

[Government response: Confirmation of UK Government agreement to Article 50 extension](#)

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[News story: Charity regulator encourages safer giving for Cyclone Idai Appeal](#)

We are issuing advice on how to donate to charities working to relieve the humanitarian crisis still unfolding in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe.

This follows the launch of the [DEC Cyclone Idai Appeal](#) by the [Disasters Emergency Committee \(DEC\)](#) on Thursday 21st March. DEC member charities and their local partners are working closely with the authorities across the affected countries to provide immediate assistance to those in need.

Public support is essential for charities delivering emergency shelter kits, food, water purification tablets and urgent health assistance – so it is vital that donations reach genuine charities.

We want people to be able to give confidently to charities working to relieve the humanitarian crisis, such as through the DEC appeal to its member charities.

The DEC has brought together 13 leading UK aid charities to maximise fundraising and quickly deliver effective emergency relief. They are all registered charities.

Most fundraising is genuine, but we are warning that fraudsters and criminals

may sometimes take advantage of public generosity at times of increased giving, using various methods such as fake appeal websites, email appeals that falsely use the name of genuine charities, or appeals from fake charities.

It is important that the public donate safely to genuine relief efforts by following a few simple steps before giving:

- check the charity's name and registration number on our [online register of charities](#) – it can help you make an informed decision before donating by providing information about each charity, including its charitable purposes and activities, registered contact details, and its compliance and financial history and accounts
- take care when responding to emails or clicking links to a charity's website to ensure that they are genuine – instead, search online for your preferred charity to check you have the right web address
- if you have any concerns about the legitimacy of a request for donations that appears to come from a charity, don't hesitate to contact that charity directly to request further information
- when approached by collectors on the street, check whether they are wearing a proper ID badge and that any collection tin is sealed

If you think that a collection or appeal is not legitimate, report it to the police. If you think the collection is fraudulent report it to Action Fraud over the phone at 0300 123 2040 or online.

You can also [complain about a charity](#) on our website.

Any concerns about fundraising standards should be sent to the [Fundraising Regulator](#).

More information about the Cyclone Idai Appeal is available [on the DEC website](#).

[Press release: Dstl Unveils First 'Searchlight' Event at Cranfield University](#)

Searchlight aims to encourage small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to work with Dstl, and the first event will focus on Radio Frequency (RF) systems. Specifically, frequency-agile RF hardware, machine learning applied to modern communications standards (including Internet of Things) and novel manufacturing solutions to reduce size, weight, power and/or cost.

The free event includes: industry insight by leading experts; how companies

can enter the market and work with Dstl; case study success stories; sample technical challenges and workshops. Staff from across various Dstl departments will be available throughout the day to offer technical and commercial guidance. Places are limited and restricted to one person per company. [Register at Team Defence](#)

SME Searchlight aims to engage with non-traditional defence suppliers and SMEs to meet the needs of a £40 million – £45 million increase in research, in line with the government's intent to increase external spending with SMEs. Companies benefit in turn from increased funding and being at the cutting-edge of research and technology.

Over the next 12 months, events, workshops and consultations run by Dstl will take place in partnership with Aerospace and Defence Suppliers (ADS), the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), Team Defence Information and TechUK, to bring companies together from across industry sectors. An ambitious target of 60% of suppliers who may never have worked with defence before has been set to attend each of these events, with the aim of bringing these new companies into Dstl's supply chain.

The increase in demand for new research opportunities extends across Dstl, with a number of priority areas identified. In addition to RF these include artificial intelligence, synthetic biology and wargaming.

Rob Solly, Division Head for Defence and Security Analysis from Dstl, said:

SMEs possess tremendous ideas and innovation. Dstl has funds available to invest in cutting-edge research, and the commercial and technological clout to accelerate these ideas. Importantly, SMEs retain the Intellectual Property rights to any innovation in most cases, boosting their long-term prosperity as well as that of the UK.

Separately, Dstl is also a sponsor of Venturefest on 29 March at the Ageas Bowl in Southampton, which brings together top talent from the region to demonstrate technologies and innovations, allow start-ups to pitch for investment, and match entrepreneurs with the right organisations to take their businesses to the next level. For more information email us at: searchlight@dstl.gov.uk

[News story: Reclassification of pregabalin and gabapentin to Schedule](#)

3 drugs from 1 April 2019

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Press release: Operation Brock: ready for action

Traditionally when there has been severe disruption to cross-channel services, sections of the M20 have been closed and used to queue HGVs heading for mainland Europe, under arrangements known as Operation Stack.

