

# Magnox Reprocessing plant achieves final milestone

Staff at Sellafield's Magnox Reprocessing Plant have safely reprocessed the final box of spent fuel from the UK's fast reactor programme being stored in the plant's ponds.

[It was announced in May](#) that the facility will finish reprocessing on 18 July and enter a new era of decommissioning and clean-up.

This latest achievement marks its final major contribution to managing the UK's nuclear legacy in a journey that stretches back to 1964.

The UK's fast reactor, at Dounreay, was built during the 1950s when there was a world-wide shortage of uranium for electricity generation. It became the world's first fast reactor to provide electricity to a national grid before shutting down in 1977.

Fast reactors came to an end in the UK in the 1980s. But the programme left behind a legacy of spent fuel with a unique chemical composition.

This remained at Dounreay, on the north coast of Scotland, for 35 years until the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and nuclear regulators agreed it could be brought to Sellafield for storage and reprocessing.

Martin Chown, Sellafield Ltd chief executive officer, said:

Throughout its history, the Magnox Reprocessing Plant has delivered on behalf of the UK.

The current workforce has carried on this proud tradition by achieving another significant milestone in its final weeks of operations.

It's a significant achievement and another demonstration of us delivering our purpose to create a clean and safe environment for future generations.

Reprocessing the final box of Dounreay fuel being held at the Magnox plant marks the completion of a 10-year programme. It was important to reprocess the fuel to minimise the amount requiring future dry storage.

The programme was a collaborative effort across the NDA Group, involving teams at Dounreay, Sellafield Ltd and Nuclear Transport Solutions.

Chris Wratten, Dounreay Fast Reactor senior project manager, said:

This has been a key project for the NDA and the entire UK nuclear

industry.

By blending and consolidating the material with routine Magnox fuel, the teams have also supported the UK's non-proliferation and security objectives.

This has been delivered through hard work, determination and perseverance by all those involved, and they should be very proud of this achievement.

A small amount of fuel remains at Dounreay which will be transferred to Sellafield for dry storage before consignment to the UK's Geological Disposal Facility.

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## [Calling for young peoples' voices to be harnessed to inform atrocity prevention efforts](#)

Thank you Mr. President,

I'd like to begin by thanking Special Adviser Nderitu for her statement today. We also welcome Special Adviser Okoth-Obbo to his new role and wish him every success.

And let me also thank the Secretary-General for his timely report on advancing the Responsibility to Protect, with its focus on children and youth. It is a stark reminder of the challenge ahead, as well as the imperative for us to succeed. I will make three points today in this regard.

First, on the importance of the responsibility to protect and prevent mass atrocities. The world is facing alarming levels of violence and displacement, with children and youth disproportionately affected. Millions of children are suffering now and millions more face the risk of mass atrocity crimes. Their safety, protection, dignity and welfare are fundamental to humanity and the responsibility to protect provides a framework for helping them.

Young people are powerful agents of peace and security, and their voices must be heard and harnessed to inform atrocity prevention efforts. Youth-led movements are demanding change to shape the world they will inherit.

All States can contribute to the prevention of atrocities by identifying drivers, triggers and risks of atrocity crimes, institutionalizing early warning and prevention mechanisms, and by coming together to break this cycle of violence. As part of the Security Council Working Group on Children and

Armed Conflict, we support the United Nations in its efforts to get parties to conflict to enter into concrete action plans.

Which takes me to my second point. We can no longer accept hesitation or inaction. Russia's unjustified and unprovoked attack on Ukraine has resulted in appalling and horrifying violations against children, including credible allegations of sexual violence by the Russian military. In Myanmar, abhorrent violence has been committed against children, with credible reports of the military regime killing and torturing children. In Syria, children born in the last decade have been subjected to terrible hunger, deprivation and violence. And in northern Ethiopia, the situation for women and girls remains deeply concerning and there are reports of the continued use of sexual violence in Western Tigray.

Those responsible for these atrocities must be held accountable whether through domestic prosecutions, the International Criminal Court or otherwise. The United Kingdom will do all it can to hold these criminals to account.

