

Investing in education and accelerating action on the SDGs

Thank you for inviting me to speak today at this important event. In these challenging times, it is especially crucial that we maintain and strengthen our efforts on the Sustainable Development Goals. I look forward to hearing the new Accelerated Actions that will be presented today by others.

This time last year, the UK presented our first Voluntary National Review outlining our progress across all the SDGs, areas of further work, and next steps. Two months later, at the SDG Summit at UNGA, we underscored our commitment by submitting eleven SDG Accelerated Actions that covered both our domestic and international efforts. These ranged from our commitment to legislate to bring all greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050 to launching a £600 million programme to provide reproductive health supplies for 20 million women until 2025.

Today, I wanted, in my role as the UK's Special Envoy for Girls' Education, to focus in on the education commitments we made, and to update this group on some of the work the UK has been leading in this critical area over the last year. Now more than ever, if we are to achieve the SDGs and recover better from the COVID-19 pandemic, standing up for the right of every girl in the world to 12 years of quality education is more important than ever. If we are to truly Build Back Better then we must see real progress on SDG 4 – so the children of the world have hope for the future and the opportunity to fulfil their potential.

At UNGA last year, the UK Prime Minister, underlining his personal commitment, announced £515 million of UK aid to support over 12 million children – half of them girls – in school. This package included: a) setting up a new £215 million education quality programme in Africa, including analysing which measures increase the proportion of girls making the transition from primary school to secondary school; and b) investing £300 million in the new International Finance Facility for Education – helping to unlock an additional \$5 billion of financial support to education projects in lower-middle income countries, with girls and the most marginalised children at the heart of the facility's work and investments.

I am delighted to say the mobilisation of this first programme is on track, and it is expected to launch in early next year. The programme will work with communities to ensure girls remain in school and successfully transition to secondary education.

Similarly, firm progress has been made on the International Finance Facility for Education – IFFEd – which I am pleased to say will be hosted in London. We strongly encourage others to join us and the Netherlands in supporting this innovative and cost-effective new financing instrument. Prior to COVID-19, 60% of the world's out-of-school girls lived in the countries eligible for IFFEd's support; by multiplying the impact of donor

contributions, IFFEd can make a real difference to the lives of many more girls than would otherwise be possible. More broadly, girls' education has been placed even more at the forefront of the UK's global development offer over the last year, recognising both the power of educating girls in its own right and its potential for unlocking progress against all the SDGs.

We were already facing a global learning crisis when, as we know all too well, the COVID-19 pandemic hit with devastating effects. 1.3 billion children – 650 million girls – have been out of primary and secondary education at the peak of school closures. The impact, both short and long-term, risks being hardest felt by the most marginalised, and by women and girls, including the potential for what has been called a 'shadow pandemic' of gender-based violence. Across the board, we risk losing recent hard-won progress made towards achieving the SDGs by 2030.

Now more than ever it is not only right but essential that we collectively champion and accelerate our efforts on education, recognising it is one of the best investments for reducing poverty and achieving all the SDGs. The intergenerational impact of educating girls can lead to healthier, fairer and safer societies, build prosperity and tackle climate change.

To this end, in the last three months, the UK have adapted and reprioritised our education programmes in 18 countries to support education systems and keep pupils safe during the pandemic. We have also provided an uplift in funding to the DFID/World Bank Education Technology hub to expand its help-desk facility for education ministries at this crucial time. At a global level we have committed additional funding of £20 million to UNICEF for child protection, and an additional £5 million grant to Education Cannot Wait, to keep the most vulnerable children in 26 countries safe and learning.

Collective effort is essential. This is why the UK is strongly supporting efforts, including the UNICEF Opening Up Better campaign, to ensure all children – including 650 million girls – get back to school when it is safe to do so. The needs of the most vulnerable children must be at the heart of this process. We encourage others, at all levels, to join these efforts.

We are also thinking about the longer term. We need both to build our education systems back better and to place girls' education, and gender equality, at the heart of the global recovery after COVID-19.

As Governments all around the world face budgetary pressure, we must all work to ensure that education spend continues to be a priority. We need more financing for education, not less. Institutions like the International Finance Facility for Education can help, and I encourage all to support it.

We will not achieve the SDGs and leave no one behind if we don't get SDG 4 back on track and address the wider impacts of school closures – we know from the West Africa Ebola epidemic these can include sexual exploitation, child marriage and increased poverty. The UK commits to continue being at the vanguard of these efforts.

I hope I have provided a snapshot of UK activity and commitment, and set out

the case for accelerate action on SDG 4 and girls' education. I ask that you share this prioritisation and passion, including by supporting the UNICEF-led Opening Up Better campaign, IFFEd and other initiatives and by putting education front and centre of your own COVID-19 and recovery efforts.

