

# UK government transforming South Wales rail network

- UK government announces up to £58 million funding commitment for significant upgrades to capital's key train station to deliver improved access and platforms suited for longer trains
- commitment to progress plans for a new parkway station at Swansea, reducing journey times to West Wales
- up to 14 minute journey time reduction between Cardiff and London from December 2019

Up to £58 million to upgrade Cardiff Central Station has been confirmed today (22 July 2019) by the Transport Secretary Chris Grayling.

Subject to the necessary assurances that the scheme represents value for money, these upgrades will ease crowding and congestion through the station during peak periods, drive forward regeneration and enable longer trains with more seats to serve the capital.

Secretary of State for Transport, Chris Grayling, said:

Passengers in Cardiff deserve a modern, accessible station at the heart of their vibrant city centre. This funding has the potential to deliver just that, ensuring more reliable, comfortable and faster journeys into and out of the capital.

It is imperative that the 2 governments in Wales work closely together – in doing so, this strengthens the Union and I look forward to receiving the proposals for an ambitious and deliverable business case.

Secretary of State for Wales, Alun Cairns, said:

We're committed to improving standards of service for rail passengers across Wales.

This funding will allow Cardiff to become an attractive tourist and commuter destination at a crucial time in the city's regeneration. We are also committing to progressing plans for a West Wales Parkway station, which will deliver time savings of up to a quarter of an hour from Pembrokeshire to Cardiff and increase local connectivity around Swansea to provide greater opportunities for the whole of the Swansea Bay City region.

This investment builds on the £5 billion the UK government is investing on improving journeys for passengers on the Great Western Mainline between South

Wales and London, targeted at introducing more reliable and faster services, new trains and more seats.

The UK government is progressing plans for a new West Wales Parkway station, near Swansea, to boost connectivity and capacity for passengers across the south and west of Wales.

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## **UK Government delivers for Wales at Royal Welsh Show**

People and firms living, working and doing business in Wales will be able to find out about the many benefits and services available to them through UK Government schemes, as departments host their biggest ever showcase at the 100th Royal Welsh Show.

Under the theme of 'Delivering for Wales,' UK Government departments including the Office of the Secretary of State for Wales, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), DVLA, Department for International Development (DFID) and ONS will join forces on avenue C, stand 221 with a series of events, interactive activities and information about support for people at work and at home.

### **Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:**

Across the UK and around the world, representatives from UK Government departments work tirelessly to provide all types of support to our citizens and aid in countries where it is desperately needed.

During a special year for the Royal Welsh Show, I'm delighted to see so many departments represented to raise awareness about the opportunities available to families, businesses and working people in all parts of Wales.

### **Environment Secretary, Michael Gove said:**

It is a pleasure to be here at the 100th Royal Welsh Show, one of the biggest and best agricultural events of the year, in this beautiful part of Wales.

The Royal Welsh Show is a wonderful showcase for the quality of livestock, food and drink and farm produce in Wales and all the

exhibitors here should be proud of their achievements. I am very much looking forward to exploring all that is on offer.

## **Highlights from the week include:**

### **Monday**

Ministerial activity:

- Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns will be joined by Environment Secretary Michael Gove in meeting a number of farming and agricultural stakeholders.

On the UK Government's stand:

- Kicking off the four-day event in Builth Wells, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Ministry of Defence and ONS will provide information about their work in Wales, including the upcoming Census in 2021.

### **Tuesday on the stand:**

- Check you're road safe with DVLA's registration plate test.
- Come along to the 'Food is GREAT' panel discussion on Tuesday with famous Welsh food and drinks suppliers to gain support about taking your next steps on your exporting journey.
- In the afternoon the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) are holding a broadband advice session.

### **Wednesday on the stand:**

- The Department for International Development will be showcasing the equipment used across the world to tackle challenges including poverty, disease, insecurity and conflict. Take part in the Halo Trust's land mine removal activity and speak to representatives from Sure Chill, whose refrigeration technology is saving lives overseas.

### **Thursday on the stand:**

- Ahead of Green Great Britain Week in November, join representatives from BEIS to find out how you and your business could benefit from the UK Government's Industrial Strategy.

**ENDS**

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**CMO: we must work together to make our**

## world safer and healthier

In her [final annual report](#) as England's Chief Medical Officer and UK Chief Medical Adviser, Professor Dame Sally Davies outlines the UK's leading role in global health and highlights the need to share international knowledge and experience.

