

# Small businesses deliver a green Christmas this festive season

- Small businesses across the UK, from Cornwall to Edinburgh, are putting sustainability at the heart of their Christmas plans
- from solar-powered offices, to electric delivery vans and planet-saving beer, small companies are taking simple steps to reduce emissions and green their businesses, while reaping the benefits, including lower business costs and attracting new customers
- through initiatives such as the Together For Our Planet campaign, the UK government is supporting businesses across the UK build back greener and capitalise on the green industrial revolution

This festive season, a record number of UK small businesses are placing sustainability at the heart of their business models, attracting new customers and driving growth in favour of a sustainable Christmas.

From sustainable skincare products to high-tech electric race-karts, small businesses across the country are making important changes to lower their carbon footprint, increase consumer confidence, choice and value for money and help meet the UK's target of becoming net zero by 2050.

As the UK's 5.5 million small businesses make up 99% of the UK's enterprises, employ 61% of the UK workforce and generate £2.3 trillion of revenue to the economy, our small businesses can make a huge impact our collective carbon footprint as the same time as future-proofing their business.

Innovative steps are being taken up and down the country this season to ensure this Christmas is a green one. For example, indoor Midlands-based Teamworks Karting has installed energy saving festive lighting to create an eco-friendly Santa's Grotto, London-based fashion company Been London and South West England's Solar Panel company Naked Solar Ltd are both switching to electric vehicles and other cleaner forms of transport to reduce their carbon footprint of deliveries, and Edinburgh-based Pizza oven company, OONI Pizza, has been working in collaboration across their supply chain on energy efficiency measures to ensure high-quality, long-lasting products for life, not just for Christmas.

Thanks to small changes like these, the UK's small business community is seeing first-hand that taking action on climate change will not only help protect the planet, but also help their businesses to grow, seize new opportunities, ultimately helping them maintain a competitive advantage locally and globally.

Greg Hands Minister for Energy, Clean Growth and Climate Change said:

The UK's small business community is leading the charge to go green and fully embracing the new opportunities it brings.

We are determined to ensure they have the tools and resources needed to grow, create jobs and attract new customers while delivering a greener future.

These are just a few of the thousands of small businesses in the UK who have signed up to the UK government's [UK Business Climate Hub](#), launched in June 2021 to encourage small businesses to go green. These actions are supported by the government's Together for Our Planet campaign, where businesses can get advice and support and commit to become net zero. So far, the campaign has helped drive 2,566 sign-ups to the UK Business Climate Hub website, representing 80% of sign-ups worldwide, as well as played a critical role in encouraging over [half of the country's largest businesses to make climate change commitments](#), announced during COP26 in November 2021.

These collective efforts to encourage business to go green form part of the government's wider plans to build a greener Britain by cutting greenhouse gas emissions, paving the way in support of the government's mission to level up by building green jobs and industries of the future across the country.

Small Business Minister Paul Scully said:

Thanks to the fantastic entrepreneurial spirit of UK business leaders from Penzance to Portree, we're not only confronting environmental challenges but also making the most of the opportunities that green business presents.

It's truly inspiring to see the UK's small business community stepping up to meet global challenges and I urge everyone to get behind their local businesses this season.

UK SMEs that are making the leap to put sustainability at the heart of their business this Christmas include:

**Planet-saving beer:** being green is at the heart of Toast Ale, an award-winning craft beer company based in London. With food production labelled as the biggest contributor to climate change, Toast Ale launched their business in pursuit of creating planet-saving beer by brewing their drinks with surplus fresh bread from bakeries, saving over 4 tonnes of bread from being wasted and raising £65,000 for charitable causes. As part of the SME Climate Commitment and thanks to their sustainable mission, the business has reached a wider audience, attracting new customers who enjoy both tasty beer and making a positive impact to the planet.

**Greenlight for green growth:** National brand Teamworks Karting is on the road to a greener future after committing to sustainable growth in 2021. Operating 5 centres across the UK, from Hertfordshire to the Midlands region, including its Birmingham HQ, as well as East Midlands and Northampton, the company invested in a fleets of electric-powered go-karts across, stating that, 'electric vehicle tech is the way forward. They are faster, much more efficient, fume-free, far better for customers, staff and critically – the

environment’.

