine and Syria and food shortages in East Africa.
- The UK continues to be a global leader supporting vulnerable people experiencing devastating conflict, extreme weather and lasting impacts of the pandemic.
- Tributes paid to aid workers helping to deal with unprecedented humanitarian catastrophes, caused by global instability and exacerbated by Putin's invasion of Ukraine.

People whose lives have been upended by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, drought and food shortages in East Africa, and conflict in Syria will be among those to benefit from £36 million in UK humanitarian funding announced today.

The announcement comes on United Nation's World Humanitarian Day (Friday 19 August) as parts of the globe come under increasing strain from lasting effects of the pandemic, the increasing impact of climate change, and conflicts in Europe, Africa and the Middle East.

Local aid workers are at the forefront of the effort to alleviate the disastrous consequences of these crises as they provide humanitarian assistance for communities across the world. The UK's funding announcement

will support them to continue their essential work.

In Ukraine and Poland, where the majority of Ukrainians who have fled the conflict have travelled, £15 million in UK funding will support up to 200,000 of the most vulnerable impacted by Russia's invasion. This includes children, older people and those with disabilities. International aid organisation Mercy Corps will work with grassroots civil society groups to provide emergency assistance to cover basic needs, including food, water and sanitation, psychological support and childcare services.

In East Africa, where severe food insecurity threatens over 48 million people, the UK has allocated an additional £14 million to the countries on the frontline of the world's worst humanitarian crisis. This new spending, which will work immediately to save lives and prevent more people experiencing famine-like conditions, includes:

- A £5 million boost to the UK Somalia programme, which is providing life-saving health, nutrition, food security and water and sanitation assistance to over half a million people in some of the most vulnerable families.
- £6 million for the Ethiopia Humanitarian Fund which will provide vital assistance to under-funded emergencies across Ethiopia, including drought and conflict-affected regions.
- £3 million in emergency humanitarian funding to the World Food Programme, Sudan, helping reach approximately 120,000 vulnerable people with food assistance.

Minister of State for South and Central Asia, North Africa, UN and the Commonwealth and the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict, Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon said:

In 2022 millions more people are now in desperate need of humanitarian support.

UK funding is ensuring that the UN and local partners can reach those affected by Russian aggression in Ukraine, drought in East Africa and ongoing conflicts in Syria, Yemen and Afghanistan. We thank those on the ground who so often risk their own lives to help and protect them.

Britain has a proud humanitarian tradition, and we will continue to support the most vulnerable, wherever they are.

The Russian invasion is exacerbating the world food crisis, which is hitting the poorest hardest, particularly in East Africa. The UK and its allies have pushed hard for the UN grain initiative and the world is watching to ensure that Russia complies, so food continues to flow from Ukraine and feed the hungry.

The UK is also providing £1.5 million to deploy technology to identify whether grain sold by Russia on the world market has been stolen from

Ukraine. A package of rail support to Ukraine will also ensure grain trains can run. Moreover, the UK is providing Ukraine with the military capability to help protect its ports, essential for the grain deal to be a success.

Minister for Africa, Vicky Ford said:

In the Horn of Africa, around 700,000 people are experiencing famine conditions – and in Somalia over 386,000 children are projected to be severely malnourished and at risk of death by the end of the year.

UK aid in east Africa is providing life-saving support to the most vulnerable people in the hardest hit countries.

We must now bring new stakeholders to the table to strengthen our international action towards the world's worst humanitarian crisis today.

The UK is also announcing a £7 million package to support Syrian refugees who have fled the conflict to Lebanon, delivered through the World Food Programme. This funding will help provide more than 150,000 people with food, water and nutrition. This is part of the UK's pledge to provide up to £158 million earlier this year at the Brussels Pledging Conference for the Syria Crisis, which will support food production, protect women and girls from violence and ensure humanitarian access to the North East of Syria, where the situation is deteriorating.

The UK is the third largest bilateral donor to the crisis in Syria, having committed over £3.8 billion to date in our largest ever response to a single humanitarian crisis. This includes support to the governments of Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey to cope with the protracted refugee presence by supporting displaced Syrians until they can return safely to Syria.

