

£12 million funding boost for cutting-edge government projects

- Projects being funded include new approaches to tackling drug misuse in prisons and preventing violence against women and girls
- The Evaluation Accelerator Fund will help test and evaluate new policies through intelligent data-driven insights
- Fund run by the Evaluation Task Force forms part of a wider push from Ministers for officials to drive efficiencies in new ways

More than £12 million of funding has been awarded to teams tackling deep-rooted issues, such as drug misuse in prisons, violence against women and homelessness.

The funding, run by the Evaluation Task Force (ETF), is the latest demonstration of the government's drive to ramp up the use of data as ministers work with officials to come up with innovative approaches to tackle age-old issues.

The 16 projects awarded money via the Evaluation Accelerator Fund will test and develop new data-driven approaches to policy-making and evaluation.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Kit Malthouse said:

We must constantly agitate and innovate to improve public services, always eager to try smart solutions to complex, deep-rooted problems across our nation.

Whether it's tackling drug misuse in prisons or finding new ways to confront violence against women and girls, this £12 million investment will help explore and develop those solutions so we can improve the lives of people in all of society.

The Evaluation Task Force invited bids from teams across Whitehall and the [What Works Network](#), asking people to pitch new and innovative ideas for testing and evaluating the impact of new policies or innovative approaches to delivering public services. The bids were focused on addressing the Prime Minister's six core missions: Levelling Up, Net Zero, Education, Health, Justice and Jobs.

The bids also needed to demonstrate how they would provide robust evidence of financial or efficiency savings, tying in with the wider push within the government to ensure taxpayers are receiving the best possible value for their money.

One successful bid, which has received £933k from the Accelerator Fund, will see wastewater in prisons monitored and tested for illegal substances, making it easier for prison staff to identify who is holding supply and reduce drug

abuse in jails. Another funded programme is run by the Centre for Homelessness Impact which received more than £200k to assess the effectiveness of a one-off payment to 18-year-olds leaving care on homelessness, employment and their involvement in criminal activity.

Around £1.7m also went towards work being undertaken by the College of Policing to identify promising interventions aimed at tackling violence against women and girls. Possible options include forensic tagging of perpetrators of crime in the Night Time Economy and the use of domestic abuse courts.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury Simon Clarke said:

Making the most of innovative ideas is one of the best ways we can continue to drive efficiency in the public sector, so it's great to see funding going towards creative solutions to such important issues.

Alongside cracking down on fraud and cutting the Government's property bill, a focus on evidence-led policy will help us ensure that we are making the most of taxpayers' hard-earned money.

The money has been awarded by the Evaluation Task Force, a joint Cabinet Office and HM Treasury unit, which was set up as part of a commitment in the Declaration on Government Reform to embed gold standard evaluation in government.

ETF is an efficiency-focused unit whose work regularly demonstrates value for taxpayers. The team are currently working with the Department for Work and Pensions to support their evaluation of labour market interventions including Kickstart and Restart. Evaluations of similar initiatives in the past have delivered returns of more than £3 for every £1 invested.

Up to this point, the Task Force has worked on 162 programmes with a value of £47.9bn. If a relentless focus on evaluation across the whole of government drives only a 1% efficiency, the ETF would already have saved around £480million through its work advising departments' spending.

To find further information on the successful projects, please refer to the [Evaluation Accelerator Fund](#) page on [GOV.UK](#).

[G7 Foreign Ministers' Statement on](#)

Energy Security

We, the Foreign Ministers of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, and the High Representative of the European Union, are steadfast in our condemnation of Russia's brutal, unprovoked, unjustifiable, and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine. We condemn and will not recognise Russia's continued attempts to re-draw borders by force. This constitutes a blatant violation of international law, in particular a serious breach of the United Nations Charter, and seriously undermines the international rules-based system. We reiterate our demand that Russia put an end to this war of choice, immediately and unconditionally cease all hostilities, and withdraw its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders.

