

£10 million for traveller sites across England will improve life chances and reduce unauthorised encampments

- Funding will increase provision of traveller sites and improve existing ones
- £10 million for improvements will help travellers' social outcomes and give easier access to healthcare, education, employment
- New and better sites will reduce the likelihood of unauthorised encampments

New traveller sites will be created through a [£10 million fund](#) announced today (20 March 2022).

The funding, for 2022/23, will allow councils to provide improved transit sites and stopping places, so travellers have authorised places to stay, and access to facilities and services.

Councils can also bid for funding for new permanent sites to meet the needs of travellers in their local areas, as well as using it to refurbish existing sites.

As part of our ambitions to level up across the country, this fund will help improve travellers' life chances, by giving them easier access to local services including healthcare, education, and employment.

Providing more and better places to stay will also reduce tensions between travellers and the settled community, and the high costs of tackling unauthorised encampments.

Communities Minister, Kemi Badenoch, said:

It's vital that everyone has access to the kind of services that offer the best support. So, these new and improved sites will give travellers easier routes to healthcare, education, and employment.

This funding is just one of the ways the government is improving opportunities for communities across the country.

This funding can be used for new sites; improve existing sites through both refurbishment and rebuild; improve site infrastructure; or pay for public spaces on existing sites, such as community centres, play areas for children and stabling for horses.

By building more sites and temporary stopping places, it also aims to reduce the number of unauthorised encampments in England; reduce enforcement costs for councils; assist councils and local police in redirecting travellers from

unauthorised encampments, and therefore enhance community cohesion between the settled community and travellers.

In addition to this fund, councils can already apply for a share of the £11.5 billion Affordable Homes Fund 2021-2026 for permanent and transit sites, and bricks and mortar accommodation for travellers.

[UK donates two million medical items to Ukraine](#)

- Latest shipment left in flight on Friday morning with thousands of doses of medicines, including pain relief
- Secretary of State for Health and Social Care affirms UK's commitment to stand shoulder to shoulder with Ukraine

More than two million items of medical supplies have been given to Ukraine by the UK to help the country cope with the medical emergency caused by the Russian invasion.

Items including vital medicines, wound packs, and intensive care equipment donated by NHS England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland have been flown to the region on ten flights over the past three weeks, leaving from Stanstead and Heathrow Airports and RAF Brize Norton.

The latest flight left from London Heathrow yesterday morning (Friday 18th March) carrying thousands of doses of medicine, including painkillers, with another flight – the 11th so far – expected next week.

Following an urgent request from Ukraine a refrigerated truck left for the region on Friday night carrying insulin injections and drugs critical for surgery which will save tens of thousands of Ukrainian lives. This is expected to arrive in the region in the coming days.

The UK government has been working closely with Ukrainian officials to deliver targeted support to ensure medical items are reaching the people who need them most.

Some of the significant items sent to the Ukraine so far includes:

- Nearly 3,000 adult resuscitators
- Around 160,000 wound care packs
- Over 300,000 sterile needles
- Over 32,000 packs of bandages
- 1,600 pieces of equipment for ventilators
- Over 54,000 cannulas
- 100,000 packs of medicines – around 800,000 doses – including

- antibiotics and painkillers
- 72,000 packs of gloves
- 28,000 FFP3 masks

Health and Social Care Secretary, Sajid Javid, said:

We're leading the humanitarian effort to support Ukraine by providing targeted medical support to those in need. In less than three weeks the UK has donated more than two million medical items.

Tens of thousands of sick or injured Ukrainians have now received treatment thanks to the donations made by NHS England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The UK will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with the people of Ukraine in the face of Russia's appalling invasion.

Today's milestone of two million medical items donated to Ukraine forms part of the government's wider humanitarian response to this emergency. Earlier this week the UK government flew 21 children with cancer to the UK, who are now receiving lifesaving treatment from the NHS.

Foreign Secretary, Liz Truss, said:

The UK is providing £220 million in life saving humanitarian aid to Ukraine. In addition to medical supplies we are providing shelter and hygiene kits. The UK is also donating over 500 mobile generators to provide vital energy to Ukrainian hospitals and shelters.

Our humanitarian advisors have been deployed to neighbouring countries to assess needs on the ground and we are supporting those affected by the deteriorating situation in Ukraine.