Third, the UK remains committed to atrocity prevention and response. To give a couple of examples:

Last November we launched the Call to Action to Ensure the Rights and Wellbeing of Children born of Sexual Violence in Conflict. This is a first step in galvanising international action to improve the situation for this vulnerable group. We call upon all states to endorse this Call to Action.

In addition, the United Kingdom is building international action on conflict related sexual violence in a way that supports survivors and strengthens existing structures. In particular, we are seeking to strengthen the international legal architecture; build global political will; and drive action and best practice on accountability for relevant crimes.

To conclude, there is a vocal minority that wishes to debunk the responsibility to protect by ignoring the unanimously agreed World Summit Outcome and by claiming falsely that it is a cover for illegal interventions. We must not let this distract us. Atrocity crimes are happening right now and there are risks of further crimes elsewhere. The responsibility to protect simply calls on us to seek to prevent and respond to these crimes. That is why the United Kingdom will call out atrocities and atrocity risks. We expect others to do so too and, in this vein, we would like future reports of the Secretary-General on R2P to cover specific country situations. How can we protect children and youth from atrocities if we only speak about them in the abstract? We need practical case-by-case actions and not a debate about theory.

Thank you, Mr President.

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# Special feature: Focus on People, Diversity and Inclusion: Our strategy and how it benefits our clients

Over the last 2 years GAD, like many other businesses, has had to adapt to working remotely due to the coronavirus pandemic. Even now with restrictions lifted, our people continuing to work remotely for a proportion of the week.

There are many advantages to hybrid working, including added flexibility and reduced commute times for our staff. However, it does mean that we need to work harder to ensure that our people are supported, happy and continue to work together effectively for our clients.

GAD aims to be a diverse, high performing team, 'One GAD'. As part of our vision for our people, our staff networks help to enhance wellbeing and promote diversity and inclusion.

## **Diversity and Inclusion (D&I)**

Diversity is acknowledging difference such as sex and sexual orientation, race, religion and disability. Inclusion is valuing these differences so that staff have equal opportunities and thrive at work.

In June 2021, the UK government issued a declaration on government reform. The declaration, included a commitment to setting a new standard for diversity and inclusion.

The declaration was followed up by the publication of the Civil Service D&I Strategy 2022 to 2025.

The strategy emphasises that diversity is essential for improved organisational performance. Benefits include the ability to attract and retain the best talent, increased employee satisfaction, improved outputs and better organisational performance.

## **GAD's D&I strategy and equality objectives**

D&I is essential for a happy and productive workplace and is an important factor for our clients and employees. We have embraced the Civil Service D&I Strategy and we are continuously developing our own D&I objectives to ensure maximum benefit for everyone.

In June 2022, we launched our D&I strategy, aligned with the Civil Service strategy and the GAD Strategic Plan 2022 to 2025. Our 3 priorities are:

- Culture: enhancing our inclusive and supportive culture
- Connections: enabling staff to develop both internal and external connections
- Continuous development: develop our staff to serve the needs of our clients.

Our objectives ensure that we:

- develop capabilities and support our people to reach their full potential
- recruit inclusively and have a diverse workforce at all levels
- encourage an inclusive culture that welcomes diversity in all its forms
- provide high quality service to our clients

Attracting talent from more diverse backgrounds with more diverse experiences and views gives us the ability to challenge established ways of thinking.

**Crucially, diverse perspectives lead to innovation and creativity, which help us to provide alternative or improved approaches to our clients' problems.**

The Civil Service is increasingly diverse. By prioritising diversity within our own organisation, we are working to ensure our ability to understand our clients changing needs.

## Staff networks

Our staff networks are a key part of our D&I strategy. They provide platforms for employees to be heard, support staff and provide a safe space for sharing issues. Each network is sponsored by a member of the management team who provides a conduit for bringing issues to the attention of management. Our networks work together and with wider Civil Service networks to build an inclusive and supportive culture.

In December 2021, we launched 3 staff networks to support our people, the:

- Women's Network
- Trainee and Analysts' Network
- Business Professionals' Network (for non-actuarial staff).

## Staff networks: focus on the Trainee and Analysts' network

We have many staff who are training to become actuaries, as well as professional analysts who have varied expertise which supports our technical work. The network gives them a forum to discuss issues which are impacting their demographic.

