

Education Secretary calls for children to spend summer outdoors

Education Secretary Damian Hinds has today (Friday 19 July) launched #SummerOutdoors which will suggest free or low-cost options to keep children entertained and spark interest in character building activities during the summer break, rather than being distracted by video games, boxsets or social media.

Children and families will be encouraged to explore the outdoors during the summer holidays, as a series of fun tips and events for kids happening across the country will be signposted each week.

This comes after the Education Secretary has placed a greater emphasis on the development of character and resilience as young people grow up, which has seen the development of 'My Activity Passport' for primary school children – which has been downloaded more than 43,000 times since December last year – and setting out the 5 Foundations for Building Character in a speech in February.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

We will all have fond memories of the summer holidays – adventuring and playing out with friends. But all too often these days the temptation is for children to play video games, binge on boxsets or only socialise online. I started this year with a resolution to spend less time on my phone – the summer provides the opportunity to repeat this pledge and redouble my efforts.

Character and resilience are the qualities, the inner resources, that we call on to get us through the frustrations and setbacks that are part and parcel of life. School plays a key role in helping to develop these traits but the activities that young people do over the holidays are also key. They can mean that the child going back to school in September is a little more confident, more willing to give something a go and possibly more likely to bounce back from life's knocks.

I really want to inspire children and families to explore the outdoors and understand that keeping children entertained during the summer break does not have to cost an arm and a leg. Getting out and about – whether that is going on a walk, playing a sport or building a den – can bring a range of benefits, from families spending time together to keeping an active body and active mind.

This summer campaign comes as the Education Secretary announces new steps to support schools identify opportunities that help their pupils build character and resilience. A new framework developed by school leaders and other experts will be published in the autumn and will include a series of benchmarking questions for schools to assess their delivery of character education. The questions will be based on the following themes:

- Leading and establishing a climate and ethos of character development;
- Developing character through the curriculum and teaching for character;
- Developing character through activities in the 5 Foundations for Building Character;
- Ensuring character education is for all pupils, including the disadvantaged;
- Reviewing and refining the existing offer with a view to making good work even better; and
- Developing staff and increasing capacity to deliver.

In recognition of the work in schools to help young people build character and resilience, the Department for Education will be relaunching the Character Awards, which highlight innovative or outstanding programmes that develop a wide variety of positive character traits. Schools will be able to enter in October, ahead of the awards ceremony in March 2020. Nominations will be considered in the following categories; school culture and ethos, curriculum and teaching; collaboration; a character champion; or delivering against the 5 Foundations for Building Character.

The 5 Foundations encompass an extensive list of activities, which through team work, trying new things, and opening minds, can help young people build character. They are:

- Sport – which includes competitive sport and other activities, such as running, martial arts, swimming and purposeful recreational activities, such as rock climbing, hiking, orienteering, yoga or cycling.
- Creativity – this involves all creative activities from coding, arts and crafts, writing, graphic design, film making and music composition.
- Performing – activities could include dance, theatre and drama, musical performance, choir, debating or public speaking.
- Volunteering & Membership – brings together teams, practical action in the service of others or groups, such as volunteering, getting involved in the #iwill campaign, litter-picking, fundraising, any structured youth programmes or uniformed groups like Guides, Scouts, Cadets and Duke of Edinburgh.
- World of work – practical experience of the world of work, work experience or entrepreneurship. For primary age children, this may involve opportunities to meet role models from different jobs.

Dame Julia Cleverdon DCVO CBE, Co founder of the #iwill campaign and Vice President of Business in the Community said:

The Character Awards announced today by the DfE will give a much needed opportunity to celebrate the brilliant work schools and

colleges are doing to develop character education, spread best practice and showcase innovation and impact. Parents, teachers and employers know that developing character and building self esteem underpins young people's success and happiness in their life, work and contribution to society.

As co-founder of the #iwill campaign, a movement of over 1000 cross-sector partners across the UK, we know that taking part in social action builds young people's confidence, empathy, resilience, voice and values. We hope the Character Awards will highlight how many more young people, particularly from low-income backgrounds, are building character through making a positive difference to their communities.

[Forestry Minister David Rutley in Northumberland](#)

First of all I would like to thank Egger for hosting us all this morning. This government is truly committed to the future of our forests and woodlands, recognising their importance to society and the natural world and in the fight against climate change.

