

Prisons receive £156 million maintenance boost

- funding builds on government's vision for the future of jails
- £2.75 billion package to transform the prison estate

Prisons across England and Wales are set to receive a £156 million cash boost to tackle the most pressing maintenance issues, the Justice Secretary, Rt Hon Robert Buckland QC MP, announced today (27 October 2019).

The new and significant investment will update critical infrastructure such as fire systems and boilers, refurbish cells and showers and improve conditions for those living and working in prisons requiring the most urgent attention.

The funding builds on the government's previous announcements to transform the prison estate, totalling £2.75 billion:

- with up to £2.5 billion to provide 10,000 additional prison places and create modern, efficient jails that rehabilitate offenders, reduce reoffending and keep the public safe.
- a further £100 million will also bolster prison security, clamping down on the weapons, drugs and mobile phones that fuel violence, self-harm and crime behind bars.
- in addition to the £156 million for pressing maintenance announced today.

Justice Secretary, Rt Hon Robert Buckland QC MP, said:

This substantial investment will drive much needed improvements in our jails – providing our hardworking staff with the right conditions to do their jobs and creating a safe and decent environment that gives offenders hope to move away from a life of crime.

This government is spending £2.75 billion to transform the estate, with modern, efficient prisons that drive rehabilitation and reduce reoffending – ultimately protecting the public.

Work to deliver new prison places is already underway, with the construction of a new prison in Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, Glen Parva in Leicestershire and a new houseblock at HMP Stocken in Rutland, which opened in June.

Plans to convert HMP Haverigg into an open jail with a doubled capacity by the end of the year are also progressing.

The £2.75 billion investment in the prison estate is part of a government-

wide crack-down on crime which includes 20,000 more police officers on the streets and stronger sentences for those who commit the most serious crimes.

[Continued violence in Iraq: UK statement](#)



Minister for the Middle East, Dr Andrew Murrison said:

I am deeply concerned about the continued violence in Iraq. I send my condolences to the families of those who have died and wish a speedy recovery to those who have been injured.

We continue to urge the Iraqi security forces to show restraint and for protests to be peaceful. More violence will simply worsen an already fragile situation. The Iraqi Government should investigate all credible allegations of criminal violence and use of excessive force by security forces.

Real political and economic reform to deliver on the legitimate demands of the protesters is the only way forward. The UK continues to support the Iraqi government to take quick and effective action on tackling corruption, creating jobs and improving services.

Further information

Published 26 October 2019

UK and Morocco sign continuity agreement

- Trade between the UK and Morocco was worth £2.5 billion in 2018.
- The UK has now secured trade with countries accounting for £109 billion.
- This agreement will ensure British businesses and consumers benefit from continued access to the Moroccan market after we leave the EU.

The Minister of State for the Middle East and North Africa Dr Andrew Murrison signed the agreement with the Moroccan Foreign Minister, Nasser Bourita.

Welcoming the agreement, Minister of State Dr Andrew Murrison said:

The UK and Morocco have a close friendship and an important diplomatic history that is over 800 years old.

The signing of this Agreement builds on the UK's deep cultural, political and economic ties with the region and demonstrates our commitment to increase trade and constructive dialogue with Morocco.

Importantly, the Agreement will give exporters and consumers the certainty they need to continue trading freely and in confidence as the UK prepares to leave the EU.

The agreement will ensure British businesses and consumers benefit from continued trade with Morocco after we leave the EU. It provides, among other trade benefits, tariff-free trade of industrial products together with liberalisation of trade in agricultural, agri-food and fisheries products.

Minister of State for Trade Policy, Conor Burns said:

The world is ready to sign free trade deals with Britain, they want to work with our people and have better links with our industries and it is our priority to ensure businesses have the tools they need to continue trading freely after Brexit.

The agreement signed with Morocco today will help provide certainty for businesses, ensuring they can continue to trade on the same terms with our Moroccan partners. On my recent visit to Morocco, I witnessed first-hand the many opportunities available to UK and Moroccan firms to advance our trade together.

I look forward to maintaining and further strengthening our current trade, political and security relationship with Morocco as we continue to work closely together in the future.