The report makes clear that by focusing purely on domestic health, we risk failing to control the shifting tide of global threats. Diseases and their determinants do not respect international borders. Ebola, antimicrobial resistance and widening health inequalities are already presenting significant challenges.

Accompanied by a collection of letters from key world health leaders to the Chief Medical Officer, Professor Davies' report makes a series of recommendations to secure a prospering health system and population both at home and across the world.

The Chief Medical Officer calls for recognition that the world is changing, with health threats becoming increasingly similar internationally. By engaging with other countries we can make the NHS more adaptable and sustainable.

Pandemics, genomics and vaccinations, Professor Davies states, are just some of the areas in which we can learn from the successes and mistakes of other nations.

Chief Medical Officer Professor Dame Sally Davies said:

Investing in global health is the smart thing to do because it is in our mutual interest – it creates a better world for us and for future generations. It helps to keep our population safe.

We should invest in systems and solutions that contribute to making health more equitable, secure and sustainable. What we learn abroad will improve our NHS and support our domestic efforts to make sure no one in the UK is left behind.

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## UK to lead global innovation in sustainable plastics in drive to net

## zero

- Businesses back Government Industrial Strategy challenge to cut plastics pollution with an expected £149m investment from the private sector
- Funding could be used to find ways to cut waste in the supply-chain and create new sustainable recyclable materials
- Announcement is part of biggest boost to R&D in UK history through the Government's modern Industrial Strategy

New forms of packaging and plastic made from plants, wood chippings and food waste could be a step closer, thanks to new business and Government investment.

Businesses are expected to jointly invest up to £149m, alongside a £60m Government investment, to help fight the global battle against single use plastics.

Funding could be used to find ways to cut waste in the supply chain, develop new business models and create new sustainable recyclable materials.

This could include using plants instead of oils to make plastic, which will help reduce their carbon impact.

This forms part of the Government's Clean Growth Challenge – a key part of the modern Industrial Strategy – and follows the UK becoming the first major economy to legislate to end its contribution to global warming by 2050.

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

We have all seen the enormous damage being caused by single-use plastics across the world. The race is on to develop new effective and practical solutions to end the scourge of single use plastics, helping protect our planet for future generations.

We have put a record level of research and development investment at the heart of our Industrial Strategy – investing to support our best minds and businesses in developing the solutions and industries of tomorrow.

This government and business co-investment clearly demonstrates that when it comes to cutting plastics pollution there is a shared ambition. This is a unique opportunity for our world-leading businesses and innovators to develop the materials of the future with the potential to transform our economy as well as our environment.

Around 80 million tonnes of plastic packaging is produced annually and if left unchecked, this is expected to triple by 2050. After a short first-use cycle, 95% of plastic packaging is lost to the economy.

Brands are increasingly acting on the need to shift away from single use plastics. Sainsbury's has committed to removing 10,000 tonnes this year as well as removing plastic bags from fresh fruit and vegetables and introducing water refill stands in superstores. Today the supermarket chain has announced the removal of all plastic bags for loose fruit and vegetables in Lincoln and Kidlington stores.

Judith Batchelar Director of Sainsbury's Brand:

The plastics challenge is one of the greatest issues for our planet, so today's announcement is fantastic news for retailers like Sainsbury's that are already committed to reducing single-use plastics.

But this is an issue that affects all retailers and manufacturers so it's only by working together that we can make genuine progress and significantly reduce the nation's reliance on plastic. This fund will act as a catalyst for this "coalition of the willing" to address the research and innovation opportunities together and Sainsbury's is proud to play our part.

Investment through the Government's modern Industrial Strategy is already backing the development of plastics made from plants, and products that degrade easily in an open environment.

Companies behind these innovations include London-based start-up Skipping Rocks Lab, who have created new packaging made from Notpla, a material made from seaweed and plants that only lasts as long as it needs to. This material was used in a trial by Just Eat for their condiments and used as an alternative to plastic bottles at the London Marathon 2019.

As part of this wider focus, the Government today published a call for evidence on standards for these types of materials, known as bio-based and biodegradable plastics. It seeks evidence from scientists, manufacturers and the research community, on the sustainability and wider impacts of biodegradable, compostable, and bio-based plastics and asks whether new and improved standards and labelling for these materials would be valuable.

UK Research and Innovation Chief Executive, Professor Sir Mark Walport said:

Plastic pollution is a global crisis that affects our oceans and our land. The new investment through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund will establish the UK as a leading innovator in smart and sustainable plastic packaging solutions, delivering cleaner growth across the supply chain, with a dramatic reduction in plastic waste entering the environment by 2025.