Forestry already plays a very important role in Northumberland and I see it playing a central part in the fight against climate change as echoed in our future ambitions to plant trees.

I view an integral part of today's programme is how we work together with stakeholders to shape the plans for the future for tree planting. Partnership working in Northumberland is key to this endeavour.

We all have to seize the opportunity. This is a unique moment and we have to act now and respond to the climate change emergency.

As my Right Honourable Friend, the Secretary of State for the Environment, stated in his speech earlier this week, time is running out for the environment if we continue in the way that we are, and it is indeed, later than we all think.

The United Kingdom is now among the most nature-depleted nations in the world. The factors driving these losses are various and inter-connected: urbanisation, unsustainable agricultural intensification, deforestation, water stress, pollution and, of course, climate change.

The new Environment Bill will set the direction for environmental

improvements in this country for decades to come to help leave the environment in a better state than we found it. The Bill will take a coordinated approach to the environment.

The Bill will specifically address tree planting in England. Environmental Land Management contracts, for example, will fund the planting of millions of trees in this country

As I mentioned climate change is one of the most urgent and pressing challenges we face today. But, late as it may be, there is still time.

The UK Government is committed to addressing it, which is why the Prime Minister announced last month that the UK will eradicate its net contribution to climate change by 2050. The UK is a world-leader in tackling this global challenge, being the first country to raise climate change on the international stage, introduce long-term legally-binding carbon reduction targets and cutting emissions further than all other G20 countries.

Tree planting is increasingly recognised as an effective way to reduce net emissions and respond to the climate emergency. Forests are not only a carbon sink, but help with preventing the erosion of soils, and reducing flood risks, whilst also providing us with fantastic recreational spaces. A great example of this is Kielder Forest, which at 250 square miles is England's largest forest.

We are already accelerating the rate of tree planting in England, recognising that our woodlands and forests, street trees and parklands help create healthier places for us to work and live.

The Government has committed to planting 11 million trees this parliament, with over 3.5 million trees planted to date, and over 15 million trees planted since 2010; whilst our longer-term aspiration is to increase woodland cover in England from 10 to 12 per cent.

I strongly believe that we must raise our level of ambition and plant more trees: we need to go a lot further and I see Northumberland playing an integral part of this.

We've kick-started a vast Northern Forest which will see 50 million trees planted from Liverpool to Hull – and are working with local authorities to prevent unnecessary tree felling.

We have also established the Woodland Carbon Guarantee fund which will provide £50 million to encourage large-scale afforestation in this country; and, as part of our Year of Green Action plan, we have allocated £10 million to plant 130,000 new trees in urban areas, including 20,000 valuable street trees through the urban trees challenge fund, which will also help meet the government's target to plant one million urban trees by 2022.

We have established the first pilot Forestry Investment Zone in Cumbria, driving large-scale planting, and I know many are keen to set up another here in Northumberland. This is where partnership work will be key to explore these future tree planting opportunities. There is already a great example of

large tree planting, thanks to government funding, in Doddington North Moor where more than 600,000 will be planted.

We have also recently re-appointed our national Tree Champion (Sir William Worsley) to drive forward planting rates but we recognise that we need to go further – and faster

At this critical time, with public pressure mounting for environmental action both on climate change and biodiversity, we are currently developing an English Tree Strategy. This strategy will set how out we wish to accelerate woodland creation in this country and to deliver the level of afforestation required to reach net zero by 2050. In fact, straight after this speech, I am meeting with stakeholders to discuss the strategy in more detail.

Thank you.

[Minister's speech at the launch of the third CSSF annual report](#)

Good afternoon, and thank you for having me here today to speak about the invaluable work the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund finances around the world.

Over the last ten years, the very nature of conflict and instability has changed dramatically. The world is facing a rise in intrastate violence, complicated by insurgencies, terrorism, serious and organised crime.

In addition to this, conflicts are lasting longer. And because they are increasingly international, these conflicts risk having an impact on the security of the UK as well.

Complex conflict requires creative solutions. So four years ago, the government decided it needed a more agile, cross-departmental approach, to complement the long term work spearheaded by DfID, the FCO and the Ministry of Defence.

Since its creation in 2015, the CSSF has enabled the government to work across departments, delivering support to fragile states at risk of instability, as well as states in the throes of complex conflicts.

