

Press release: UK aid supports world's first mobile app to help the poorest people with disabilities into work

Landmine amputee Khtoeb Veb is a farmer in Cambodia. His prosthetic leg is waterproofed for his work in the rice fields and adapted to allow him to balance. Picture: Humanity and Inclusion UK

UK aid is behind the world's first mobile phone app to identify innovative ways to help people with disabilities in the world's poorest countries to get jobs and contribute to their society.

Speaking at a Humanity and Inclusion event, International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt will set out how data, technology and collaboration are vital to making sure people with disabilities are consistently included in, and benefit from, the opportunities that are available to everyone in society.

The UK's Department for International Development (DFID) and Humanity and Inclusion are collaborating to prototype a mobile phone app that will help employers in developing countries share information on how to adapt tools, including cutting-edge prosthetics, and working environments, to make sure that workplaces are accessible for employees and entrepreneurs with disabilities.

For example, in Cambodia, farmers are using low-cost prosthetic legs made for unstable terrain, such as swampy fields. The app will share this adaptation with other farmers with similar disabilities in developing countries so they can adapt their own prosthetics and continue to work.

In her speech Ms Mordaunt will also announce that the UK government's first Global Disability Summit will be held at the Olympic Park in London on 24 July 2018. The Summit will be co-hosted with the Government of Kenya, building on the existing strong ties through the Commonwealth. Inclusion is also a key theme of this year's Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

People with disabilities suffer appalling and entrenched stigma and discrimination, and in many parts of the world they simply don't count.

This cannot continue – which is why I have put disability at the heart of UK aid to make those invisible visible.

DFID is using new technology and building on innovative

collaborations like our work with Humanity and Inclusion to help people with disabilities in the world's poorest countries get jobs and contribute to their society and economy. Alongside this, we have issued a call for the world to step up and tackle this inequality.

We must all work together to create a healthier, more inclusive and prosperous world – this is in all our interests.

For too long many people with disabilities in the world's poorest countries have not been able to fulfil their potential due to stigma or a lack of practical support.

Ms Mordaunt met the World Bank earlier this month to call on them to scale up their work on disability and development, and pushed for data collection to make the invisible visible. The Bank is expected to announce high level commitments on disability at the Global Disability Summit in London this year.

The Summit will bring the private sector, technology companies, international governments and charities together to secure ambitious commitments which will deliver a significant and tangible difference to the lives of millions of people with disabilities around the world.

The Summit will be held at the Olympic Park in London, home to the Global Disability Innovation Hub which finds innovative ways to unlock the potential of people with disabilities, to grow global prosperity.

UK aid has already been supporting innovative technology to transform the lives of people with disabilities by collaborating with tech pioneer, D-Rev, which is supported by DFID's Amplify Programme. This project is developing low-cost, high performance prosthetic knee joints for amputees in developing countries.

[News story: Scrap metal merger could leave businesses worse off](#)

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has been investigating European Metal Recycling Limited (EMR)'s purchase of Metal & Waste Recycling Limited (MWR). These are two of the largest metal recyclers in the UK.

As part of its initial investigation, the CMA found that EMR and MWR were the two main companies offering to purchase waste scrap metal and shred scrap metal in the area around and to the north of London. Following the deal, the merged company will face limited competition from other metal recyclers in

this area.

The CMA is therefore concerned that this merger could lead to a reduction in choice, price, quality and service to customers.

It will now refer the merger for an in-depth investigation unless EMR offers acceptable undertakings to address competition concerns.

All information relating to the merger is available on the [case page](#).

[News story: Post-Brexit economy will help Merseyside trade with the world](#)

Highlighting the latest figures that show goods exports from the North West of England were worth £27.8 billion in 2016, up by nearly £1 billion on the previous year, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury reaffirmed today (24 January) the government is committed to a post-Brexit economy that gives Liverpool even more opportunity to trade.

A buoyant export market has been vital in helping to grow the local Liverpool economy which is now worth more than £30 billion – up nearly 12% since 2010.

This strong export economy is fuelled by the continued importance of Liverpool Port with latest figures showing nearly 32,000 tonnes of traffic pass through the port.

Latest figures show that export goods from the North West of England to North America were worth £5.1 billion. The largest export destination from the North West of England is Europe, with goods worth more than £14.6 billion being shipped to the rest of the continent.