We further condemn Russian attempts to weaponise its energy exports and use energy as a tool of geopolitical coercion. Russia is therefore not a reliable energy supplier. We will act in solidarity and close coordination to mitigate the impact of supply disruptions on economies and citizens globally and in our countries, especially in order to protect vulnerable groups. We are working to ensure Russia does not exploit its position as an energy producer to profit from its aggression at the expense of vulnerable countries. We will build on our recent actions to secure energy supplies, stabilise markets and mitigate the increases in energy prices driven by Russia's actions and extraordinary market conditions. This includes our efforts to reduce our demand for Russian energy and our support for International Energy Agency voluntary collective actions. We remain committed to energy and resource diversification and promote competitive, reliable, affordable energy markets that are transparent and adhere to high environmental, social, and governance standards. We reiterate our support for an ambitious and expedited global clean energy transition towards net zero by 2050, consistent with a 1.5°C warming limit and implementation of the Glasgow Climate Pact. This is essential to achieving our shared climate, security, and economic recovery objectives. The more quickly we achieve this transition, the more secure our societies will be.

We continue to explore further measures to prevent Russia from profiting from its war of aggression and to curtail Russia's ability to wage war. As we phase out Russian energy from our domestic markets, we will seek to develop solutions that reduce Russian revenues from hydrocarbons, support stability in global energy markets, and minimise negative economic impacts, especially on low- and middle-income countries. We remain committed to considering a range of approaches, including options for a comprehensive prohibition of all services that enable transportation of Russian seaborne crude oil and petroleum products globally, unless the oil is purchased at or below a price to be agreed in consultation with international partners. In considering this and other options, we will also consider mitigation mechanisms alongside our restrictive measures to ensure the most vulnerable and impacted countries maintain access to energy markets including from Russia.

We will further reduce our reliance on civil nuclear and related goods from Russia, and assist countries seeking to diversify their supplies. In all these actions, we will support each other and coordinate our actions to preserve G7 unity and reinforce our collective energy security and resilience. We welcome efforts by partners with the aim of replenishing gas reserves and increasing energy security and resilience, amid Russia's increased weaponization of energy. At the same time, we will continue our efforts with partners around the world to make energy savings and efficiency a global priority.

We remain steadfast in our solidarity with Ukraine and reaffirm our unwavering commitment to support the Government and people of Ukraine in their courageous defence of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and in their fight for a peaceful, prosperous, and democratic future.

British Embassy Ashgabat welcomes applications for Chevening Scholarships to study in the United Kingdom

Applications for Chevening Scholarships to study in the UK are open from 2 August to 1 November 2022.

You can submit your application via [the Chevening website](#).

Chevening Scholarships are awarded to individuals from all backgrounds who can demonstrate that they have the commitment and skills required to create positive change, and can show how a UK master's degree will help them do that. The scholarship offers full financial support for scholars to study for any eligible master's degree at any UK university whilst also gaining access to a wide range of exclusive academic, professional, and cultural experiences.

Since the programme was created in 1983, over 50,000 professionals have had the opportunity to develop in the UK through Chevening. There are more than 1,500 scholarships on offer globally for the 2023/2024 academic year, demonstrating the UK's ongoing commitment towards developing the leaders of tomorrow.

Head of Scholarships at the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), Naomi Rayner, said:

As the world continues to tackle major global issues such as climate change, international cooperation is more essential than ever. Chevening seeks to build an international community of people who are committed to working together to drive positive change. We do this by bringing together incredible people from around the world and supporting them, through education, to achieve their goals.

In the UK we are proud of our world class universities and we know that our learning environments are enriched by the wide diversity of cultures, experiences and viewpoints represented on our campuses. Chevening scholars make a significant contribution to these communities, as well as becoming an important part of our network of over 50,000 alumni.

Chevening represents the very best of the UK, welcoming people from across the world to study, grow, and thrive. Being a part of the Chevening network instils a strong sense of pride and responsibility. I am consistently inspired by the passion and commitment of those in the Chevening community and I look forward to hearing from this year's applicants.

Her Majesty's Ambassador, Ms Lucia Wilde, to Turkmenistan said:

If you are someone who is passionate about driving change, whether on a local or global scale, if you want to be the best at what you do and if you have the imagination to inspire others, then a Chevening scholarship could be the perfect opportunity for you.

There is no such thing as a 'typical' scholar. Your age, race, gender, religion and cultural background do not matter to us. We want to see that you have energy, curiosity, compassion a clear vision for your future and the ability to achieve your goals. If this sounds like you, then you are very likely to fit in with our community of over 50,000 alumni worldwide.

Our alumni network is full of dynamic influencers who have shared the same experience that you will. They can offer encouragement, mentorship, advice, and contacts. When you return home after your studies you should feel well-equipped to start making a real difference professionally or socially.

There is a lot to gain from submitting a thoughtful application, so if you have what it takes to be a Chevening Scholar, I would encourage you to apply before the 1 November deadline.