Of course, we need to make sustained and enhanced progress against all the SDGs, and I am proud of the work the UK is doing across the spectrum – on an agenda which we championed so strongly when the goals and principle of leave no one behind were agreed five years ago. I look forward to hearing your plans and commitments, and understanding where the UK can support and learn from these endeavours.

£62 million to help discharge people with learning disabilities or autism into the community

- Funding will be given to local councils to accelerate discharge of patients with learning disabilities or autism (or both) from mental health hospitals into the community
- The funding can be spent on costs associated with discharge, including establishing community teams, funding accommodation and staff training
- A new independent oversight panel has been set up to improve care and support for inpatients with learning disabilities or autism

The Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock has called for a renewed focus to ensure people with learning disabilities or autism are discharged promptly from hospital back into the community.

Additionally, last year the Health and Social Care Secretary asked Baroness Hollins to oversee the independent case reviews for people with a learning disability or autism who were identified as being in long-term segregation. The reviews have made recommendations in each case to support moving people to less restrictive settings as quickly as possible.

Baroness Hollins has now appointed an oversight panel, which will examine findings from these reviews and develop recommendations to the government.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Far too many people with learning disabilities and autistic people remain in hospital when they could receive better-suited support in their communities, closer to their homes and loved ones.

So, I am delighted this new funding will help local authorities to

support discharges into the community more quickly for people with learning disabilities and/or autism.

Minister for Care Helen Whately said:

People with a learning disability and autistic people should have the best possible care, and I am determined to put an end to the health inequalities they too often face.

Few of us would choose to remain in a hospital bed when we could be receiving better care in our own community. This funding will speed up discharge from hospital wards making a real difference to people's lives.

I'd like to thank Baroness Hollins for her important work overseeing independent case reviews of those in long-term segregation and look forward to seeing her recommendations.

Named the Community Discharge Fund, the funding will help to move people with learning disabilities and autistic people into more appropriate care: either into less restrictive settings or into the community, where appropriate.

The fund, split over 3 years, will give local authorities additional money to remove some of the obstacles to discharging inpatients. The new funding will help to cover 'double-running' costs such as establishing community teams, funding accommodation and staff training. Local authorities and Transforming Care Partnerships will be able to use the funding on the most appropriate measures for their area.

This funding is on top of a total of £3.7 billion given to councils to support their response to the coronavirus pandemic. This is a significant package of support which responds to the range of pressures councils have told us they are facing.

The oversight panel will make recommendations to transform the care and treatment of people with a learning disability or autism and prevent unnecessary admissions and the use of restrictive practices in future.

Baroness Hollins said:

Since November I have been reviewing all of those instances when people with learning disabilities and autistic people have been detained in long-term segregation. I have now appointed an oversight panel to assist me in understanding what I have found out, and in making urgent recommendations to the government. Our aim is to prevent the use of seclusion and restraint in future.

Supporting people to live well in their own homes would be the best outcome. In some circumstances people's mental health may require a

short admission for specialist assessment and development of an evidence-based treatment plan, but the majority can and should be able to receive expert mental health treatment and support in the community.

The independent reviews have made recommendations to improve individual cases and outlined steps to move individuals to less restrictive settings and onto discharge, which will now be considered by the oversight panel.

The panel held its first meeting on 29 June and will continue to meet throughout the summer to develop its findings and recommendations. It is made up of clinical, psychological and commissioning experts as well as those with a lived experience, including family members and advocates.

Cllr Paulette Hamilton, Vice Chair of the Local Government Association's Community Wellbeing Board, said:

Councils want to do all they can to support those with learning disabilities and/or autism to return to and be supported in their local communities.

This funding will be helpful for councils in ensuring the discharge process is speeded up and safe, while following the person throughout their treatment.

We look forward to seeing as many people return to their homes and communities as possible.

The funding, announced in the March Budget, consists of £74 million over 3 years for the whole of the UK under the Barnett Formula. Local authorities in England will receive £62 million over the 3 years:

- £20 million in 2020 to 2021
- £21 million in 2021 to 2022
- £21 million in 2022 to 2023

Funding will be allocated to a nominated local authority in each Transforming Care Partnership based on forecast need.

Areas with the highest number of autistic people or those with learning disabilities currently in inpatient settings will receive the most funding. However, all local areas will receive a share of the funding.

The funding is to be distributed to local government through payment of grants under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003.

Nearly 70 independent case reviews have been completed.

The oversight panel, chaired by Baroness Hollins, is examining the anonymised findings from the independent reviews to develop its recommendations. In

adherence with data protection policy, panel members do not have access to identifying information about individuals and will not intervene in individual cases.

