

Special #knifefree chicken boxes launched across the country

More than 321,000 chicken boxes that feature the Home Office #knifefree campaign have been distributed to over 210 outlets in England and Wales.

The insides of the boxes are printed with real life stories of young people who have chosen to pursue positive activities, such as boxing or music, instead of carrying a knife.

The boxes will replace the standard packaging in both independent and branch owned chicken shops, including Morley's, Chicken Cottage and Dixy Chicken. Many of the participating shops will also have screens showing the #knifefree campaign.

Policing Minister Kit Malthouse said:

These chicken boxes will bring home to thousands of young people the tragic consequences of carrying a knife and challenge the idea that it makes you safer.

The government is doing everything it can to tackle the senseless violence that is traumatising communities and claiming too many young lives, including bolstering the police's ranks with 20,000 new police officers on our streets.

In addition, new #knifefree street teams will be visiting convenience stores, hair salons and barber shops as well as places of worship and community centres across London, Manchester and Birmingham. The street teams are made up of people who are trained to speak to local communities about the campaign and on the risks of carrying a knife.

The #knifefree chicken boxes are being introduced nationwide following a successful partnership with Morley's in March this year, during which 20,000 #knifefree chicken boxes were distributed in 15 branches of Morley's.

Morley's managing director Shan Selvendran said:

Morley's are proud to support the #knifefree campaign. We have been saddened by the recent increase in knife crime. We want to promote being knife free by using custom chicken boxes to deliver the message and start conversations amongst all of our customers.

The #knifefree campaign aims to reduce knife crime by changing the attitudes and behaviours of young people aged between 10 – 21, highlighting positive alternatives to carrying a knife and challenging the perception that knife

carrying is widespread and makes you safer.

It seeks to empower young people with the belief that there is a way out of knife crime, by using real-life stories of young people who made the decision to stop carrying knives and focus on positive alternative activities, such as basketball or acting.

The #knifefree chicken boxes follow a series of Government announcements to tackle serious violence, including the recruitment of 20,000 new police officers and confirmation that all 43 police forces in England and Wales can use enhanced stop and search powers.

On Monday (12 August) £35 million was confirmed for 18 Violence Reduction Units, which will tackle violent crime on a local level through a multi-agency approach.

The Prime Minister also hosted a roundtable at Downing Street, bringing together the police, probation and prison leaders to discuss how to cut crime and improve the criminal justice system.

He also announced up to £2.5 billion for 10,000 prison places; a review of sentencing for the most dangerous offenders; and a £100 million in prison security.

[First steel cut for HMS Cardiff](#)

Defence Minister Anne-Marie Trevelyan cut the steel for the UK's newest warship at a ceremony at BAE Systems' shipyard in Govan on the River Clyde today.

Marking the official start of build on the second of eight City Class vessels, it also represents another significant milestone for the Type 26 programme, the Royal Navy, UK Defence and shipbuilding in Scotland. All eight Type 26 frigates will be built on the Clyde, with the work sustaining some 1,700 jobs in Scotland and 4,000 jobs across the wider UK maritime supply chain for decades to come.

Defence Minister Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

The Royal Navy's new world beating Type 26 anti-submarine frigates are truly a UK-wide enterprise, supporting thousands of jobs here in Scotland and across the UK. These ships will clearly contribute to UK and allied security, but also make a strong economic contribution to the country. With 64 sub-contracts already placed with UK-based businesses, there will be new export opportunities for them to tender for through the selection of the Type 26 design

by Australia and Canada too.

Chief of Materiel Ships, Vice Admiral Chris Gardner said:

Type 26 will form a key part of the Royal Navy's future balanced Fleet, providing a core component of anti-submarine protection. Today's steel cut is another significant milestone in the delivery of the Type 26 programme, a programme that is sustaining thousands of UK jobs and future proofing our naval capability for years to come.

The first steel section of HMS Cardiff being cut. Crown copyright.

The cutting-edge frigates for the Royal Navy will replace the current anti-submarine warfare Type 23 frigates and provide advanced protection to the Continuous at Sea Deterrent and Queen Elizabeth Class aircraft carriers and offer unrivalled anti-submarine warfare capability.

Each Type 26 will be equipped with a range of capabilities including the Sea-Ceptor missile defence system, a 5-inch medium calibre gun, an embarked helicopter, medium range radar, powerful bow and towed array sonars, helicopter-launched torpedoes and a design which makes them extremely difficult for enemy submarines to detect. They will be designed for joint and multinational operations across the full spectrum of warfare, including complex combat operations, counter piracy, humanitarian aid and disaster relief work.