On Thursday 17 March the government announced that Ukrainians fleeing their home country will be guaranteed free access to NHS healthcare, including hospital services, GP and nurse consultations, urgent care centres and injury units.

More than 6,100 visas have been granted through the Ukraine Family Scheme and, for those with valid Ukrainian passports, the government has removed the need to attend an in-person appointment to conduct biometric checks before travelling to the UK.

Since Monday 14 March, people in the UK have been able to register their interest to sponsor a named Ukrainian under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, with more than 150,000 people registering.

The government has provided £400 million in humanitarian and economic aid to

Ukraine and neighbouring countries since the Russian invasion started, along with defensive anti-tank and anti-aircraft weaponry.

UK City of Culture 2025 shortlist revealed

- Bradford, County Durham, Southampton and Wrexham County Borough selected
- Winner will be announced by the Culture Secretary in May

Bradford, County Durham, Southampton and Wrexham County Borough are today unveiled as the four areas shortlisted to be UK City of Culture 2025.

The four locations were approved by Culture Secretary Nadine Dorries based on independent advice made to the government by a panel of experts led by Sir Phil Redmond.

The finalists were whittled down from a record twenty initial bids to eight outstanding longlist applications which also included Cornwall, Derby, Stirling and Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon.

All bids were asked to explain how they would use culture to grow and strengthen their local area, as well as how they would use culture to recover from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The vast benefits of winning the prestigious title include attracting millions of pounds in additional investment to help boost regeneration, a year in the cultural spotlight with hundreds of events encouraging long-lasting participation in the arts, and growth for local tourism.

Arts Minister Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay said:

The UK City of Culture competition shows the important role that culture can play in levelling up our towns, cities and rural communities – bringing investment, great events, thousands of tourists, and opportunity for people of all ages and backgrounds.

We have seen a huge positive impact in this year's host city, Coventry, with millions of pounds in investment and thousands of visitors.

This has been a record year for bids, which is great to see. Congratulations to the four shortlisted places – I wish them all

the best of luck.

Coventry UK City of Culture 2021 has seen more than £172 million invested in funding music concerts, public art displays, the UK's first permanent immersive digital art gallery, a new children's play area in the centre of the city, the new Telegraph Hotel and improvements to public transport.

More than a third of event tickets (43 per cent) issued to Coventry residents as part of the City of Culture went to financially stretched people or those facing adversity and a third of the cultural programme was co-created with local communities. A further £500 million has been ploughed into the city's regeneration since it was confirmed as the UK City of Culture.

More than £150 million of public and private sector investment was invested into 2013 winner Derry-Londonderry while the 2017 winner Hull saw a 10 percent increase in visitor numbers during its tenure.

Sir Phil Redmond, Chair of the City of Culture Expert Advisory Panel, said:

Culture can act as a catalyst for community engagement, civic cohesion and a driver for economic and social change as previously seen not just in Derry-Londonderry (2013), Hull (2017) and Coventry (2021), but all those other places who went on a journey to develop their own cultural strategy. Simply taking part has proved a catalyst in itself. We have had a great longlist to select from, which made the shortlisting difficult, but I am now looking forward to visiting each of the shortlisted places with the panel to witness culture's catalytic effect in action.

Martin Sutherland, Chief Executive, Coventry City of Culture Trust, said:

This is such an exciting moment for the shortlisted cities and we wish them all the best for the next stage. Holding the title in Coventry has been a privilege and has made a considerable impact already on the City and its citizens. We can't wait to see what comes next for those who've used the bidding process to truly consider the value of culture – all will have inspired the next generation of artists, organisations, funders and supporters. The expert advisory panel, chaired by Sir Phil Redmond, will now visit the four shortlisted places before making their final recommendation in May. The winner will be announced this year in Coventry.

The competition, delivered by DCMS in collaboration with the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, brings culture into the heart of communities and gives people an opportunity to get involved in everything the arts have to offer.

The eight longlisted bidders received, for the first time, a £40,000 grant to strengthen their applications which were scrutinised by the expert advisory panel against [published criteria](#).

The unsuccessful areas will each receive detailed feedback on their bids. Ministers and officials will also engage with them on how best they can maintain momentum and realise their ambitions in the future.