**Sustainable hydration:** as a business with a mission to end plastic waste, the Wirral-based juice dispenser producer, generationJuice, is providing staff across sectors with healthy, natural hydration, helping people to ditch single-use plastic for glasses, reusable bottles or compostable cups. They distribute their refreshing juice dispensers to hotels, schools, restaurant, and offices and are making a real difference, for example, saving 3.6 million plastic bottles from being thrown away in secondary schools while cutting costs.

**Home-spun and handknitted:** Small family-run business, the Naked Sheep Hayle, based in Hayle in Cornwall, creates one of a kind knitted and crocheted items, produced entirely by hand. Providing a unique selection of hand-crafted Christmas gifts, Naked Sheep sell their products at local events to reduce product miles and use fleeces from farms local in Cornwall, which not only helps local farmers, but keeps the carbon footprint as low as possible. Their festive creations are also made from 100% natural products, such as plant fibres and organic natural dyes from plants, providing the company with a whole new palette of colours to work with while saving money by not buying commercial yarns.

**‘Tis the pizza season:** Ooni Pizza is a pizza oven company committed to using business as a force for good since it was founded in 2012 by husband-and-wife team. Ooni has now grown into a multi award-winning business that sells its products around the world. Headquartered in West Lothian, Edinburgh, they have planted 2.8 million trees to date, measure their full carbon footprint and are members of the SME Climate Hub. In partnership with Pawprint, the Ooni team have participated in sustainability challenges and collectively saved over 30,000kg of carbon – the equivalent of driving around the world 3 times.

**The green ride:** named Wales Manufacturer of the Year in 2017, the family business Frog Bikes have made a real mark on the bike designing and manufacturing industry. Using academic research-led design and careful sourcing, Frog Bikes have developed lightweight kids’ bikes that are robust and reliable and designed for longevity. Supporting locally sourced suppliers, providing accessible spare parts and reducing plastic in pedals, this provides both an exciting eco-friendly Christmas present and the beginning of a new sustainable lifestyle.

As part of our COP26 Presidency and beyond, the UK government is supporting all businesses as they sign up to the globally-recognised UN Race to Zero Climate Commitment, which helps organisations become more energy efficient, switch to electric vehicles and active travel, and become landfill free. By doing so, they can protect the planet and their business, and help us deliver a green business revolution.

Michelle Ovens CBE, founder of Small Business Britain said:

Representing 99% of UK business, small firms can play a huge role

in tackling climate change and reducing the UK's carbon emissions. There is huge passion among small businesses for sustainability, and it's wonderful to see this inspiring showcase of the innovative steps many are taking to reduce their impact on the environment.

More and more small businesses are making the important commitment to go net zero by 2050. Those who have not yet done so should check out the government's SME Climate Hub, to make this pledge and get some fantastic support on their journey to net zero.

Mike Cherry, national chairman for the Federation of Small Businesses said:

The role of small businesses in transitioning to net zero is ever more vital. Small business owners care passionately about the environment and they recognise the need to tackle the climate crisis this Christmas and beyond.

Our Accelerating Progress report on net zero sets out an ambitious but tangible blueprint for small firms, so they can make those all-important, necessary changes to help power a small business-led, sustainable economic recovery.

---

## [UK secures millions more antivirals to help fight Omicron](#)

- Monumental deals have been accelerated to combat the Omicron variant and protect patients
- Government urges all over 50s and most vulnerable to sign up to the national study as soon as they test positive for COVID-19

Millions more cutting-edge antiviral treatments for COVID-19 have been secured for NHS patients as the UK Government signs two new contracts to help tackle Omicron.

The significant new deals have been accelerated following the emergence of the Omicron variant to protect vulnerable people over the coming months. The move will help reduce hospitalisations and therefore ease pressures on the NHS.

Antivirals are treatments used to either treat those who are infected with a virus or sometimes protect exposed individuals from becoming infected. They target the virus at an early stage, preventing progression to more severe, or even critical, symptoms.