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Liz Truss said:

From machinery to medicine, Liverpool has a vibrant export industry with world-class products being sent to Europe, USA and afar. I've seen that first hand today visiting a world-class local business exporting cutting edge technology.

With trade forming such an important part of the Merseyside economy, the government is hugely committed to ensuring its businesses are even more competitive than ever before after Brexit as the UK prepares for independent trade deals.

The impact of this is more jobs and a stronger economy for people in Merseyside.

Northern Powerhouse Minister Jake Berry said:

Northern exporters, innovators and creators are thriving within the globally competitive Northern Powerhouse economy.

As a government, we're doing all we can to create a business-friendly environment to support British manufacturing in Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield and throughout the Northern Powerhouse region.

These latest stats are a testament to the resolve, determination and hard work of Northern businesses and to what we can achieve through working together.

Successful exports mean the North West of England economy was valued at more than £166.5 billion, according to latest figures. This represents more than 8 per cent of UK total output.

At [the Autumn Budget](#) the government announced that Liverpool City Region would receive £134 million from the new Transforming Cities Fund. Funding will be invested in transport projects, which drive productivity by improving transport links around the city and reducing congestion.

News story: Scotland's biggest trading partner continues to be rest of UK

Exports to the rest of the UK make up 61 per cent of Scotland's total exports, nearly four times the amount of trade with the EU market.

Independent research published by the Fraser of Allander Institute in November last year showed that around 560,000 jobs in Scotland (nearly one in four of all jobs) are supported by demand for Scottish goods and services from the rest of the UK.

These statistics underline how vital it is that we do maintain Scottish businesses' trade with their closest and most valuable market.

Commenting on the figures, Scottish Secretary David Mundell said:

These figures from the Scottish Government again show that Scotland's trade with the rest of the UK is worth nearly four times that with the EU. We know that more than half a million Scottish jobs depend on the vital UK internal market.

I cautiously welcome today's labour market statistics. But we know the Scottish economy continues to lag behind the rest of the UK, reinforcing the need to maintain our trade with the rest of the UK.

As the UK prepares to leave the EU, it is essential that we ensure the UK internal market continues unimpeded.

The trade figures also show an increase of over half a billion pounds in exports to markets outside the EU. This demonstrates the opportunities that lie ahead for Scottish businesses, as we strike new, ambitious trade deals around the world.

[Press release: North east rivers get fish stocks boost](#)

The Environment Agency has released more than 40,000 young fish into north east rivers during last year to give stocks a boost.

The fish – chub, dace, roach, bream, barbel, tench, grayling, crucian carp and rudd – are just some that were released right across the region during 2017.

And on Monday (22 January), the Environment Agency's north east fisheries team started off the new year by releasing 4,000 chub and 5,000 roach into the River Skerne at Darlington.

All the fish were reared at the Environment Agency's fish farm near Calverton, Nottinghamshire, using funding from rod licence sales.

Last year fish were released into rivers such as the Tees, Wear, Skerne, Gaunless, Browney, Blyth, Pont, Clow Beck and Langley Beck as well as Stillwater fisheries.

The work is part of the Environment Agency's ongoing plan to develop and restore rivers and fisheries in the region, targeting those which have previously been affected by pollution or where barriers affect fish passage.

Paul Frear, Fisheries Officers for the Environment Agency in the north east,

said:

Restocking is one of many things we do together with our partners to develop fisheries, including reducing the impact of pollution, improving habitats and removing barriers to fish migration.

The Environment Agency releases fish into our waterways annually. Fisheries officers target fish stocking activity using data from national fish surveys to identify where there are problems with poor breeding and survival. Paul added:

By releasing fish into the rivers it helps the process of natural recovery and development. We're pleased to be able to provide these young fish as part of our commitment to rod licence paying anglers. Restoration and the creation of new fisheries for all people to enjoy is a very important aspect of our work.

Many of our industrialised rivers have improved dramatically in water quality in the last 30 years and targeted and appropriate restocking has helped the restoration of natural fish stocks and viable fisheries.

Angling is a great way to keep healthy and enjoy the natural environment. All rod licence income is used to fund work to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries.

Fishing is free for children under 16, although those aged between 12 and 16 still need a junior licence. For anyone over 16, a full annual licence costs from just £30, with some short term and concessionary licences also available. You can buy your rod licence online at the [gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk)