

Alok Sharma, COP26 President, to visit Australia to meet the country's new government and build momentum on climate action ahead of COP27

- COP26 President Alok Sharma will meet members of the Australian Cabinet in Canberra as the new parliament meets for the first time
- He will visit the New South Wales Rural Fire Service State Operations Centre to hear directly from first responders tackling the impact of severe weather in the region
- While in Canberra, Mr Sharma will also meet indigenous community representatives to understand their approach to nature-based solutions, as well as engaging with states, businesses and civil society in support of stronger climate actions

COP President Alok Sharma will travel to Sydney and Canberra from 24-26 July 2022 to meet ministers in the first week of the new Australian government as he continues to press for the delivery of the Glasgow Climate Pact.

Mr Sharma will discuss Australia's potential as an international climate leader in a number of areas, including climate finance and zero-emission vehicles. He will also engage with Australian states and hold discussions with banks, businesses and civil society groups in support of stronger action on climate.

In recent months, more frequent and severe natural disasters have shown the impacts of climate change in Australia, including severe flooding in New South Wales. Mr Sharma will speak with first responders to these disasters at New South Wales Rural Fire Service State Operations Centre

On Monday, the COP26 President will be in Canberra, where he will visit a local nature reserve. He will hear first-hand from Ngunnawal Indigenous leaders who will explain the impacts of climate change in Australia, as well as traditional land management practices.

COP26 recognised the role of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in the Glasgow Climate Pact. As stewards of 80% of the world's remaining biodiversity, Indigenous Peoples are leaders in how to develop nature-based, resilient and effective solutions to climate change, through their knowledge and innovations, technologies, and spiritual values.

Alok Sharma, COP26 President, said:

Australia is turning a fresh page with its climate commitments and I look forward to working with the new Australian government on its path towards increased commitments and leadership in crucial areas such as climate finance, deforestation and support for less developed nations in the Indo-Pacific.

The “Powering Australia Plan” is an innovative centrepiece of the new government’s clean energy and industrial decarbonisation policy and paves the country’s path to net-zero by 2050 and increasing its clean energy capacity.

During my time in Australia I will meet Indigenous representatives, business leaders, government ministers and more, providing a great opportunity to discuss ways we can work together for effective climate action.

UK High Commissioner to Australia, Vicki Treadell said:

We’re delighted to welcome Alok Sharma to Australia where he’ll hear first-hand how the region is impacted by the climate emergency.

We know that the Glasgow Climate Pact was a historic collective achievement, keeping 1.5C alive. Now is the time to deliver on those commitments. This visit by the COP President to Australia and Fiji outlines how important the Indo Pacific is to tackling climate change within the decade.

Following the COP President’s visit to Australia, he will travel on to Fiji, a climate leader in the Pacific region. Like other Pacific countries, Fiji is highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

The UK is focussed on working with Fiji and Pacific countries to keep adaptation, loss and damage and climate finance on the top of the agenda in the lead up to and at COP27 in Egypt.

Support continues for Hong Kongers building new lives in the UK

- Over 40 national and regional organisations to share £3 million to deliver projects

- £3.6 million more for Welcome Hubs across the UK
- Continued cash for English language in England

Hong Kong British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) status holders building new lives in the UK will continue to receive vital support after the government today (23 July) confirmed the next phase of the Welcome Programme.

Today's package will help individuals and their families on the BN(O) visa to come and settle in the UK. Since its launch at the start of 2021, over 123,000 eligible Hong Kongers and their family members have chosen to take up this offer and applied for the BN(O) visa.

The Welcome Programme will continue to provide:

- a further £3 million for over [40 voluntary, community, and social enterprise \(VCSE\) organisations](#) to deliver their national and regional projects across mental health, social integration, employability and tackling hate crime
- £3.6 million more to continue the network of 12 Welcome Hubs across the UK which support people to get to know and connect with services in their local area
- further support for English language classes, and destitution support for those who need it (England only)
- and updates to the Welcome pack on GOV.UK, available in [English](#) and [Cantonese](#)

Levelling Up Secretary Greg Clark said:

We have strong ties with the people of Hong Kong and we want those who have chosen to build a home here to be supported to settle successfully.

I'm pleased that our new neighbours will continue to benefit from the expert support of councils, dedicated welcome hubs and fantastic grassroots projects thanks to this funding.

[Since February](#), VCSE organisations have been providing much needed support across the country, making a huge difference to people's lives, including:

- help for parents and carers who want to know which schools to send their

children to and how to connect with other parents

- help to get into work – across the UK, there have been seminars, one to one coaching sessions and entrepreneur networking events to boost skills, confidence and provide interview practice to help people get jobs that match their experience
- a dedicated mental health helpline to support young people and adults who may be struggling to start over in a new country
- a range of events and activities to integrate BN(0)s, including art classes, visits to museums, and organised walks around cities, with opportunities for communities to learn about Hong Kong culture through Dragon Boat festivals and Lunar New Year celebrations

One such project is FaithAction, which runs a Café Connect space in Solihull for arrivals from Hong Kong to meet others in the community, and direct them to local support and advice.