"The Trainee and Analysts' Network has been a great opportunity for me to

develop my leadership and presentation skills. We share experiences and knowledge with others, leading to a broader range of skills within the network.

We hope to expand the scope to encompass both professional and social activities. This will lead to greater collaboration across GAD and our wider networks.

Being a member of this network has had a positive impact on my quality of work." We have many staff who are training to become actuaries, as well as professional analysts who have varied expertise which supports our technical work. The network gives them a forum to discuss issues which are impacting their demographic.

## **External partnerships**

### **Civil Service**

We work with other departments across the Civil Service to share knowledge and best practice. This includes attending the Government Analysis Function's D&I programme board and the Cabinet Office Heads of D&I meetings. We also participate in the Civil Service Inclusion survey, the results of which are published on the GOV.UK website.

As most of our clients are part of the Civil Service, knowledge sharing ensures that we are aware of D&I developments which impact our clients.

### **The Institute and Faculty of Actuaries (IFoA)**

The IFoA launched their D&I strategy in 2021, highlighting the 'triple gain' from a more inclusive and fairer society, which are improvements in:

- productivity
- mental health
- life expectancy

GAD is accredited by the IFoA's Quality Assurance Scheme (QAS). This is a voluntary scheme to promote confidence in the work of actuaries and identify issues which impact their work. QAS has identified D&I as a key issue and to become QAS accredited an organisation must demonstrate proactive promotion of D&I, specifically:

- appreciating the impact of D&I
- fostering an inclusive working environment
- valuing all colleagues and being able to raise D&I issues without fear of retaliation

Our progress is published in our annual report and accounts and in our annual D&I impact report.

## Internal events

Regular knowledge sharing with our staff is key to achieving our D&I plan. We have a D&I calendar of events with a different focus each month. These include Pride month and Wellbeing month. We have also organised events such as listening circles during International Women's Day to learn and share experiences with colleagues.

### D&I calendar: Focus on Pride month

This month (June) is Pride month, and our D&I group have run various sessions.

One was to discuss issues that LGBT+ colleagues may experience in the workplace, particularly the question of whether or not to 'come out' at work. Colleagues had an opportunity to share their own insights and reactions to what has been said and seen.

"It's been great to see GAD involved in pride month and raising awareness of LGBT+ experiences across the business. GAD has increased its involvement year on year and I'm looking forward to seeing how this develops in the future. It was helpful to see colleagues participating in events, wanting to learn and becoming allies to their LGBT+ colleagues.

Knowing who your allies are makes it easier to come out and to build more open and meaningful relationships with colleagues. I hope that this will have a positive impact on my work."

A poll taken revealed that:

- 12% of attendees rated themselves as having a very good or reasonable understanding of LGBT+ colleagues' experiences at work, but
- 50% admitted limited or no understanding with 38% saying that they were unsure.

The session was run to build greater awareness, understanding and empathy. We hope that these statistics have and will continue to improve. Staff commented that the examples helped them to gain a better understanding of the issues faced at work by LGBT+ colleagues daily.

### Wellbeing month

In May GAD focussed on wellbeing. As part of wellbeing month, we marked Mental Health Awareness Week which is one of the largest awareness campaigns in the UK. We held several staff events all linked to this year's theme of loneliness. These helped to raise awareness of the importance of looking after our own mental health and supporting colleagues with theirs.

## **Moving forwards: our vision for inclusion**

People and Inclusion are priorities in the GAD Strategic Plan 2020 to 2025, As we approach the halfway point, delivery is progressing well and we are on track to achieve our vision for D&I within the timescale.

We are constantly working to improve inclusion at GAD, with the aim of enhancing both our staff and client experience.

Although our current Strategic Plan runs to 2025, there is no finite point at which we will have achieved inclusion. Our people strategy will continuously develop as the world and our working environment changes. We are constantly learning and strive to be adaptable, maximise potential and provide the best support possible to the UK government and wider Civil Service.

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## **[TRA reviews measures on two steel products and suspension for Ukraine](#)**

The Trade Remedies Authority (TRA) has today (Friday 24 June) initiated a transition review into [anti-dumping measures on Hot Rolled Flat and Coiled \(HRFC\) Steel](#) from Russia, Ukraine, Brazil and Iran. It has also opened a transition review into [anti-subsidy measures on imports of Stainless Steel bars and rods](#) from India.