The two new contracts are for 1.75 million additional courses of Merck Sharp and Dohme's (MSD) molnupiravir (Lagevrio®) and 2.5 million additional courses of PF-07321332/ritonavir (Paxlovid™) from Pfizer which will be available from early next year and are both expected to be effective against Omicron.

The 4.25 million courses are in addition to the procurement of 480,000 courses of molnupiravir and 250,000 courses of PF-07321332/ritonavir announced in October this year.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

Our COVID-19 booster programme continues at unparalleled pace and it's vital we further bolster our national response to the virus by ensuring access to the world's best treatments too.

This is a mammoth deal for the UK Government and for patients across the country that are set to benefit from these antivirals over the coming months.

If you're aged 50 and over or have an underlying health condition and test positive for COVID-19 – sign up to the study as soon as you can and take advantage of this remarkable treatment.

Molnupiravir is already being rolled out to hundreds of patients through the national study PANORAMIC, run by the University of Oxford in close collaboration with GP hubs. The government is urging everyone aged 50 and over, or between 18 to 49 with an underlying health condition, to [sign up to the trial](#) if they test positive for COVID-19.

Last week, deployment of the antiviral to those at highest risk began outside of the clinical trial – for example, people who are immunocompromised or cancer patients – after they've tested positive. And as of Monday the antibody treatment sotrovimab (Xevudy™) was also being made available to this group of patients.

Molnupiravir has shown in clinical trials to reduce the risk of hospitalisation or death for at-risk, non-hospitalised adults with mild to moderate COVID-19 by 30%. PF-07321332/ritonavir reduced the relative risk of COVID-19-associated hospitalisation or death by 89% in those who received treatment within three days of symptoms appearing.

Should PF-07321332 be approved by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA), it will also be deployed through the PANORAMIC study as quickly as possible.

The study was launched to allow medical experts to gather further data on the potential benefits these treatments bring to vaccinated patients, and will help the NHS to develop plans for rolling out the antivirals to further patients next year.

For treatment access outside of the study, those in the highest risk group

will be informed by the NHS if they have a condition that will make them eligible to receive these treatments, should they test positive for COVID-19.

Chair of the Antivirals Taskforce Eddie Gray said:

Both antivirals in our current portfolio could be vital tools against Omicron – with current evidence showing they will be effective against the variant.

The Antivirals Taskforce will continue its work to ensure vulnerable people who test positive for COVID-19 can rapidly access these medicines.

Signing up to the study is a simple and easy way you can protect yourself once you contract COVID-19 – if eligible, please sign up as soon as you test positive.

The Antivirals Taskforce will continue to look at a number of further treatment options, spanning a range of different antiviral mechanisms. Alongside the work of the Therapeutics Taskforce, this will ensure as many people as possible can be protected from COVID-19, future variants and other future diseases.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the UK has proven itself to be a world leader in identifying and rolling out effective treatments for COVID-19 – including the world's first treatment, dexamethasone, which has saved over a million lives worldwide.

---

## [CMA action frees leaseholders from costly contract terms](#)

- Taylor Wimpey to strike out terms that mean ground rents double every 10 years in latest CMA victory for leaseholders.
- Affected leaseholders' ground rents will no longer increase and will remain at the amount charged when they first bought their home.
- Investigation into Barratt Developments ongoing.

Taylor Wimpey – one of the UK's leading housing developers – has voluntarily given formal commitments to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) to remove terms from leasehold contracts that cause ground rents to double in price. The effect of these increases, which kick in every 10 years, is that people often struggle to sell or obtain a mortgage on their home. Their property rights can also be at risk if they fall behind on their rent.

Taylor Wimpey will also remove terms which had originally been ground rent

doubling clauses but were converted so that the ground rent increased in line with the Retail Prices Index (RPI). The CMA believes that the original doubling clauses were unfair terms and should therefore have been fully removed, not replaced with another term that increases the ground rent.

The move comes after the CMA launched enforcement action against 4 housing developers in September 2020. These were Countryside and Taylor Wimpey, for using possibly unfair contract terms, and Barratt Developments and Persimmon Homes over the possible mis-selling of leasehold homes. As part of this action, the CMA has already helped thousands of leaseholders by securing commitments from Countryside and Persimmon, as well as from an investor in freeholds, Aviva.