The call for new applicants follows the selection of two scholars from Turkmenistan, who won an award to study at a UK university this year. Successful applicants have been sharing their stories through the #ChosenForChevening hashtag.

[UK in Turkmenistan Facebook](#)

[British Embassy in Ashgabat Instagram](#)

More information

Visit [the Chevening website](#) for detailed information on the eligibility criteria and scholarship specifications.

Contact

British Embassy ukembassy.ashgabat@fcdo.gov.uk

Background information

Chevening Scholarships are the UK Government's global scholarship programme, funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), partner organisations, and partner universities. The scholarships support study at UK universities – mostly one year taught master's degrees – for individuals with demonstrable potential to become future leaders, decision-makers, and opinion formers.

Chevening began in 1983 and has developed into a prestigious international awards scheme. Chevening Scholars come from over 160 countries and territories worldwide, and over the past five years we have awarded almost 10,000 scholarships. There are over 50,000 Chevening Alumni around the world who comprise an influential and highly regarded global network.

The name 'Chevening' comes from Chevening House in Sevenoaks, Kent – currently the joint official residence of the UK's Foreign Secretary.

[Couples urged to 'say yes' to Marriage Allowance proposal](#)

At the height of the wedding season, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) is reminding married couples and people in civil partnerships to put extra cash at the top of their gift list and sign up for Marriage Allowance.

Marriage Allowance allows married couples or people in civil partnerships, including those who have been together for many years, to share their personal tax allowances if one partner earns below the Personal Allowance threshold of £12,570, and the other is a basic rate taxpayer.

Eligible couples can transfer 10% of their tax-free allowance to their partner, which is £1,260 in the 2022 to 2023 tax year. It means couples can reduce the tax they pay by up to £252 a year. They can apply any time and, if eligible, could backdate their claims for up to four previous tax years to receive a payment of up to £1,242.

Marriage Allowance is free to apply for, and customers are reminded to claim directly via HMRC's online portal to ensure they receive 100% of the tax relief they are eligible for.

Marriage Allowance is one of a number of benefits and reliefs available to boost family finances at a time when many are concerned with the rising cost of living.

Angela MacDonald, HMRC's Deputy Chief Executive and Second Permanent Secretary, said:

We want to ensure people are receiving vital financial support at a time when they need it most. Married couples or those in a civil partnership could potentially receive tax relief worth up to £1,242, meaning extra cash in their pockets.

To find out if you are eligible and how to apply search 'marriage allowance' on GOV.UK.

More than 2 million couples currently benefit from Marriage Allowance, but there could be thousands more who are eligible to claim.

Even if couples don't qualify for Marriage Allowance when they first get married, a change in circumstances years later could mean they become newly eligible. These include:

- one partner retiring and the other remaining in work
- a change in employment
- a reduction in working hours which means their earnings fall below their Personal Allowance
- maternity, paternity, or shared parental leave
- unpaid leave or a career break
- one partner studying or in education and not earning above their Personal Allowance

If a spouse or civil partner has died since 5 April 2018, the surviving person can still claim by contacting the [Income Tax helpline](#).

Marriage Allowance claims are automatically renewed every year. However, couples should notify HMRC if their circumstances change.

Marriage Allowance is 10% of an individual's tax-free personal allowance. The maximum amount that can be transferred to their husband, wife or civil partner is dependent on the Personal Allowance for that tax year.

Tax Year Marriage Allowance amount

2022/23 £252

2021/22 £252

2020/21 £250

2019/20 £250

2018/19 £238

If you cannot apply for Marriage Allowance online, you can apply to HMRC in writing or via your Self Assessment tax return.

The government is offering [help for households](#). Check GOV.UK to find out what cost of living support you could be eligible for.

World-leading UK safety tech sector sees strong sales and job growth

- Safety tech sector's revenue is up 21 per cent in the last year, topping £381 million
- Jobs in the sector grew by 30 percent, to 2,850 people across the UK

British safety tech firms are leading the global fight against online harms and are one of the fastest-growing sectors of the UK tech industry, according to an independent report published by the government today.

More than one hundred companies spread across the UK are creating innovative products and services to make online platforms, apps and websites safer. They do this, for example, by helping spot illegal content – such as child sexual abuse and terrorist material – by countering online harassment and disinformation, and preventing underage access to inappropriate content.

[The UK Safety Tech Sector: 2022 Analysis](#) by Perspective Economics on behalf of the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, reveals that the UK safety tech sector's revenues jumped by 21 per cent last year, hitting £381 million.