Four years later, this approach is seeing strong results, as we see in the Annual Report released today.

It has contributed to halving the number of UN Peacekeeper casualties in Mali, Democratic Republic of Congo and the Central African Republic – the three most deadly UN Peacekeeping Missions.

The CSSF has encouraged 3.1 million more women to register to vote in Pakistan.

It has financed the retraining of more than 150 reformed Boko Haram soldiers giving them the vocational skills they need to establish a peaceful life.

It has contributed to saving the lives of more than 3,000 vulnerable migrants in the Aegean and the Mediterranean seas.

But these are just a few of the success stories you find turning the pages of the annual report, further demonstrating this country's well-earned reputation as a global leader in managing conflict.

Today, the UK retains its long-held role as a trusted voice on the global stage and the only permanent member of the UN Security Council to spend both 2% of GDP on defence and 0.7% of GNI on development. So it is unsurprising that no other country has a fund as large in scope or as ambitious as the CSSF.

Its unique ability to spend both Official Development Assistance and non-ODA money means that the CSSF can be agile and responsive. It gives it the flexibility to trial new approaches, share UK expertise and leverage funding from other donors or government departments, to achieve long term change. And it builds on UK expertise in areas like policing, counter terrorism, defence and intelligence to save lives and improve security, both at home and abroad.

With a budget of £1.26bn, the CSSF brings together 13 government departments and agencies to deliver 90 programmes in no fewer than 70 different countries. Guided by the National Security Council, this allows the fund to be responsive to new and emerging threats. These are the kinds of threats which directly affect the UK's domestic security, like the rise of hostile state actors, the increasing challenge to the Rules Based International System, growing concerns over climate change, and the rise of Serious and Organised Crime.

Serious and Organised Crime affects British citizens, more often, than any other national security threat, whether it's online sexual exploitation or firearms offenses. And this crime comes at a cost – for the UK, at least £37 billion every year. So last year, under a new strategy, the CSSF launched a new £1.3m allocation to pay for a global network of advisers on serious and organised crime.

This is an important area for both UK and global stability and security. For example, when presented with the name, the "Conflict, Stability and Security Fund," one might not think of cracking down on illegal cigarettes. But cigarette smuggling in the Western Balkans has a direct impact upon the UK.

It costs the UK economy £2.5 billion every year in lost tax revenues. But it also helps to perpetuate the abhorrent practice of people trafficking and illegal drug smuggling across Europe, providing income for serious and organised crime networks.

And today, the UK's National Crime Agency is working with the Kenyan

authorities to crack down on international trafficking in the region and the sexual abuse of children. Since 2017/18, the Unit has rescued more than 90 survivors of these crimes.

CSSF programmes are also supporting our broader global policy objectives. With ongoing Russian aggression at its borders, Ukraine remains vulnerable to attack. A strong and stable Ukraine has long been a top UK priority, and through the CSSF we are able to coordinate our diplomatic, humanitarian and defence and security efforts for a more holistic approach.

For example, by educating school children and communities and clearing 1 million square metres of land, we have helped halve landmine casualties from 2017-2018.

This comprehensive approach can be beneficial for the UK, too. We have provided military support and training to over 13,000 members of the Ukrainian Armed Forces in infantry skills, medical, operational planning and logistics – which in turn provides the UK with in-depth, on-the-ground insight into the challenges of defending against Russian aggression.

And we are even using CSSF to act on this government's commitment to combat climate change. In Columbia, the CSSF has helped maintain and implement the peace process since 2016.

But peace – however longed-for – can sometimes have unintended results. An unfortunate effect in Colombia has been an increase in the rate of deforestation, as communities recover from conflict and former fighters return home to find limited economic opportunities. So we are working with the Government of Colombia to bring former fighters together with local communities to design jobs like eco-tourism and farming that offer alternatives, not only to violence, but to activities that damage the environment to protect Columbia's natural resources.

Its clear CSSF programmes are making a real difference in the lives and communities of those affected most by violence and instability. But it's also demonstrated an ability to adapt as the nature of conflict continues to evolve.

Now there are areas for improvement and change. By seriously considering external recommendations, like those from the Independent Commission of Aid Impact, the CSSF has significantly improved its programme management, transparency and monitoring and evaluation practices. And I was pleased to see in the ICAI follow up report published today an acknowledgment of these improvements.