Government advances plans to boost security of smart products

- Includes further information on powers granted to enforcement body and scope of rules
- Shoppers urged to look at security update periods when buying a smart product

The government has today [published proposals](#) for a new law that will help protect millions of smart device users from cyber criminals.

The proposals, drawn up by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and supported by the technical expertise of the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), detail the government's plans to raise the security standard for all consumer smart products sold in the UK.

As a first step the standard will make sure they adhere to three important requirements, which may be expanded on over time in consultation with stakeholders. The three requirements are:

- Device passwords must be unique and not resettable to any universal factory setting;
- Manufacturers must provide a public point of contact so anyone can report a vulnerability;
- Information stating the minimum length of time for which the device will receive security updates must be provided to customers.

This latest move by government is a significant step towards bringing robust security requirements for consumer smart products, such as smart speakers, kitchen appliances or cameras, into law as part of its ambition to make the UK the safest place to be online.

Research suggests there are now [20 billion smart devices](#) – known as the Internet of Things (IoT) – in use around the world. But with only around [13 per cent](#) of manufacturers embedding even the most basic approaches to cyber security in their products, people's privacy and security is at risk.

The government is already taking world-leading steps to tackle the problem and published a [code of practice for consumer IoT security for manufacturers](#) in 2018. Last month DCMS and the NCSC also played a vital role collaborating with global standards body European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI) to develop the first major [international standard](#) for the security of

smart devices, which will help protect consumers around the world from falling victim to cyber hacks through security vulnerabilities in devices bought on the global market.

Digital Infrastructure Minister Matt Warman said:

This is a significant step forward in our plans to help make sure smart products are secure and people's privacy is protected.

I urge organisations to respond to these proposals so we can make the UK the safest place to be online with pro-innovation regulation that inspires consumer confidence in our tech products.

People should continue to change default passwords on their smart devices and regularly update software to help protect themselves from cyber criminals.

The call for views also sets out the scope of the rules, what industry will need to do to comply with the new laws and an overview of industry guidance to be produced, as well as information on potential powers granted to the enforcement body. These could include powers to:

- Temporarily ban the supply or sale of the product while tests are undertaken;
- Permanently ban insecure products, if a breach of the regulations is identified;
- Serve a recall notice, compelling manufacturers or retailers to take steps to organise the return of the insecure product from consumers;
- Apply to the court for an order for the confiscation or destruction of a dangerous product; Issue a penalty notice imposing a fine directly on a business.

The proposals will also aim to future proof legislation in an age of rapid technological change and innovation, and the government will be looking for industry, academics and consumer groups to feed back on the plans.

Groups providing feedback to the [Call for Views](<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/proposals-for-regulating-consumer-smart-product-cyber-security-call-for-views>) will help shape the final enforcement approach, which will help determine the body best placed to administer the measures.

Consumer smart products can be the weak points of entry for hackers looking to breach someone's home network and owners are often unaware that the default passwords or outdated software which can come as standard on a new device can lead to a range of harms, including the invasion of privacy, fraud or even physical harm.

Insecure smart devices also enable more widespread and destabilising cyber attacks on infrastructure and services. In the 2016 Mirai botnet attack, hackers gained access to thousands of IoT products through common default

passwords to launch an attack that overwhelmed servers leaving much of the internet inaccessible on the US east coast.

Shoppers are urged to look at information on the duration of security update periods when choosing a smart product and people are still encouraged to follow [NCSC guidance](#) and change default passwords as well as regularly update apps and software to help protect their devices from cyber criminals.

National Cyber Security Centre Technical Director Dr Ian Levy said:

People are at risk because fundamental security flaws in their connected devices are often not fixed – and manufacturers need to take this seriously.

We would encourage all consumer device manufacturers to make their views heard and help us ensure the technology people bring into their homes is as safe and secure as possible.

British Retail Consortium Assistant Director Graham Wynn said:

Internet of Things products are quickly growing in popularity but most people still do not realise the dangers to personal data from smart products that are insecure. We welcome practical proposals from the government based on the three rigorous requirements to ensure that consumers' safety and privacy are protected.

techUK CEO Julian David said:

Consumer IoT devices are increasingly delivering on their potential to improve consumers' lives, with smart speakers, activity trackers and smart kitchen appliances a few notable examples. Poor security practices have consistently slowed the adoption of these devices, acting as a barrier to UK citizens reaping the benefits of the latest innovations and products.

techUK has continually supported government's efforts to ensure IoT products are secured at the design stage, starting in 2018 with the Secure-by-Design Code of Practice and now through this legislation. This important step will help ensure consumers are sufficiently protected, building trust and driving wider adoption across this growing sector which can ultimately improve the lives of UK citizens.