In November 2017 the Government announced that, alongside ongoing work to find a permanent solution for Operation Stack, Highways England would take forward interim alternatives for Operation Stack that could be ready for use in March 2019, and that, crucially, would keep the M20 open in both directions

From next week, Operation Brock will be available as an extra tool for managing disruption in Kent. Operation Brock queues lorries bound for mainland Europe on the coastbound M20 and uses a contraflow on the London-bound carriageway to enable other traffic to travel in both directions.

Under the new arrangements, in addition to the M20 contraflow lorries can be routed to Manston Airfield and, if needed, the M26 motorway can be closed and used to queue HGVs too.

The M20 contraflow is planned to be in place by 6am on Monday 25 March, and there will be roadworks on the M20 and M26 over the weekend and into next week as the final preparations and adjustments are made.

Highways England project director John Kerner said:

Since Operation Stack's 32-day deployment in summer 2015 we have been working tirelessly with our partners across Kent to make the

county more resilient to disruption than ever before. Operation Brock strengthens this resilience even further and offers a safe, scalable response to disruption that can be used to queue up to 11,000 lorries heading for mainland Europe, while keeping other traffic flowing for people living, working and travelling in and around Kent

From Monday (25 March) the M20 contraflow will be in effect from north of Junction 8 (for Maidstone) to Junction 9 at Ashford. Lorries heading for mainland Europe will be routed down the coastbound carriageway, with a 30mph speed limit in place. All other traffic will be directed onto the London-bound carriageway, with two lanes in each direction operating at 50mph. The deployment will help to demonstrate Kent's preparedness for disruption and allow the contraflow to be in place for any traffic disruption in the coming weeks. Three lanes in each direction could be restored, with a 50mph limit, if Operation Brock is assessed as unlikely to be required in the following weeks.

Drivers are advised that sections of the M20 will be closed this weekend for the final work to take place, signed diversions will be in place. From Monday drivers will need to follow the different layout on the M20 from just north of Junction 8 (for Leeds) to Junction 9 (Ashford).

The M20 will be closed overnight (8pm – 6am) each night until Monday morning between Junction 7 (for Maidstone) and Junction 9. Overnight closures may also be required on this section next week if there is remaining work to complete. For the preparations for the M26, there will also be overnight closures on the weekends of the 23 and 30 March.

Operation Brock has stages that can be deployed sequentially, scaling up or down to meet demand. This is how Operation Brock will work:

- in recent years there have already been significant improvements to the holding capacity in the Port of Dover and Eurotunnel, as well as the A20 on approach to the port, where peaks of traffic arriving at the Port of Dover can be managed by traffic lights toward the end of the dual carriageway
- if this increased capacity looks set to be reached, Highways England can activate a contraflow on the M20 between junctions 8 and 9. Lorries bound for mainland Europe will be queued on the coastbound carriageway, with cars using a clearly signed contraflow on the London-bound carriageway
- if the M20 becomes full, lorries heading for the Port of Dover will be directed to Manston Airfield, while the M20 is used to hold traffic for Eurotunnel. Traffic lights on the A256 will help to manage traffic arriving at the port from Manston, similar to the existing system on the A20
- If the M20 holding area becomes full after Manston airfield has been activated, the coastbound M26 could additionally be used to hold lorries heading for the Eurotunnel terminal.
- lorries would move through the queue in sequence and would be released

from the front of the queue as soon as there is capacity in the port and tunnel terminals

- instructions for lorry drivers will be clearly signed, well managed and monitored at every step
- the holding areas are all temporary and will be stood down as soon as they are no longer needed. They will be safe and secure with appropriate welfare facilities and access for emergency services throughout
- the queuing system only applies to drivers of lorries heading to mainland Europe from Kent. All other drivers should check conditions before setting out and, if they are crossing the channel, check with their service operator for updates

The arrangements offer a significant improvement to Operation Stack and, crucially, keep the M20 motorway open to traffic in both directions in all but the most extreme circumstances.

For more information on Operation Brock and other contingency measures in Kent, visit:

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.