One arrival said: “Café Connect is a very good place for me because I want to know about English history and culture. I want to be part of life here. It’s good that I can speak to English people as my understanding improves and one day I will speak to everyone like they do.”

Wai Yin Society, based in Manchester, helped Ms L who arrived in the UK from Hong Kong in 2021 with her husband and daughter and was feeling disorientated and socially isolated. They helped her to get a job as a lunch time assistant at a local school and are now supporting her to complete a food hygiene course to help build on her existing skills.

Ms L said: “I am happy that Wai Yin gave me advice and support.”

One individual accessing support from Hongkongers in Britain through their CV writing clinic said: “ It was very helpful since the speaker told me about the job seeking culture in the UK that I didn’t know before. I could understand more because the speaker spoke in Cantonese, and also understood what a Hong Konger might be concerned about when finding a job. It is not only about polishing a CV, but also helping me gain more confidence to get a job.”

Today’s announcements means that organisations can extend their support to reach more individuals and provide tailored services to meet their needs.

The Welcome Programme is also providing funding to create a reporting and support service for Hong Kongers and all other East and Southeast Asian communities in the UK who experience racism or any forms of hate. ‘On Your Side’, led by Protection Approaches alongside a consortium of community organisations, will be launching soon.

The Welcome Hubs across the UK will continue to provide practical advice and support in English and Cantonese through their websites, one to one sessions and local support networks.

Councils across England, which are already playing a key role to ensure BN(0) status holders are warmly welcomed and supported, will continue to provide targeted English language and destitution support where the help is needed.

[1,000 personnel to represent the Armed Forces at the Birmingham Commonwealth Games 2022](#)

- Long-planned deployment will see hundreds of military personnel support smooth running of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games.
- Six serving Armed Forces personnel competing or coaching at the Games.
- 300 personnel supporting with ceremonial duties.

Around 1,000 Armed Forces personnel will be a part of this year's Commonwealth Games in Birmingham –by supporting security, competing for medals, officiating competitions, participating in the opening ceremony and supporting the delivery of a safe and secure event.

Hundreds of Armed Forces personnel will be deployed to Birmingham to support the West Midlands Police Security Operation, the biggest the region has seen.

An opening ceremony on Thursday 28 July will mark the start of the Commonwealth Games, featuring many of the Armed Forces personnel who are in Birmingham for ceremonial duties, civil engagement or competing as athletes.

The Band of HM Royal Marines will provide a fanfare of trumpeters during the ceremony. More than 130 Armed Forces flag raisers will be deployed across the venues to lead the over 280 medal presentations taking place throughout the Games.

Minister for the Armed Forces James Heappey said:

On behalf of the Defence community, I'd like to wish the Armed Forces competitors representing both their nation and their service at the Commonwealth Games the very best of luck.

Alongside our elite athletes in Birmingham will be hundreds of their Armed Forces colleagues, deployed to help ensure the Games run as smoothly and securely as possible.

Commander of the military deployment, Brigadier Matt Pierson said:

I am delighted to be leading the Armed Forces' contribution to the Commonwealth Games. We will play a small but important role in this fantastic sporting event, supporting West Midlands Police and Birmingham 2022.

Our personnel will be raising flags during medal ceremonies, supporting security efforts, and competing for medals. Sport, health and fitness are core elements of the Armed Forces community – this event shows who we are and what we do. I wish every success to those competing.

The British Army and Royal Air Force will be represented by athletes competing at this year's Games, with Armed Forces personnel taking part in boxing, judo and athletics.

Supported by the Armed Forces' elite athletes programmes, competing service personnel have been given time off their normal duties to focus on their training. Among them is Air Specialist (Class 1) Luke Pollard, a paratriathlete guide for world number one ranked paratriathlete David Ellis.

Air Specialist (Class 1) Luke Pollard, competing as a paratriathlete guide, said:

I'm proud to represent not only Team England but also the Royal Air Force (RAF) and the Armed Forces. I do feel a sense of pride at representing my service. I'd love to be able to showcase what the RAF has to offer and how much they value sport.

As part of the Government's long-term planning for the delivery of the Games, a Venue Assistance Force (VAF) made up of Armed Forces personnel has deployed to Birmingham to support local authorities.

Like the military flag raisers, the VAF will be working across the Games' venues, on hand to support the security programme led by West Midlands Police. The VAF is made up of both regular and reservists representing a large number of regiments from across the UK.

Defence is providing a range of standard support to enable the safe delivery of the Games including expert advisers and bomb disposal teams.

Assistant Chief Constable Matt Ward, Gold Commander for Birmingham 2022 commented:

WMP have been working on the security plans for Birmingham 2022

since the City won the bid back in 2017 and our partners have been part of that planning every step of the way. If you are visiting the Games, it's likely you'll see a number of different uniforms but we are all working together to deliver a safe and secure Birmingham 2022 for athletes, the Games family, spectators and the public.

This joint approach to security has always been an important part of the overall security plan. We know there's often a real interest in the military being involved with security of events but it's standard practice for them to be part of the planning and delivery of events of this scale.