There was a 30 per cent boost to the number of safety tech jobs in 2021, with an additional 650 jobs bringing the total number of people employed in the sector to 2,850. Jobs in the sector include content moderators, policy professionals as well as research and tech developers.

The safety tech sector is on track to grow even further, raising a record-

breaking £63 million of external equity investment last year.

Companies that adopt online safety technology also experience overall greater brand trust, higher user engagement and better staff and customer retention, according to a second report, [Trust, Safety and the Digital Economy](#), released today.

Digital Minister Damian Collins said:

Making the online world safer is not only the right thing to do, it's good for business.

UK tech firms are at the cutting-edge developing practical solutions to the risks posed by the internet so that it continues to be a benefit not a detriment to people's lives.

They have blazed a trail of growth, innovation and job creation to become world leaders in their field and we are committed to maintaining their upward trajectory.

There are now 117 safety tech firms operating across the UK, an increase of 17 on last year. More than half of these firms are located outside of London, with hotspots in Leeds, Edinburgh and Manchester.

These firms include GoBubble, based in Chester, which is partnering with Professional Footballers Australia and FTSE 250 companies to protect their social media channels from online hate and abuse. Cyacomb, based in Edinburgh, is working with law enforcement agencies in Germany, Canada and across the US to detect illegal child sexual abuse content. Dorset-based Image Analyzer, winner of the 2021 Computing award for Best Emerging AI Technology, provides AI-based content moderation technology for image and video, including live-streamed footage uploaded by users.

Professor Ciaran Martin, CB, Professor of Government at Oxford University, advisor to Paladin Capital Group and founding Chief Executive of the UK's National Cyber Security Centre, said:

Properly designed, safer technology is critical to everything about our future in an uncertain and sometimes dangerous world. As this report shows, the UK is well placed to help develop safety tech in some key areas. It's vital we take this opportunity".

Andy Burrows, Head of Online Safety Policy at NSPCC, said:

The UK is well placed to become a global leader in developing innovative solutions that tackle online harms and keep children safe from preventable abuse. The growth of the safety tech market will boost child safety and deliver a significant economic return.

As these reports make clear, upcoming regulation can stimulate innovation and deliver safer and better designed online services for children and young people.

Ian Stevenson, Chair of the Online Safety Tech Industry Association (OSTIA), said:

I'm delighted to see the Safety Tech Sector Analysis confirms there has been strong growth in sales, employment and investment in the sector and it remains one of the fastest growing parts of the economy. The new Trust, Safety and the Digital Economy report highlights how platforms benefit from safety tech by creating healthier and more resilient online environments, which have commercial value as well as benefiting their users. These new analyses will help OSTIA members and others in the sector continue these positive trends.

The Trust Safety and Digital Economy study, conducted by Ipsos, Perspective Economics and Careful Industries, looked at six different industries vital to the UK economy, including gaming and entertainment; social media, apps and platforms; media and creative industries; retail and services; digital infrastructure; and the public sector, to understand the business case for investing in online trust and online safety.

These report findings support measures outlined in the [Online Safety Bill](#), and the government's commitment to ensuring the UK is the safest place in the world to be online.

ENDS

Notes for Editor

- Earlier this month, Minister for Tech and the Digital Economy, Damian Collins, held a roundtable with safety tech industry leaders to discuss new and emerging UK tech solutions that address a range of online harms, including fraud and child exploitation, and how the Government can better support the growing sector
- Since 2020, the UK Safety Tech Sector Analysis report has looked at the rise of this fast-growing sector in which the UK has become an emerging leader. Read the 2020 and 2021 reports [here](#).
- Interviews for the Trust, Safety and Digital Economy report were held with participants from 26 organisations between September 2021 and January 2022. Two stakeholder workshops were also conducted in Autumn 2021.
- The [UK Online Safety Tech Industry Association](#) (OSTIA) was established in April 2020, bringing together the UK's leading safety tech companies to promote online safety innovations and solutions in the UK and overseas
- The government has supported the safety tech sector through the creation of the [Safety Tech Challenge Fund](#), introduced to encourage UK tech firms

to find innovative solutions to helping keep children safe in end-to-end encrypted environments, while upholding user privacy.

- In June, the government set out its support for the safety tech sector in the [UK Digital Strategy](#), including its vision for growing the digital economy, addressing tech sector skills, investment and infrastructure.