Its flexible design will also allow its weapon systems to be adapted throughout its lifespan to counter future threats. The Type 26 benefits from the latest advances in digital technologies, including 3D and virtual reality, which ensures that the ship's design is refined earlier in the process.

The first three ships, HMS Glasgow, HMS Cardiff and HMS Belfast, were ordered for £3.7 billion. HMS Edinburgh, Birmingham, Sheffield, Newcastle and London will form the second batch of Type 26 warships.

The Defence Minister touring BAE Systems. Crown copyright.

The first Type 26 warship, HMS Glasgow, will enter service in the mid-2020s. Designed for a service life of at least 25 years, the Type 26 frigates will serve in the future Royal Navy surface fleet into the 2060s. Both Australia and Canada have now chosen the Type 26 design as the baseline for their respective warship programmes.

The Type 26 manufacture Batch 1 contract was signed in June 2017. This will deliver the first three ships to the Royal Navy and includes the necessary

modifications to the Govan and Scotstoun shipyards. The procurement of Batch 2 will be subject to a separate approval and contract which is expected to be awarded in the early-2020s.

[Successful start for Sellafield repackaging mission](#)

Experts at Sellafield have opened and repacked a historic plutonium can for the first time.

The work is part of a £1 billion programme to address an identified degradation risk in a small proportion of the canisters, which date from about 50 years ago.

It's painstaking and highly skilled work which requires operators to deftly manoeuvre the package inside a sealed glovebox.

The material was originally placed in an inner can which was wrapped in a plastic casing and then placed into an 'overpack' can – like a Russian doll.

But in a small proportion of the packages, the outer can has shown sign of degradation.

The operators' task is to take the plastic-coated can out of the 'overpack', clean off as much plastic as possible and then reseal it in a modern and more robust outer can.

This is done in a sealed glovebox while the operator wears several layers of protective gloves.

[Successful start for Sellafield repackaging mission](#)

James Millington, head of special nuclear materials at Sellafield Ltd, said:

Our teams have practised and practised the techniques using mock-up gloveboxes, so I'm delighted to see that all the preparation has paid off.

Safely getting the first package into the new outer can represents one of the most significant risk reduction milestones we've delivered in recent years.

Completion of the first successful repackaging kicks off a 5 year work programme.

In parallel, a new purpose-built repackaging plant is under construction which is scheduled to begin operations in the 2020s.

This will enhance the repackaging process by removing impurities in the plutonium which contribute to the degrading process.

The Economics of Biodiversity: Exchequer Secretary's speech

In May, the UN released a report on the state of biodiversity on Earth showing that species of all kinds – mammals, birds, insects, plants, fish – are disappearing at an alarming rate.

One million species are at risk of extinction, including 40 percent of all amphibian species, 33 percent of reef-forming corals, and around 10 percent of insects.

Unfortunately, it's our species that is to blame:

- we've cleared 100 million hectares of tropical forest between 1980 and 2000
- we've brought a third of fish stocks to biologically unsustainable levels
- and every year, we dump 3–400 million tons of heavy metals, solvents, toxic sludge and other wastes from industrial facilities into the world's waters

The death of any one species is a special tragedy, and a haunting loss.

But the loss of a million would be a threat to our entire existence.

Because, as you all know, biodiversity is not mere window dressing. Nature truly provides:

- it gives us the basics of food, fibres and clean water
- forests and wetlands capture carbon and retain rain water
- what's more, approximately half of synthetic drugs have a natural

origin, including many of our cancer drugs, and ten of the 25 highest selling drugs in the USA

The need for an economic framework

So we can see the scale of the problem in front of us.

We have scraped and scoured our environment to the bone.

But, like the state of climate science before the Stern review, we don't yet have the economic tools to shape the policies required to heal it.

We might know that the UK's 1,500 species of pollinators deliver an estimated £680 million annual value to the UK economy.

But that's just one part of the picture. We need to be able to quantify what is at stake, and we need to be able to do so on the broadest possible canvas.

There's an urgent need to better understand the intricate relationship between human wealth and welfare, and the environment's biodiversity and ecosystems.

At the moment, not all that is very useful commands high value.

And not everything that has high value is very useful – as Adam Smith once observed, water is a fair bit cheaper than diamonds.

The situation demands we think more deeply.

We need to get to grips with the nature of value, and the value of nature.

