

Press release: Fresh UK aid for humanitarian crises in 2018, as International Development Secretary warns it could be even “bleaker” than 2017

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt today announced a new package of support for humanitarian crises in the coming year, after UK aid delivered life-saving support to millions of people around the world and averted two famines in 2017.

In early 2017 the United Nations warned that the world was facing its worst humanitarian crisis since 1945. Ms Mordaunt says today that 2018 could be even worse with ongoing famines and conflicts in Yemen, South Sudan and Burma.

The new UK aid package will give a £21 million boost to the United Nations' Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) so agencies can respond even more quickly to under-funded emergencies around the world in 2018.

It will help to provide critical health services to 20 million people, plus clean water and sanitation to 13 million people and food to 9 million people.

The UK package is part of a wider international relief effort. Globally, the United Nations estimates that in 2018 some 136 million people in 25 countries will be in need of humanitarian assistance.

The UK is ready to deliver life-saving aid to those that need it most.

During 2017, UK aid has helped prevented famines in Nigeria and Somalia, as well as alleviating untold suffering in South Sudan and Yemen. We achieved this by providing:

- 1.8 million people in Yemen with food, 300,000 with safe water and 250,000 with medical treatment
- 1.6 million people in Somalia with food, 1.1 million with safe water and 700,000 with medical treatment
- 1 million people in northeast Nigeria with food assistance and 500,000 with safe water
- 500,000 people in South Sudan with food, 300,000 with safe water and 100,000 with medical treatment

In addition, this year UK aid delivered 827 tonnes of supplies in response to hurricanes Irma and Maria in the Caribbean. It also provided emergency shelter to 130,000 people affected by the Rohingya crisis and medical support for more than 1 million people in Syria.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

While 2017 was a year of harrowing humanitarian crises, the truth is 2018 could be even bleaker.

When we see suffering, we instinctively want to help. Britons are big-hearted, open-minded and far-sighted – qualities that define a great nation.

This year, through UK aid and further public donations, we helped avert famines in Nigeria and Somalia, gave emergency help to the survivors of the Caribbean hurricanes and provided a vital life-line to people suffering from conflict in Syria and Yemen.

Britain is giving life saving aid, but also hope, to millions of people around the world. In the challenges 2018 brings Britain will continue to be at the forefront of the global humanitarian response.

Ms Mordaunt also announced –ongoing support for people driven from their homes as a result of the conflict in Syria, which is in its seventh year. The UK aid package will give money directly to Syrian refugees living in Lebanon, so they can decide how best to look after their families.

The programme, delivered by the UN's World Food Programme (WFP), will help stamp out child labour by providing more than 10,0000 families with an allowance so that they can buy essential food, shelter, household supplies and medical assistance.

Notes to Editors

1. Today's announcement will provide an additional £21m support for the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) so that it can respond to under-funded emergencies even more quickly. This funding is in addition to the UK's core funding allocation of £55m to CERF in 2017.
2. CERF provides an efficient and effective way to provide additional resources rapidly in response to humanitarian crises. It has recently saved lives in Syria, responded to famine in East Africa and supported people suffering violence from Boko Haram.
3. Lebanon is host to more refugees relative to its own population than any other country. It currently hosts around 1.5 million Syrians, as well as 300,000 Palestinians.

[News story: Welsh Secretary congratulates Welsh recipients of New Year's Honours](#)

I'm delighted to recognise and give thanks to those who serve their communities with selfless dedication for the benefit of others.

It is inspiring to hear about the good work carried out by the outstanding Welsh men and women honoured today, many of whom have been selected for the unseen contributions they make to their communities at home or around the world.

Those nominated for this accolade should be incredibly proud of their achievements, and I extend my thanks and congratulations to them all."

[Press release: Yorkshire court worker awarded OBE](#)

David Greensmith, Justices' Clerk for North and West Yorkshire, has been given the honour after 30 years working for Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service.

As a Justice's Clerk, he is primarily responsible for ensuring that 700 magistrates across the region receive timely legal advice, managing a team of advisers who work across the two counties' eight courthouses.

David spoke of his delight on receiving the award:

I'm honoured to receive this OBE. My 30 years serving as a Justice Clerk has brought with it a number of unexpected opportunities both at home in Yorkshire, the North West and further afield.

The variety of legal work has meant that no day is ever the same and I've particularly enjoyed seeing so many individuals develop and flourish in their professional and magisterial careers.

Mr Greensmith's varied career has taken him to a number of exotic destinations, leading successful programmes developing the court systems of

Serbia, Croatia and the Falkland Islands, as well as helping to launch a judicial efficiency project in Serbia.

Closer to home, he previously sat as President of the Justices' Clerks Society and has contributed to a number of national programmes, working to increase efficiency and modernise the court system.

Courts and Justice Minister Dominic Raab said:

Throughout his time working for HMCTS, David has made a tremendous contribution to the administration of justice, using his knowledge and experience to implement real change in the court system of the UK and internationally.

I congratulate him for the honour he has earned through his hard work and commitment.

Mr Greensmith has also been honoured for his services to the UK Scouting movement.

Press release: £60 million boost to UK children's television

The Government's response to the consultation on the Contestable Fund, sets out proposals for up to £60 million to be made available for content creators to receive up to 50 per cent of the production and distribution costs of original TV shows.