Sentences increased for 63 offenders

New statistics for 2019 [2019 ULS statistics](#) (MS Excel Spreadsheet, 21.3KB) show 63 offenders had their sentences increased, after the Attorney General and Solicitor General (the Law Officers) considered that their original sentences were too low.

Under the Unduly Lenient Sentence (ULS) scheme, victims of crime, members of the public, and prosecutors can ask for certain Crown Court sentences to be reviewed if they believe they are too low. Only one referral is required in order for it to be considered by the Attorney General's Office.

The Law Officers carefully consider each case personally, and if they think the sentence is too low, they will ask the Court of Appeal to review the sentence. They can only ask the Court of Appeal to review a sentence with a view to increasing it if that sentence is not just lenient but unduly so, such that the sentencing judge made a gross error or imposed a sentence outside the range of sentences available.

The 2019 Unduly Lenient Sentence Scheme statistics published by the Attorney General's Office revealed that in the vast majority of cases, judges get it right. There has also been a fall in the number of applications for sentences to be reviewed.

The Law Officers received 577 applications for sentences to be reviewed which met the necessary criteria to be considered under the Scheme. Of these, 93 were referred to the Court of Appeal. The Court of Appeal agreed that 64 sentences were too low, and as a result 63 offenders had their sentences increased. 16 people were imprisoned after avoiding prison time at their original sentencing.

Of the 93 offenders who were referred to the Court of Appeal, these related to crimes in the following categories:

- Rape and serious sexual offences
- Homicide
- Serious assault offences
- Drug-related
- Death by dangerous driving

The Solicitor General, Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP, said:

The ULS scheme allows anyone, including victims of crime, to ask for a review of certain sentences they believe are too low.

A sentencing exercise is not an exact science. In the vast majority of cases, judges get it right. While we are seeing fewer complaints about sentences, the scheme is still important to ensure that certain cases can be reviewed where there may have been a gross error in the sentencing decision. This brings comfort to many

victims and their families.

The Law Officers have 28 days from the date of sentencing to refer a case to the Court of Appeal, so it's important for them to receive a referral as early as possible in order to properly consider a case.

The ULS scheme came into force on 1st February 1989. It was introduced after public outcry over the lenient sentencing of the offenders involved in the 1986 rape of 21 year old Jill Saward. The victim was brutally raped by a gang of robbers at her father's vicarage.

The scheme was extended in 2017 to include an additional 19 terror-related offences, and again last year to cover sexual abuse of children or vulnerable adult offences, and stalking and harassment involving violence.

Notes

- The first ever ULS hearing took place in July 1989 for a man who committed incest on his daughter and had his sentence doubled from 3 to 6 years.
- The ULS scheme was legislated for within the Criminal Justice Act 1988.
- Anyone is able to ask a Crown Court sentence to be reviewed by the Attorney General's Office and the progress of referrals can be followed on the website. The ULS scheme only applies to certain Crown Court offences.
- Details of some of the offences covered by the scheme can be found [here](#)
- Under the ULS scheme a case must be referred to the Court of Appeal within 28 days of the date of sentencing. This deadline cannot be extended and in order to ensure we have time to properly consider a case we ask that referrals are made early in the process. It is very difficult to consider a case which is submitted late and it is not possible to do so outside of working hours.

[Stena Superfast VII and Royal Navy submarine report published](#)

News story

Near miss between a ro-ro ferry and a submerged submarine in the North Channel between Belfast, Northern Ireland and Cairnryan, Scotland.



Submarine periscope as seen from ferry (photo: Stena Line)

Our accident investigation report into the near miss between the ferry Stena Superfast VII and a submerged Royal Navy submarine on 6 November 2018, is now published.

The report contains details of what happened, actions taken and recommendations made: [read more](#).

Statement from the Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents

On 6 November 2018, the lookout on board the ferry Stena Superfast VII spotted a submarine's periscope close ahead. The officer of the watch then took immediate and effective action, turning the ferry to avoid a genuine risk of collision with a submerged submarine. The incident happened because the submarine's control room team had underestimated the ferry's speed and overestimated its range, resulting in safety-critical decisions being made based on inaccurate information.

Although there was no collision, this was the third accident or incident between a dived Royal Navy submarine and a surface vessel in 4 years, which is a matter of significant concern. The Royal Navy co-operated with the MAIB's investigation into this near miss and has taken a series of actions, intended to prevent recurrence, in response to this, and the other similar incidents. However, I have today recommended that the Royal Navy undertakes an independent review of the actions that have been taken, in order to ensure that the risk of similar collisions has been reduced to as low as possible.

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