ENDS

Notes to Editors:

- The [expert advisory panel](#) includes representatives from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and brings together a wide range of experience.
- To learn more about each shortlisted bid visit the cities' websites: [Bradford](#), [County Durham](#), [Southampton](#), [Wrexham](#).
- Read more information on [Coventry UK City of Culture 2021](#).
- For the first time this year groups of towns were able to join together and apply for the title to be awarded to their local area – widening the scope of which areas of the country could benefit.

Full list of bids:

- Armagh City, Banbridge and Craigavon
 - The City of Bangor and Northwest Wales
 - The Borderlands region, comprising Dumfries and Galloway, Scottish Borders, Northumberland, Cumbria and Carlisle City
 - Bradford
 - Conwy County
 - Cornwall
 - Derby
 - County Durham
 - Lancashire
 - Medway
 - City of Newport
 - Powys
 - Southampton
 - Stirling
 - The Tay Cities region
 - Torbay and Exeter
 - Wakefield District
 - City of Wolverhampton
 - Wrexham County Borough
 - Great Yarmouth & East Suffolk
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Lord Evans' statement on the Government's response to the Committee's report on local government ethical standards

Press release

Lord Evans has responded to the publication of the Government's response to the Committee's report on local government ethical standards



Today, [the Government has published its response to the Committee's 2019 report, Local Government Ethical Standards](#).

In response, Lord Evans said:

“While we note the government’s commitment to further work to support local government, the Committee is disappointed that many of its careful recommendations have not been accepted. It was clear from our evidence that the sector backed our call to strengthen the arrangements in place to support high ethical standards, whilst respecting the benefits of a localised approach.

We are pleased that many local authorities have already reviewed their approach as a result of this work and are adopting the best practice points from the report. Across all tiers of local government, decisions are taken about a wide range of local services using public funds, so it is important that there are robust governance arrangements that command public confidence.”

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How your pensions can help tackle climate change

Not only do we believe that tackling climate change is right for the planet, green investments represent a huge opportunity for the UK's financial services sector. And getting this right is a key part of the Chancellor's vision to make the UK the global hub of choice for green finance.

As ministers representing different departments, we are working together to support the green agenda. Last October, the UK was the first country in the world to require trustees of occupational pension schemes to identify, manage, and report on the climate-related risks and opportunities within their portfolios.

By October this year, 81% of occupational pension scheme assets will be assessed and the disclosures will be published in the months that follow. And because we know that forests and land use are a significant source of carbon emissions, any action on climate change will need to take deforestation into account. These measures will deliver a new level of accountability, with pension savers able to see the impact of their investments and better understand how risks are being considered and mitigated.

During our COP26 Presidency, we are putting forests front and centre of our global response to climate change. Ending deforestation would make the single largest contribution to greenhouse gases reduction targets for 2030, taking 3.5 gigatons of carbon out of the system every single year. That's 10% of the emissions reductions we need during this decade.

At COP26, we were delighted that 141 countries representing 90% of the world's forests committed to ending forest loss and land degradation by 2030. The declaration was bolstered by unprecedented public, private, and philanthropic investment, amounting to around \$20 billion. The world's biggest buyers of forest-risk commodities and all the main multilateral development banks committed to align with our climate goals and the recovery of nature – which, in turn, will help to protect millions of livelihoods and natural habitats around the world.

We were pleased that several significant UK-based pension funds committed to transitioning their portfolios away from activities that are driving deforestation. And with the new requirements from October 2021 on climate-related financial disclosure, shareholders, members, and constituents can now see and understand the progress that is being made.

It is clear that the British people care passionately about making sure their savings are part of the solutions, and they deserve to know whether pension fund managers are using their hard-earned money in a way that jeopardises or prioritises the future for which they are saving. In the coming weeks we will be reaching out to UK pension funds, to help them further understand deforestation issues and how to manage this risk as effectively as possible.

The UK Presidency of COP26 continues until we hand the baton to Egypt towards the end of this year; our priority is to ensure we achieve the outcomes secured in Glasgow last November and keep leading by example.

Our pensions can play a crucial role in driving forward our pledge to protect precious natural habitats and reduce emissions in the years to come.