Unilever Chief R&D Officer Richard Slater said:

Unilever is actively working to reduce the impact of its plastic packaging. Many of the key challenges we face can only be overcome by working in partnership and across the whole system. It's great to see industry and government coming together to find innovative solutions – as part of the 'Smart Sustainable Plastic Packaging challenge'.

Today's announcement is part of the Smart Sustainable Plastic Packaging challenge, through Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund, delivered by UK Research and Innovation. It builds on the UK Bioeconomy Strategy and Government's Resources and Waste Strategy which sets out its plans to overhaul the waste system, cut plastic pollution, and move towards a more circular economy.

The Industrial Strategy sets out how the whole of the UK can build on its strengths, extend them into the future, and capitalise on new opportunities. Investing in science and research to keep us at the forefront of new technologies and the benefits they bring, including through meeting the Clean Growth Grand Challenge.

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## **Body-worn cameras to curb aggressive bailiffs**

- Body worn-cameras to be made compulsory for bailiffs
- Further findings and action on bailiff behaviour to be published later this year
- Part of wider Government efforts to improve how people in debt are treated, including 60-day 'breathing space'

While the vast majority act professionally and within the rules, there are concerns that some bailiffs continue to employ intimidating tactics that put both themselves and often vulnerable consumers at risk.

The Government is taking decisive action and making body-worn cameras mandatory to ensure debt is collected in a fair and safe manner – with those who fail to do so held to account.

It comes after recent moves by ministers to improve industry standards and better protect vulnerable consumers. This includes introducing a new 60-day 'breathing space' for people struggling to cope with debt – during which creditors will not be able to chase payments and individuals must seek professional advice.

Justice Minister Paul Maynard said:

“The use of intimidation and aggression by some bailiffs is utterly unacceptable, and it is right we do all we can to tackle such behaviour.

“Whilst most bailiffs act above board, body-worn cameras will provide greater security for all involved – not least consumers who are often vulnerable.

“We are looking carefully at other measures to improve the system and will not hesitate to take action where necessary.”

Today’s announcement follows a recent Government call for evidence aimed at ending intimidating practices, whilst better protecting vulnerable people.

A response outlining its findings, including options for independent regulation and an improved complaints system, will be published after the summer following further engagement with the enforcement industry and the advice sector.

## **Notes to editors**

- The work to make the use of body-worn cameras mandatory relates to High Court Enforcement Agents and certificated enforcement agents. It does not relate to County Court Bailiffs who are employees of HMCTS and who are out of scope for the review.
- The Ministry of Justice will work with the Treasury to implement a ‘breathing space’ period where people with problem debts will be protected from enforcement action from creditors and will see their interest frozen. We will also work with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to review how local authorities collect Council Tax debt. For more information see [here](#).
- In 2014 the government introduced reforms to strengthen protection from rogue enforcement agents, while at the same time making sure that debts could still be collected fairly.
- The reforms centred on the implementation of Part 3 and Schedule 12 of the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007. The reforms provided legal protection by introducing a comprehensive code governing, amongst other things:
  - when and how enforcement agents can enter somebody’s premises;
  - the safeguards to prevent the use of force against debtors;
  - what goods they can and cannot seize and, if necessary, sell; and
  - what fees they can charge.
- The reforms also stopped enforcement agents entering homes when only children are present, and introduced mandatory training and a new



certification process for enforcement agents.

- Ministers pledged to review the impact of the reforms after one, three and if necessary five years.
- The Ministry of Justice conducted the first review in 2015, which it published in 2018, after extensive gathering of views from key stakeholders including creditors, the advice sector, other government agencies and enforcement agents.
- The review found that, at the one-year point in 2015, the reforms were having many positive benefits. This included better awareness around debtor rights and how to complain, more clarity for debtors about the fees that can be charged, the processes that should be followed, and where to go for advice. It was also reported, however, that debt advisors and debtors still perceived some enforcement agents to be acting aggressively and in some cases not acting within the regulations
- A Call for Evidence was held to inform its second review of enforcement regulations on 25 November 2018. Nearly 300 responses were received from individuals who have been visited by enforcement agents, enforcement agents, firms and trade associations and local authorities.
- A full response to this and the Justice Select Committee's inquiry will be published later in the summer following further engagement with stakeholders over the summer. This will include whether the regulations can be strengthened and assessing the case for independent regulation.
- Debts which bailiffs enforce include council tax debt and unpaid debts owed to individuals and businesses.