These measures are among those that the UK inherited from the EU system – the TRA is reviewing them to make sure they are still suitable for the UK's needs.

HRFC Steel is used primarily in the mechanical and electrical engineering, construction and automobile sectors.

The measures on Stainless Steel bars and rods cover those used across various industries, including the automotive, aerospace and food processing industries. These products can be easily cut and machined and are often used in the manufacture of tools, machine parts and components.

The period of investigation for both transition reviews will be 1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022 while the injury period will be 1 April 2018 – 31 March 2022.

### **Suspension investigation**

In addition to today's initiation of the transition reviews, the TRA has also opened a [suspension investigation into the anti-dumping measures on HRFC Steel from Ukraine](#).

The TRA has assessed information provided to it by the government of Ukraine



against the following three conditions:

- Whether there has been a change to market conditions;
- Whether the effect of this change is temporary;
- The effect of this change on UK industry.

The TRA has made an initial assessment that these three conditions have been met following Russia's invasion of Ukraine earlier this year and will now investigate this further.

TRA Chief Executive Oliver Griffiths said:

"This week we have launched two transition reviews into measures on steel products, spanning imports from India, Russia, Ukraine, Brazil and Iran.

"Alongside this, following a request from the government of Ukraine we will investigate whether a suspension of measures on certain Ukrainian steel products is justified because of changed market conditions after the Russian invasion."

[View further information on the TRA's current investigations](#), including transition reviews like this one.

Businesses that may be affected by the investigations (such as importers or exporters of the products or UK producers of similar products) can contribute to the investigation by registering on the [TRA's online case platform](#). They can also stay up to date with developments in the case, which will be posted on the TRA's public file.

### **Note to editors:**

- The Trade Remedies Authority is the UK body that investigates whether new trade remedy measures are needed to counter unfair import practices and unforeseen surges of imports.
- [View more on how we investigate whether to suspend a trade remedy measure.](#)
- Anti-dumping remedies address imported goods which are being dumped in the UK at prices below what they would be sold for in their home country.
- Anti-subsidy measures, also known as countervailing measures, are one of three types of trade remedies that are allowed under World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules. They are put in place to offset imports being sold at unfair prices due to government subsidies in their country of origin.
- The TRA may make a suspension recommendation if it is satisfied it is appropriate to do so, and on the grounds that market conditions have temporarily changed such that injury would be unlikely to resume as a result of suspending the measure. The suspension of the measure would be short-term and a maximum of nine months in duration. Before making its recommendation, the TRA must give the UK industry opportunity to comment on the proposed suspension.
- Trade remedy investigations were carried out by the EU Commission on the

UK's behalf until the UK left the EU. Forty-four EU trade remedy measures of interest to UK producers were carried across into UK law when the UK left the EU and the TRA is currently reviewing each one to check if it is suitable for UK needs.

- Period of Investigation – when we are investigating dumping and subsidy cases, we will use a period of investigation of around a year. We will aim for the end point to be as close as possible to the date of initiation. However, we will decide this on a case-by-case basis.
- Period of injury – the injury period will usually cover the period of investigation and normally the 36 months immediately before this (i.e. 48 months in total). TRA investigators look at evidence of injury over a longer period than the general period of investigation so that they can assess trends and other factors in more detail than if they looked at a single year.

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## Health and Social Care Secretary of State speech on suicide prevention

Last Monday would have been my brother Tariq's birthday. I say it would have been because Tariq is no longer with us. He took his own life.

And on that Monday it was the first thing I thought about when I opened my eyes and the last thing I thought about when I closed my eyes. Nothing can prepare for you for the loss of a loved one.

But I want to use this privileged role that I have as Secretary of State to do right by his memory, but also the memories of thousands of others each year who have left us before their time, by preventing more people from going down the same devastating path.

Almost everyone in this country has been touched by suicide in some way.

The Samaritans – doing amazing work – answer a call for help every 10 seconds and tragically, around every 90 minutes someone dies from suicide in the UK. When we look across the last decade and look at Government initiatives like the previous Suicide Prevention Strategy no matter how well intentioned, the trends have broadly been going in the wrong direction.