This progress should be applauded. As government comes to the end of this Spending Review period, the CSSF will need to ensure that it can continue to learn and adapt. And we will need to be clear about how a fund of this size and structure can be used most effectively.

So as we celebrate the successes of this ambitious fund, with many of those who made them possible, I look forward to seeing what comes next.

Because in a world of competing conflicts and challenges, the UK's investment in global security, and its willingness to trial new approaches and respond to emerging threats, speaks volumes.

It emphasizes that our leadership in this area is a responsibility we do not take lightly, whether that is financially or politically.

And it sets the standard for countries everywhere as we work together to create a more peaceful and a more prosperous world.

Thank you.

Government to consult on reducing personal water consumption

Plans to encourage customers to save water in their everyday lives and to introduce a personal water consumption target have been [published today](#) (Friday 19 July).

The proposals form part of a public consultation that examines how water can be saved on a personal level, and how industry can take a leading role in supporting customers to use less.

In the 25 Year Environment Plan, the government committed to incentivise greater water efficiency and less personal use. As part of that, the aim of the new proposals is to develop a "water-saving culture" to make sure that there is enough clean water for everyone now and in the future.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

We take our supply of clean water for granted and to keep doing that, given the growing population and impact of climate change, we need to challenge ourselves more on how much water we actually need to use.

While water companies must lead the way in reducing leakage, using water efficiently will help ensure we all have enough water for our homes, to produce food, products and services, and to protect our valuable natural environment for the next generation.

This call for evidence will help us set an ambitious target for personal water consumption.

On average, a person in England currently uses 141 litres of water per day, and over the last few years consumption figures have begun to rise. Research

by the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) has shown that if this trend continues, England could see significant water deficits by 2050.

Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, said:

Balancing the water needed for people and the environment in the face of a warming climate and a growing population will be one of the major challenges of the next 25 years.

Our tap water comes direct from the ground, and our lakes and rivers where it supports wildlife. It is only by reducing the amount of water we all use that we can reduce pressure on the environment and avoid future water shortages. I'd encourage everyone to take part in the consultation and think about ways you can use less water.

The consultation seeks to establish a personal water consumption target, inviting responses from the public as well as specialists including water companies and academics. It will look at measures on how to achieve this non-binding target and will include exploratory questions around:

- the labelling of water-using products;
- how building standards can be improved;
- the future role of metering;
- the implementation of behaviour change campaigns; and,
- how to improve the availability of information for consumers.

The consultation will run for 12 weeks. It will be open to any interested parties in England only.

The deadline for response is Friday 11 October 2019.

[Traffic officers fly to the rescue of distressed buzzard](#)

The distressed buzzard was unable to fly and looking a little ruffled when traffic officers spotted it near junction 8 on the coastbound carriageway of the M20.

The team of rescuers which included Highways England traffic officers, Stephen Moakes, Nick Sivell, Jo Langton and Mike Reynolds, flew into action with their specialist equipment, following a tip off from a member of the public.

They worked with experts from the Eagle Heights Wildlife Foundation near

Eynsford who suggested it was left in the care of Newnham Court Veterinary Hospital, Bearsted, where it's currently recovering.

Emily Fairhurst, veterinary nurse at Newnham veterinary hospital near Bearsted, said:

The buzzard was a little dishevelled, and very quiet. Previous experience with birds of this type suggest it may have hit a car windscreen and become a little disorientated.

Once it's recovered the bird will be given to local raptor experts for a long holiday at the Folly Wildlife Rescue Centre near Tunbridge Wells, where it will stay until it's released into the wild.

Stephen Moakes said:

No single day is the same in this job, and we come across all manner of different issues. Although we are more used to dealing with human customers, animals do end up on the motorway more often than you would think, and we are trained in dealing with a wide range of situations – so we didn't have to wing it.

It's always satisfying to help to know we have made a difference to such a majestic bird like this one and I want to thank my colleagues and partners involved to ensure we could resolve this swiftly and successfully. Hopefully if it decides to cross a busy road in future, it will use the flyover next time.

Experts say that birds of this type can be quite territorial. Once it has recovered it will be brought back to where it was found and released back into the wild.

The bird will be released in the next few weeks.

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.