Due to the CMA's action, affected Taylor Wimpey leaseholders will now see their ground rents remain at the original amount – i.e. when the property was first sold – and they will not increase over time. Taylor Wimpey has also confirmed to the CMA that it has stopped selling leasehold properties with doubling ground rent clauses.

Andrea Coscelli, Chief Executive of the CMA, said:

This is a huge step forward for leaseholders with Taylor Wimpey, who will no longer be subject to doubling ground rents. These are totally unwarranted obligations that lead to people being trapped in their homes, struggling to sell or obtain a mortgage. I hope the news they will no longer be bound into these terms will bring them some cheer as we head into Christmas.

Other developers and freehold investors should now do the right thing for homeowners and remove these problematic clauses from their contracts. If they refuse, we stand ready to step in and take further action – through the courts if necessary.

Of the four developers against whom the CMA opened a case in September 2020 three have now settled with the CMA. Only the investigation into Barratt Developments is still ongoing.

This is the kind of issue that could be resolved at pace and met with fines if the CMA receives the consumer powers that the Government is currently consulting on.

Secretary of State for Levelling Up Michael Gove said:

Unfair practices, such as doubling ground rents, have no place in our housing market – which is why we asked the CMA to investigate and I welcome their success in holding these major industry players to account.

This settlement will help to free thousands more leaseholders from unreasonable ground rent increases and other developers with

similar arrangements in place should beware, we are coming after you.

We continue our work to protect and support all leaseholders and our legislation to restrict ground rents in new leases to zero will put a stop to such unfair charges for future homeowners once and for all.

As part of its review of the leasehold sector, the CMA is continuing to investigate two investment groups, Brigante Properties and Abacus Land and Adriatic Land, after it wrote to the firms earlier this year setting out its concerns and requiring them to remove doubling ground rent terms from their contracts. The CMA's investigation into Barratt Developments is also continuing.

For more information on the CMA's ongoing work in the sector and for future updates, visit the [leasehold case page](#).

1. These undertakings have been provided to the CMA voluntarily and without any admission of wrongdoing or liability. It should not be assumed that Taylor Wimpey has breached the law – only a court can decide whether a breach has occurred.
2. Where Taylor Wimpey has sold the freehold, and cannot remove clauses itself, then it will help get them removed at no cost to leaseholders. This will involve liaising with the current freeholder and making a financial contribution to the freeholder when the freeholder gives formal commitments to the CMA to remove the clauses.
3. Since April 2017, Taylor Wimpey has operated a Ground Rent Review Assistance Scheme to allow its customers with Doubling Clauses to vary their Leases to RPI-based ground rent.
4. For people who own, or are looking to buy, a leasehold property, [the CMA has produced written and video guidance](#), which offers advice on a number of issues, including what people can do when faced with fees and charges they consider unjustified.
5. The remaining housing developer under investigation by the CMA is Barratt Developments over concerns about its sales practices in relation to leasehold properties. The investors under review who are freeholders of leases with less than 20 year doubling ground rents are Brigante Properties, Abacus Land and Adriatic Land. It should not be assumed that any of these firms have breached the law.
6. The main provisions of consumer protection legislation relevant to the CMA's concerns about ground rent terms are the Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts Regulations 1999 (UTCCRs), for contracts entered into before 1 October 2015, and Part 2 of the Consumer Rights Act 2015 (CRA), for contracts entered into on or after 1 October 2015. The UTCCRs and Part 2 of the CRA aim to protect consumers against unfair contract terms, and require contract terms to be fair and transparent.
7. The main provisions of consumer protection legislation relevant to the CMA's concerns about mis-selling are the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 (CPRs). The CPRs aim to protect consumers from unfair commercial practices such as the misleading provision or omission

of information as part of sales processes.