The fund is still in development, but would be available for content broadcast on commercial Public Service Broadcasters (PSBs), as well as for other free and widely available channels and on-demand platforms, and potentially also online.

Over the past decade the output of children's television from PSBs in the UK has been in decline, with spending falling by £55m. This investment will aim to help reverse that trend and is the first of its kind to specifically focus on children's television.

The pilot is also aimed at stimulating greater variety in a market where the BBC is often the dominant buyer and broadcaster of children's content. In 2016, the BBC accounted for 87% of all first run UK originated children's programming by PSBs.

The pilot is intended to complement other measures taken by government in this area, including the introduction of a children's TV tax break and new

powers given to Ofcom.

Culture Secretary Karen Bradley said:

High quality children's television is not only entertaining but plays a vital role in stimulating learning and giving young people a greater understanding of the world around them.

This significant investment will give our world-renowned television production sector the boost it needs to create innovative content for a wider audience that would otherwise not be made.

Anna Home OBE, Chair of the Children's Media Foundation said:

The Children's Media Foundation welcomes the confirmation that the new Contestable Content Fund will focus on the children's audience. It's a much-needed stimulus for the UK's children's media makers and we hope it will bring new and exciting content for children of all ages that could not otherwise have been commissioned.

John McVay, Chief Executive of PACT said:

Pact has long campaigned for increased investment in original children's content to incentivise new entrants to the market. This along with the introduction of the PSB criteria through the Digital Economy Act, will encourage the commercial PSBs back to the table and foster new talent.

The cash will be distributed over three years as part of a pilot starting in 2019. Programmes from new and diverse backgrounds, and those made in the nations and regions, will be a particular focus.

The funding for the pilot has been made available as a result of unspent funds from the previous licence fee settlement.

The BFI has been provisionally appointed as administrator for the fund, and will work with government on its final design, including whether the fund should include other genres in its scope.

Notes to Editors

- A detailed policy paper will be published in 2018 setting out how the fund will work, with the first awards distributed from the beginning of 2019/20.
- In the BBC Charter White Paper (May 2016), the government committed to establish a pilot contestable fund for public service broadcasting content. The consultation on the pilot contestable fund closed in February 2017. The government has today publishing its initial response

to the consultation: [Public Service Broadcasting Contestable Fund: Pilot Phase](#).

- The UK's public service broadcasters are the BBC, ITV 1, Channel 4, Channel 5 and S4C.
 - [PACT](#) is the trade association representing the commercial interests of UK independent television, film, digital, children's and animation media companies.
 - The government gave Ofcom powers, through the Digital Economy Act 2017, to introduce children's content quotas on commercial public service broadcasters should it see fit. Ofcom launched a review of children's content in November 2017: [Children's Content Review](#). Ofcom intends to publish its findings, alongside any proposed regulatory measures, in summer 2018.
 - The government extended the tax relief for animation and high-end TV programmes to UK children's programmes in 2014.
 - [Ofcom's PSB Annual Research Report 2017](#)
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[Press release: Environment Agency uncovers landscape with laser mapping](#)

The Environment Agency has announced plans to map England's entire landscape by 2020, using the data to assess flood risk and inform conservation work.

Using aircraft equipped with laser scanners, the Environment Agency will map all 130,000km² of the country, including rivers, fields and national parks – equivalent to 32 million football pitches.

As well as being used to understand flood risk, the data will also be made available for free to the public and industry to be used by archaeologists, environmental and urban planners, and even gamers to make accurate 3D models of the landscape.

Currently about 75 per cent of the country is mapped but with only sporadic coverage of upland areas. The new project, beginning over winter, will cover all of England's national parks, areas of outstanding natural beauty (AONBs) and sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs) such as the Peak District and the Yorkshire Dales.

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

This ambitious project will enhance our understanding of England's unique natural features and landscape, helping us to better understand flood risk, plan effective defences and fight waste crime.

I'm pleased we are able to gather, use and share such valuable data to contribute to environmental improvements and conservation. It's just one of the many ways the Environment Agency is using technology to help people and wildlife.

The Environment Agency has been using lidar – light detection and ranging – technology for 20 years to better understand flood risk. Maps are created by aircraft equipped with laser scanners, which measure the distance between the aeroplane and the ground. The data collected can then be used to plan flood defences across whole river catchments. It also helps environment officers spot sudden changes in the landscape that could indicate illegal waste dumping – in 2014 eight people in Cornwall were fined for [dumping 4,500m³ of waste](#), which was discovered using lidar data.

Other organisations across the Defra group also use the data to help improve the environment – Natural England uses it to assess wildlife habitat and Forestry Commission use it to understand more about the country's tree cover.

In 2015, the Environment Agency made 11 terabytes of lidar data – equivalent to 3 million MP3 songs – available for free to the public as open data. Since then, the data has been downloaded more than 500,000 times. The data has even [helped archaeologists uncover lost Roman roads](#) in the north of the country.

The new data will also be better quality than ever before, as the Environment Agency will map the whole country at 1m resolution by 2020. This means using the most up-to-date laser technology to reveal the features and details of the terrain more clearly.

For more information on how the Environment Agency collects and uses Lidar data, check out our [blog](#).

You can also follow the Environment Agency's Geomatics team on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).