Since 2012, across Syria and the region, the UK has provided over 28.3 million food rations, over 24 million medical consultations, 6.3 million cash grants/vouchers, 11 million relief packages and over 15.2 million vaccines. Our aid provides life-saving support to millions of Syrians, supporting refugees to remain in countries in the region, and enabling their host communities to accommodate them.

The UK has consistently been one of the largest bilateral humanitarian donors globally and have been at the forefront of driving more effective and innovative approaches to crisis prevention, preparedness, and response. Since 2015, the UK has reached 32.6 million people with humanitarian aid, saving lives and alleviating suffering in places like Syria, Ethiopia, and Afghanistan.

Now in Ukraine, the UK is working alongside trusted partners to deliver its £220 million humanitarian pledge.

Mercy Corps Ukraine Response Director, Michael Young, said:

In Ukraine and Poland, we have partnered directly with local organisations that know their community needs best and are working quickly to deliver humanitarian aid.

With this funding, our partners will continue to deliver emergency assistance and ship essential supplies such as food and hygiene items to people affected by heavy fighting, as well as providing reliable information on where to access basic services, safe routes, legal rights for refugees and people displaced inside Ukraine.

ENDS

[Historical UK breweries at New Zealand's biggest beer festival](#)

World news story

10 iconic and sustainable British breweries are being featured on the GREAT Britain stand at Beervana in Wellington.



The UK Government has returned to Beervana with 10 UK breweries.

The UK Government in New Zealand have hand selected the group of UK companies who are being showcased on the GREAT stand at New Zealand's premier [beer festival](#).

The 10 breweries featured on the stand are:

Greene King Brewery and Shepherd Neame are members of the UK's 'Net Zero Now' initiative launched in July 2021. This scheme is an industry protocol and certification standard which will help bars and pubs across Britain reach net-zero before the national legal deadline of 2050.

Britain's oldest brewery, Shepherd Neame, founded in 1698 has repeatedly pioneered sustainable brewing methods. They recycle 97% of the grain and hops used in the brewing process and their waste management was restructured so they could convert it into biofuel. In 2013 Shepherd Neame also invested in a £3 million water recovery plant which enabled them to reduce their water consumption by 40%.

British High Commissioner to New Zealand, [Iona Thomas](#) said:

The UK and New Zealand share so much – whether it's our common values, our passion for sport, or our shared love of beer! Beervana is a wonderful celebration of some of the best beer in the world, so I'm delighted that ten British breweries are taking part this year.

You will find them at the GREAT Britain stand where you can also learn more about how British bars, pubs and breweries are greenifying the industry and tackling climate change – another important goal we share with New Zealand. Cheers!

British Consul General and Deputy Trade Commissioner Asia Pacific (Australia and New Zealand) [Louise Cantillon](#) said:

We are delighted to be showcasing these 10 British breweries at Beervana 2022. Beer is one of the UK's top food and drink exports valued at £413 million.

There are over 3,000 breweries in the UK. An impressive 441 million kilograms of beer is exported from the UK around the world each year.

Through the UK-New Zealand Free Trade Agreement we will strengthen opportunities to export high-quality British food and drink products so they can be enjoyed by even more New Zealanders.

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[Southampton targeted for illegal waste exports](#)

A former company director has been fined for exporting banned household waste from Southampton.

The illegal cargo bound for Indonesia in 2019 included nappies, clothing, textiles, tins and electrical items sent from a site in Worcestershire.

Tianyong Wang, of Solihull, pleaded guilty at an earlier hearing to causing his dissolved company, Berry Polymer Ltd, to export the waste. Shipping documents described the waste as plastic, which can be exported to Indonesia for recycling.

Howard McCann, prosecuting for the Environment Agency, told Kidderminster magistrates that between 27 June and 5 July 2019, Wang had caused his company to export some 382 tonnes of household waste in 22 sea containers from its site in Droitwich via Southampton and Felixstowe, including 17 from the south coast port.

The waste included 1,590 nappies and sanitary items, 1,338 electrical items and 33,639 tins and cans.