We must treat suicides with the same urgency that we treat any other major killer and take determined action that reflects the changes and progress that we all want to see in society.

So we will be publishing a new 10-year mental health plan. At the moment we have a call for evidence asking for people's views and shortly afterwards we will be publishing a new 10-year suicide prevention plan.

I want to hear views from far and wide to help shape this work and the roundtable that I chaired here earlier this morning was so illuminating to help us do just that.

I heard heart-breaking tales of love and loss but also inspirational stories of the work being done to divert people from this painful path including of course the work of Papyrus here.

I am determined to make a difference on this issue and I wanted to take this opportunity to come and speak to you all, and talk about some of the principles that will drive this future work.

The first is encouraging those people who are at the greatest risk to come forward and to get the help they need. Talking about our innermost feelings can be uncomfortable and upsetting of course. But it is so important.

I am 52 years old, the same age as Tariq was when he left us.

Men in their 40s and 50s they make up a disproportionately high proportion of male suicides, around 40%. We can achieve so much if we encourage people to talk about how they feel and they come forward and ask for help.

Thanks to the trailblazing courage of campaigners in the public eye and thousands of quiet conversations in homes, schools and workplaces more and more people across the country are being open about their mental health.

We must keep these conversations going as we live with Covid and look at how we can bring in groups of people together traditionally more reluctant to come forward.

Last week I heard about a survey published showing that 75% of construction workers said that they regularly discussed emotions with colleagues. Yet there were some people who derided this, some newspapers who said this was evidence of a stereotypically male-dominated industry that had supposedly lost its way. I found the data shocking too.

I want it to be 100%. Not 75%. Because too many people suffer in silence, based on outdated ideas of what it means to be a man.

Mental health must not be only talked about in whispers. We must shout about it. Because keeping quiet can kill.

Traditionally, the construction trade has a suicide rate that is three times higher than the national male average rate and so the fact that people who work there are talking more is a cause for celebration, not castigation.

To build on this progress, I want to see more local areas doing outreach activities in places that men are likely to attend.

I've heard wonderful stories of a Tyne and Wear gym that gives men a safe space to share their feelings, a group of barbers who are trained to recognise symptoms of mental ill health, and there is a Talk Club, where a talking and listening club has been established and hosted at football clubs

for their supporters.

We know, from all the research that's already out there, that it's easier to talk about your feelings when you're pursuing your passion.

When we recently awarded over £5 million of funding to the voluntary sector as part of our Suicide Prevention Grant we backed a number of organisations that work specifically with men.

As we take forward our plans for suicide prevention we will also keep focusing on those communities where suicide is the greatest risk so for instance, the LGBT community which makes up a third of people who access an organisation called SHOUT, a suicide prevention hotline.

This work goes hand-in-hand with our mission to tackle disparities across the country and transform local communities.

Men in the lowest socioeconomic groups, who live in some of the most deprived areas are up to ten times more at risk of suicide than those in the highest socioeconomic groups, in other words those living in the most affluent areas.

There are regional disparities too.

For instance, you are twice as likely to die in the North East by suicide, than you are in London. It's fantastic that we have charities from across the UK here today many I met in the roundtable we just had and my Department is working with many of you here today to get to the bottom of these disparities and work out how we can put them right.

One of the golden threads running through all my work in this role has been a commitment to tackling disparities of all kinds that have been overlooked and ignored for far too long.

A relentless focus on suicide prevention will help us to break the cycle of devastation and deprivation in some of our most deprived communities and so too, focusing on transforming communities can lift so many of the strains on our health and happiness what the economist and Nobel Prize winner Sir Angus Deaton recently called the 'deaths of despair' that sit behind so many of the tragic stories in this country.

As well as looking at those communities at greatest risk we must also look at the risk factors that lead to suicides across all communities and this is the second area of what I wanted to talk about today.

We know that the causes of suicide are complex and intertwined but the data does show that there are some areas where we can have a big impact.

For example, there is a project in Kent that found that 30% of all suspected suicides in a two year period were linked to domestic abuse.

Our new Plan will look at risks like domestic abuse and gambling these weren't looked at in the previous strategy.