It's a great opportunity for our officers to get to work with military colleagues and officers and staff from so many different police forces and organisations and there's a fantastic team spirit, not just inside the stadiums and venues but out on the streets with everyone working together towards the same goal, a safe and truly memorable Birmingham 2022.

[Minister Ford statement on the humanitarian crisis in East Africa](#)

Press release

Statement from the Minister for Africa, Vicky Ford, on the humanitarian crisis in East Africa.



Minister for Africa, Vicky Ford, said:

Today's agreement to resume Ukraine grain exports, brokered by the UN and Turkey, is a vital step towards alleviating hunger for the

world's poorest and most vulnerable.

This is welcome news for countries in East Africa where famine is also being driven by four consecutive seasons of failed rains and the impact of conflicts, with 48 million people now facing severe food insecurity.

That's why the UK is calling for urgent action to address suffering in East Africa and is also working with humanitarian aid agencies to tackle this crisis and to stop it from getting worse. This year, The UK will spend approximately £156 million across East Africa towards humanitarian crises.

It's eleven years since famine was last declared in Somalia, a crisis that killed over 250,000 people. We have worked with partners to build resilience and save lives over those 11 years and as the UN lead on Somalia, the UK is committed to driving a global response to prevent famine and alleviate further suffering.

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Every school will have a life-saving defibrillator by 22/23

State-funded schools across England will receive defibrillators under new government plans to make sure there is a device in every school, boosting their numbers in communities across the country.

Defibrillators have the potential to save the lives of pupils, staff and visitors in schools, with [latest research](#) showing that accessing these devices within 3-5 minutes of a cardiac arrest increases the chance of survival by over 40%.

The announcement comes after the government first committed last year to look at how to achieve a defibrillator on every school site, following a meeting with the Oliver King Foundation, supported by ex-footballer Jamie Carragher, which has worked tirelessly to raise awareness of this issue.

Since meeting with the foundation's founder Mark King, who tragically lost his son Oliver at the age of 12 to a cardiac arrest, the government has worked with charities and experts, including the British Heart Foundation, to identify the scale of need across English schools.

A survey will soon go out to all state-funded schools to finalise the number of devices that will need to be procured, which is estimated to be over

20,000. The government has committed to funding all necessary devices so that every school has at least one on-site, or more for schools with larger sites.

The rollout will build on existing requirements for schools to teach first aid as part of the curriculum, with secondary school pupils being taught life-saving methods such as CPR and the purpose of defibrillators. This rollout will help protect schools and their local communities against cardiac arrest, delivering wider access to these devices.

Education Secretary James Cleverly said:

Access to funding must not stand in the way of every school having on-site access to a life-saving defibrillator.

The evidence clearly shows that defibrillators drastically increase the chance of survival from a cardiac arrest, and it's particularly important that they are available close to sports halls and playing fields that children, young people, and the wider community use on a daily basis.

That is why I am so pleased to be able to roll these devices out to schools across the country over the coming year, and I hope this goes some way to preventing more tragic stories like Oliver King's.

Mark King, Founder of the Oliver King Foundation said:

It's been 11 years since we tragically lost our Ollie to a sudden cardiac arrest while he was taking part in a school swimming lesson. If there had been a defibrillator on site, our son would still be alive today.

Since 2012 we've fought with tenacity to make defibrillators mandatory in all schools. I'm therefore delighted that, after our decade-long fight, the Government has finally listened and schools will now be equipped with them. It will mean families up and down the country won't ever have to go through the pain that we did when we lost our Ollie.

I am thankful to the MPs and ministers who've supported our campaign and particularly all of those at the Department for Education.

Jamie Carragher, supporter of the Oliver King Foundation said:

This is fantastic news and is testament to the relentless and unwavering campaigning of Mark and Joanne King who've fought so hard for this moment.

They are an inspirational couple who, supported by a small team,

have spent more than 10 years fighting for defibrillators in schools so that young lives are not needlessly lost. I am proud to have played a small part in supporting them and I am delighted that the government has committed to installing this lifesaving kit in all schools.

Many schools already have defibrillators on-site. The purpose of this programme is to plug the gaps, giving more schools and local communities access to this vitally important first-aid equipment.

It will aim to ensure that all state-funded schools in England have at least one device on site, with more devices delivered to larger schools.

The defibrillators will protect pupils, staff and visitors to the schools, including local communities who use school facilities. For example, this could mean football teams who hire school pitches would be protected, as well as keeping pupils safe during the school day.

Schools will shortly be sent a survey to identify which already have defibrillators, with the responses being used to establish how many devices are needed.

Further details of the rollout and device specification will be confirmed in the autumn term.

The Government currently encourages schools to have an automated external defibrillator (AED) on their premises as part of their first aid equipment. AEDs are currently available for schools and other education providers in the UK to purchase through the NHS Supply Chain at a reduced cost. These arrangements are available to all UK schools, including academies and independent schools, sixth-form colleges, FE institutions and early years settings (including holiday and out-of-school providers).

The Government has produced guidance for schools on buying, installing and using an AED, which can be viewed [here](#).