In addition to growing trade, today's agreement seeks to deepen UK-Moroccan cooperation across foreign policy, economic, social and cultural ties. The Agreement provides a framework for policy dialogue and to strengthen cooperation on important issues like trade, educational and environmental matters. The Agreement sends a strong signal that Britain is committed to a close bilateral relationship with Morocco and will continue to play a positive role in the region.

Her Majesty's Ambassador to Morocco, Thomas Reilly, said:

Morocco has a well-diversified and modern market across a number of sectors where UK companies and expertise have much to offer. I hope that this Agreement will usher in a new phase of increased bilateral investment in each other's economies, which is so essential for continued stable economic growth.

Notes to editors

- This Agreement will be subject to domestic parliamentary procedures in both the UK and Morocco before it is brought into force.
- This Agreement is designed to take effect when the EU-Morocco Association Agreement ceases to apply to the UK. If we leave the EU at the end of October, the Agreement will come into effect on a provisional basis to maintain continuity before both Parties have completed their respective domestic procedures.
- The UK has signed or agreed in principle 19 Trade Continuity Agreements with 47 countries. A regularly updated list of all signed agreements is available on GOV.UK.
- Statistics sourced from ONS 'UK total trade: all countries, non-seasonally adjusted January to March 2019 release'. Figures relate to 2018. Note that this includes routine data revisions since the previous ONS release.
- The UK-Morocco Association Agreement replicates the effects of the existing trade and non-trade provisions as far as possible. Under the Agreement consumers in the UK will continue to benefit from lower prices on goods imported from Morocco, such as fruit and vegetables. Consumers in Morocco will continue to benefit from lower tariffs on products such as dairy products, meat, fruit and vegetables from the UK.
- [Read the UK-Morocco Political Declaration](#)

Further information

[Minister for Europe supports stronger](#)

United Kingdom-Spain ties at annual talks

Christopher Pincher joined Spanish Europe Minister Luis Marco Aguiriano at the event in Edinburgh which celebrates the United Kingdom's strong bilateral and cultural links with Spain and commitment to strengthening the United Kingdom-Spain relationship after Brexit.

The Minister for Europe Christopher Pincher said:

The annual Tertulias dialogue illustrates the breadth and depth of the relationship between the United Kingdom and Spain. We have participants from politics, business, media and civil society, coming together to discuss some of the most important issues facing both our countries, such as cybersecurity, artificial intelligence and the future of financial services.

The richness of this dialogue reflects the close people to people links that exist between the United Kingdom and Spain and our commitment to strengthen those links once we have left the EU.

The United Kingdom and Spain have a deep and broad bilateral relationship. Our bilateral trade was worth £50 billion pounds last year and growing. Spain is the eighth largest investor in the United Kingdom (£50bn inward FDI stock), while Spain is the fifth destination for British investment (£71bn outward FDI stock).

The United Kingdom and Spain collaborate closely on justice, defence, security and preventing organised crime. We also have strong people to people links, over 300,000 British nationals living in Spain, and nearly 200,000 Spanish nationals resident in the United Kingdom.

Further information

UK Government Minister for Wales to commemorate the liberation of 's-Hertogenbosch



53rd Welsh Division memorial 's-Hertogenbosch

UK Government Minister for Wales Kevin Foster will travel to the Netherlands on the 26 October to take part in a service of remembrance for those from the Welsh army division who fought and died in the liberation of 's-Hertogenbosch in 1944.

The 53rd Welsh Infantry Division spent four days in October 1944 battling to free the city in the southern Netherlands during the Second World War. The city and surrounding area saw allied forces enter the freed city on 27 October 1944 after fierce fighting which claimed the lives of 764 civilians and 146 British soldiers.

The UK Government Minister for Wales will honour the memories of the fallen soldiers and civilians at the memorial service, laying a wreath on behalf of the UK Government.

UK Government Minister for Wales Kevin Foster said:

“The commemorations offer an important opportunity to honour the lives and bravery of all those in the 53rd Welsh Division who fought so bravely to liberate 's-Hertogenbosch during the Second World War, with many making the ultimate sacrifice.”

“I am proud to represent the UK Government and to share in this special moment of reflection at the memorial service for the British Soldiers and civilians who lost their lives 75 years ago. It is important we continue to take the time to remember those who fell in the liberation of 's-Hertogenbosch and thank those who served alongside them to ensure their bravery continues to be honoured.”

ENDS

Published 26 October 2019