It will also place a greater focus on the online world which has created new

challenges when it comes to suicide prevention.

Now we have made real progress in some areas like working with manufacturers and online platforms to limit access to methods of suicide online. But there are also areas where we've found it harder to keep up with the proliferation of digital content for example when it comes to pro-suicide related content.

Research has found that suicide-related internet use was relevant to a quarter of suicide deaths in those aged under 20 and Google searches for suicide methods from UK browsers have risen by over 50% in two years.

Just think about that. When we use the internet we use google and search for suicide rates has gone up by 50% in two years.

When I was Home Secretary I spoke at the launch of the Online Harms White Paper. I talked about how we cannot allow leaders of some of the tech companies to simply look the other way and deny their share of responsibility for content on their platforms. Because if you run a business, of any kind, you have a duty to protect your customers.

I believe this strongly then as Home Secretary when I was thinking about sexual abuse but is just as important now.

Although the Internet contains a wealth of helpful content for those who are struggling too many people, especially those who are young or vulnerable they are also exposed to abhorrent and unacceptable content that promotes suicide and self-harm.

I will be convening a roundtable with social media platforms and search engines to encourage them to take more action and the Online Safety Bill that we have already brought before Parliament which will give us a once in a generation opportunity to tackle this issue.

I will also work jointly across Government to look at both upcoming and current legislation to make sure it meets the rapidly evolving challenges that we face.

Because when it comes to the encouragement of suicide and related harmful behavior we are currently relying on legislation that was primarily created long before the digital age and there is currently no specific offence that covers those who encourage or assist others to self-harm, or in my view of course a grave and heinous offence.

We have already announced that we will be creating a new offence of encouraging or assisting self-harm and I will work with my colleagues to see what else we can do where we might be falling short.

Our Suicide Prevention Plan will set out more about how we will do this.

We know that debt and economic uncertainty can be a factor too. We saw from the recession in 2008 which tragically led to a rise in suicide rates over the following years especially among men.

I know that people are facing real strains over the cost of living. There is a huge cost of living challenge now for so many people.

We protected millions of jobs during the pandemic through many incentives and we are now providing economic security at a time of great uncertainty.

During Covid-19 the suicide rate mercifully remained stable, despite the monumental impact on people's lives.

But the next few months are critical and we must do everything in our power to make sure that we support the most vulnerable as they deal with these financial pressures.

Our public servants of course have a hugely important role to play here. They interact with people when they are at their most vulnerable and they deal with issues like debt and gambling that can be major risk factors.

I want to ensure that all front line Government employees and workers who interact with people in these situations have suicide prevention training and I'm also going to be working with the Speaker of the House of Commons to encourage access to suicide prevention training for all MPs and their staff.

I've been hosting surgeries in my own constituency for over 12 years, and often people come to see me when they feel they have nowhere else to turn.

As a result, I think it is really important MPs and their staff who have a unique window into the lives of many people in distress in their local area that they get this training. To recognise the signs of suicidal behaviour, and signpost options for support we can help them to intervene before it's too late.

I am determined to focus not just on those who are at risk of suicide, but of course also their loved ones too. The sudden and unexpected circumstances of death from suicide can bring huge trauma. And I know the toll of losing a loved one and we need to be better at supporting those who are left behind. Not only because it is the right thing to do but because those who are bereaved from suicide are themselves at greater risk of suicide.

The evidence suggests that for every suicide, 135 people are directly affected and so we need to do everything we can to break this cycle of grief and suffering. Through putting in place for example the NHS Long Term Plan, every local area now has services for suicide bereavement support. By the end of this year, those services will proactively communicate with bereaved families within days of a death to offer their support. Removing the onus from the bereaved at their time of grief.

Third, we must keep improving services to help people who are struggling with their mental health.

The NHS is offering care and support to more people with mental health conditions than ever before with record levels of investment and more comprehensive round-the-clock support.

After all, your suicidal thoughts don't keep office hours.

They are more likely to emerge when people are alone or perhaps late at night and we hear from our charity partners that their helplines are often busiest between the hours of 9pm and midnight.