Above all, we need to understand that you cannot manage what you do not measure.

And that to forge a sustainable economy in harmony with nature – to keep it clean, use it wisely and share it fairly..

...we have to better understand the links between ecosystems, biodiversity and human well-being...

...And to come up with creative and transformative solutions to help secure it all.

This is an ambitious goal which can only be achieved through the concerted efforts and combined strength of all sections of society.

We need national and international alliances between policy makers, science, the public and the business community.

And that's why I'm proud that Britain is playing a leading role.

Earlier this year, the previous Chancellor announced an independent global review on the Economics of Biodiversity – the first on the topic to be led by

an Economics and Finance Ministry.

We were all thrilled when Professor Dasgupta agreed to lead the review. With his global intellectual standing, I can think of no one better.

I am also delighted that leading lights from academia, public policy and the private sector have agreed to take part in an Advisory Panel to provide expert advice to Professor Dasgupta and his team with their work.

As a humble politician, seeking sensible options for change, I would warmly welcome your thoughts not just on how we establish the economic framework... but also on the policy choices that may flow from this.

It's great to see so many of you here today, with an opportunity to contribute your ideas and engage on this critical issue.

I look forward to hearing all about your day and will retain a keen interest throughout the year ahead.

Thank you.

Highways England weighs in with one tonne donation for food banks

Almost 1,000kg of items was collected by the teams taking care of motorways and main A roads across the East Midlands, while workers carrying out the widening of the A500 in Staffordshire delivered 37kg of goods to help people in need and are continuing to collect.

From tinned goods to pasta and rice, to tea bags and toilet rolls, a shopping list of foods desperately needed by food banks for the emergency parcels was collected.

The donations came as the Trussell Trust, the UK's largest food bank provider, revealed a 20 per cent increase in the number of food parcels going to children over the summer holidays last year.

Recent figures from the trust showed that 87,496 food parcels went to children in the UK during the summer break in 2018, 20 per cent up on the same period in 2017.

And the Trussell Trust expects demand this year to be as high as families who are entitled to free school meals during term time feel the extra financial pressure over the summer break.

To help those in local communities who risk going hungry this summer, staff from Highways England and the East Midlands Asset Delivery (EMAD) partnership

organised collections at offices across the region – covering Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire.

The huge collection weighing almost one tonne included 156 tins of baked beans, 170 tins of tuna, 90 bags of pasta, 139 jars of cooking sauces, 155 tins of vegetables, 40 boxes of tea bags, 79 toilet rolls and over 300 nappies. The collections were divided up to go to three food banks in the region.

Highways England Assistant Contract Collaboration Manager Nicola Tomlinson said:

This fantastic contribution from all of our suppliers really does take working collaboratively to the next level. I'm astounded by the generosity of the workforces and hope our donation will make a big difference to families in communities across our region.

Kay Fleming, Framework Manager for nmcn, said:

I've never seen so many tins of beans and I used to work in a shop! I'm so proud of the East Midlands' Customer and People team who promoted this worthwhile cause.

Meanwhile in Staffordshire, members of the Highways England and Osborne A500 Etruria Widening Team recently dropped off a delivery of food to the Stoke-on-Trent Foodbank, part of the Trussell Trust network.

At the first delivery are John Bennett, warehouse coordinator for the Stoke food bank, Lee Brook, Osborne general foreperson; Kimberley Wild, Osborne performance manager; and Humzah Mir, Highways England project manager.

The A500 is being widened from two to three lanes in both directions between Porthill (A5271) and Wolstanton (A527) as part of a £17.5 million upgrade.

A collection box has been set up at the site office for food donations and the first delivery was made just before the schools broke up for summer. Collections will now continue over the duration of the scheme, due to finish autumn 2020.

Kimberley Wild, Osborne Performance Manager, said:

We continue to try to find opportunities to engage and help local communities where possible, particularly when we are effectively part of the community for a period of time, through our work. We hope that the food bank will be successful and help support the community.

Nigel Webster, from the Bulwell and Bestwood Foodbank in Nottingham, thanked EMAD for their donation and told how stocks were running low this time of year while Gareth Duffield, the Trussell Trust's Area Manager for Birmingham and Northern Counties, added:

We're so glad food banks in our network could benefit from the collection organised by Highways England to help support people facing crisis. We have seen a record demand in food bank use in the past decade, with more and more people struggling to afford the basics. This isn't right.

We're continually blown away by people's support to provide emergency help, and ultimately work towards a future without hunger and poverty.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.