Other contaminants found in searches by investigators from the Environment Agency were items of clothing, textiles and rags, unopened plastic bags, glass, wood, golf balls, toys, a used toilet brush and food and drink cartons.

Mr McCann told the court Wang was the sole director of Berry Polymer, which has since been dissolved.

Wang had agreed to sell 500 tonnes of plastic bottle waste to a broker at £270 per tonne. A purchase order confirmed the load site of the waste as 'Berry Polymer Ltd, 20 The Furlong, Droitwich WR9 9AH'. Berry Polymer invoiced the broker £103,210.20 for 382.26 tonnes of 'plastic bottles'.

The offence was discovered on 4 July 2019 by Environment Agency officers who conducted initial inspections of some of the 22 containers sent to Southampton and Felixstowe.

The inspections recorded significant evidence of contamination, flies and, in some containers, a rotting decomposing smell.

The containers were deemed unfit for export at that stage and prevented from onward shipment to Indonesia.

Five of the containers were transported to the Environment Agency's inspection facility at Felixstowe for full examination. One of the bales was so badly contaminated, it made an officer physically sick.

All the containers were returned to the site in Droitwich for reprocessing.

Wang told the Environment Agency the material supplied was not as described because his company's usual bale-inspection had either not happened or was sub-standard.

In sentencing, district judge Ian Strongman said this was a 'blunder' by Wang that cost him his business and his reputation.

Sham Singh, a senior investigating officer for the Environment Agency, said:

This prosecution sends out a strong message we will investigate and, where necessary, prosecute anyone found to be involved in exporting waste illegally.

Waste crime can have a serious environmental impact and puts communities at risk. It undermines legitimate business and the investment and economic growth that go with it.

We support businesses operating within the law by stopping the illegal waste exports.

At Kidderminster magistrates' court on 10 August, Tianyong Wang, 43, of Welcombe Grove, Solihull, was fined £1,200 and ordered to pay costs of £10,000.

He was charged with breaching regulation 55(1) of the Transfrontier Shipment of Waste Regulations 2007, by causing Berry Polymer Ltd to transport 22 containers of waste collected from households to Indonesia illegally between 27 June and 5 July 2019. This was contrary to regulation 23 of the Transfrontier Shipment of Waste Regulations 2007.

If anyone suspects a company is doing something wrong, please contact the Environment Agency on 0800 80 70 60 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

COP26 Regional Ambassador O'Flaherty travels to Guatemala

World news story

UK Government's Regional Ambassador for Asia/ Pacific, Caribbean and Small Island Developing States, Ken O'Flaherty, will visit Guatemala on 19 August.



Ambassador O'Flaherty is including Guatemala in a global tour to several countries vulnerable to climate change as part of the UK's vigorous diplomatic efforts to follow up on the commitments of the Glasgow Climate Pact, achieved last year at COP26 in Scotland.

The Regional Ambassador will focus on helping meaningfully efforts to build resilience to climate change, to curb greenhouse gas emissions and to provide the necessary finance for both.

The Ambassador will stress the importance of reducing the gap between existing emission reduction plans and what is required to reduce emissions, such as Guatemala's commitments to tackle deforestation and promote the use of renewable energies. He will also discuss the importance for Guatemala to support initiatives to phase down unabated coal power and inefficient subsidies for fossil fuels.

For that purpose, the Regional Ambassador will meet with senior representatives of the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Energy and the National Council of Protected Areas. He will also learn about private sector efforts to promote sustainable development, and other active projects being implemented in Guatemala by environmental organizations.

During his trip, the Regional Ambassador will also highlight the need for nations to reaffirm their duty to comply with contributing 100 billion dollars annually from developed to developing countries. The UK has already committed US\$20 million through its [Biodiverse Landscapes Fund](#), which will help Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Belize cope with the impacts of climate change, reduce poverty and protect biodiversity in environmentally rich areas of Mesoamerica.

The 26th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), COP26 took place November 1-12, 2021, in Glasgow, UK. The UK holds the Presidency until COP27 in Egypt later this year and will aim to ensure promises on emission reductions are fulfilled to keep 1.5C alive; commitments on adaptation and loss and damage are honoured; commitments to get finance flowing are kept and that its inclusive Presidency continues.

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