All mental health providers now have 24/7 urgent mental health helplines in place that, together, are managing over 200,000 calls each month. My aim is that by 2023/24, anyone in the country can dial NHS 111 to reach their local mental health team at any time of day, 24/7 which would make England one of the first countries in the world to offer this service.

We are also making greater use of talking therapies which were pioneered in England and have now been emulated across the world.

Over a million people have accessed talking therapy in the past year and we're expanding this access even further. The vast majority of these people who have accessed these therapies have done so through self-referral meaning they can get the help they need more quickly and so the median waiting time to start treatment is now only two weeks.

But despite this progress we must keep working to drive up service levels and address any unevenness in provision across the board. As part of this, I want to see an improvement in the quality of safety plans.

These are practical tools to help someone to navigate suicidal feelings and urges for example, removing objects that could be used for suicide or self-harm.

At the moment, there's a stark variation in the standard and quality of these plans. I'm pleased to announce today that we will be working with experts in the sector to publish some standalone, best practice guidance on safety plans showing what good looks like, and how we can save lives.

These urgent services work extraordinarily hard to help people at the greatest risk. But sadly, some two thirds of people who take their own life are not in contact with mental health services at all.

I was just reminded of this a couple of hours ago when I spoke to a bereaved parent.

Of course, we want to get this number down but it reinforces the importance of the communities we need around.

A report for the Adolescent Mental Health programme finds that, and I quote, "in cohesive neighbourhoods defined as a place where people know their neighbours adolescent wellbeing and mental health are stronger".

We all know the power to make a positive impact on the mental health of people around us and the answers can often lie within the communities where we live.

There are two central pillars of my overall NHS reform programme that I think

are crucial here, prevention and personalisation. One wonderful initiative that intersects both of these areas is social prescribing where we draw on all parts of the local community that shape our health and happiness.

This work will benefit the whole community but especially those at risk of suicide reconnecting those who feel lonely or isolated with the world around them.

I talked earlier about how we need to do more to reach middle aged men, who are at greatest risk. Men of that age typically find it harder to build social connections than women and I've been really inspired by groups like Men in Sheds which give men a place to meet like-minded people and share their concerns.

Through tailored opportunities for social prescribing and personalised support we can help those who are traditionally reluctant to come forward and give them the help and support that they need.

There have now been almost a million referrals to social prescribing services in this country with now some record 2,500 social prescribing workers in place who have all been encouraged to do e-learning on suicide awareness.

I've set a target of four million people to benefit from personalised care, like this, by March 2024 and I want to get more people into community-led schemes to tackle the social and economic drivers of their distress.

Finally, we will make the most of the kind of new technologies that helped this country through the pandemic. This was a time when our mental health system just like others across the world, was put under huge strain.

But it was also a time when we saw new ways of accessing care that we can take forward now as we enter this next chapter.

We must make greater use of the apps and online services that can provide new pathways for care and help us to give more people the kind of access they need more quickly.

We must apply this approach to data too. During the Covid crisis, our decisions, my decisions were underpinned by real-time data that gave us an up-to-date picture of the situation on the ground.

But there are currently too many gaps when it comes to data around suicide prevention that means we don't currently have a clear picture in certain areas for example, any link between suicide and ethnicity.

By bringing data together, we can identify concerning trends and respond at a much faster pace. We've been working with OHID – the division in my department- to trial a national suspected suicide surveillance system.

This allows us to look at patterns of risk like data on new and emerging methods of suicide and on suicide rates across different population groups to provide more sophisticated real time information that will allow us to make



better decisions.

These trials have already shown to be a great success and I'm pleased to confirm today that we will now be rolling this initiative out nationally and it'll be operational from early next year.

Last week, during London Tech Week I also launched our Data Strategy which shows how we will use the intrinsic value within data to tackle the twin challenges of recovery and reform.

I called the strategy, I named it Data Saves Lives and there are few greater opportunities to save lives than this vital work on suicide prevention.

This issue is deeply personal to me, and I feel a heavy sense of duty to use my time in this role to make a difference.

The dark cloud of suicide means that too much potential has gone unfilled and that there are too many families that have been left incomplete.

I'm determined to work with you to tackle this source of grief and heartbreak so that fewer people get the news that will one day perhaps turn their lives upside down.

Thank you all very much.