8. As an enforcer under Part 8 of the Enterprise Act 2002, the CMA cannot currently impose administrative fines for breaches of this consumer protection legislation, but it can enforce the legislation through the courts, and where appropriate, obtain additional measures to improve consumer choice, drive better compliance with the law, or obtain redress for consumers. The Government is consulting on proposals to give the CMA new powers, including to impose fines for breaches of consumer protection law.
9. The CMA's investigation of potential mis-selling of leasehold properties has benefitted from the support of several local Trading Standards offices which have been the focal point for some consumers to raise their concerns.
10. All media enquiries should be directed to the CMA press office by email on [press@cma.gov.uk](mailto:press@cma.gov.uk) or by phone on 020 3738 6460.

---

## **More than half a million children benefitted from healthy food and activities during summer**

Hundreds of thousands of children from low-income families are benefitting from healthy food and extra-curricular activities, through programmes helping to level up children's educational outcomes providing better nutrition, and improving wellbeing, behaviour and social skills.

New data from [Childcare Works](#) shows almost half a million children eligible for free school meals received nutritious meals, exercise, enriching activities like music, sports or cooking classes and opportunities to improve their social skills during the summer holidays. The Government's Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) clubs reached over 600,000 children and young people in England in total, and councils are offering clubs for the first time this year over the Christmas break.

Research published today by [Family Action and Magic Breakfast](#) (Wednesday 22 December) shows strong evidence that breakfast clubs – run in schools to provide free, healthy breakfasts to children from low-income families – have had a positive impact on pupils' behaviour, educational attainment and their eating habits. To date, more than 1,200 schools have signed up to the new National School Breakfast Programme to run from next September to 2023, run by Family Action.

Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi said:

Being healthy and active is a vital part of growing up, and if we

want to continue to level up opportunities for every child in the country this must go hand-in-hand with an excellent education.

I'm really encouraged to see the huge numbers of children benefitting from our Holiday Activities and Food programme and the National School Breakfast programme. Both provide not just the benefits of a nutritious meal but also the chance to take part in activities they may not otherwise have exposure to, such as music lessons, cookery classes or the arts.

It's great to see the latest evidence support what we've already seen first-hand in children's lives. I'm grateful to those running holiday clubs this Christmas, and I urge teachers and school staff to sign up to the National School Breakfast Programme.

The [new report](#), published by Family Action and Magic Breakfast, who delivered the government's previous contract for the National School Breakfast Programme between 2019 and 2021, has revealed that of the schools who hosted breakfast clubs:

- 94% felt better supported with their pupil's behaviour;
- 95% found the pupils attending benefitted from better eating habits;
- 94% felt better supported with educational attainment;
- 94% felt better supported with nutrition; and
- 79% found better engagement with parents due to the programme's support.

Backed by up to £24 million over two years, the new breakfast clubs programme, run by Family Action, builds on this positive impact it has already had on participating children and will look to support 2,500 schools up to 2023.

Chief Executive of Family Action, David Holmes CBE said:

A healthy breakfast can make the world of difference to a child at the beginning of the school day. It is so much easier to concentrate and to learn if your tummy is full. Despite all of the challenges schools are facing as the pandemic continues, I am humbled that so many are still finding time to apply for a place on the National School Breakfast Programme. Already more than 1,200 schools have found the time to complete their enrolment process and sign up to the programme.

I urge any eligible school to sign up to the programme while places remain available. Breakfast clubs provide immediate benefits in terms of increased attendance, reduced lateness and improved concentration and behaviour in class – and the national programme is here to help you. Please join us while you still can.

The new numbers on HAF delivery, published by the government's national support partner Childcare Works, come as [funding allocations](#) for 2022 are

distributed to each local authority in England for the Government's flagship HAF programme, which will continue to benefit disadvantaged children over the next three years, backed by more than £200 million per year. The funding package was announced by the Chancellor at the Spending Review and the programme will run at Easter, over the summer and at Christmas.

Feedback from parents, and councils, on HAF over the summer includes:

- Parents of children in Birmingham reporting less stress, with 73% saying their children were less likely to engage in anti-social behaviour;
- Parents in East Sussex praising the structure and outdoors activities their HAF provided;
- Providers in North Yorkshire saying children improved their confidence and social skills, becoming more 'vocal and enthusiastic'; and
- Children in Lincolnshire saying this summer holiday has been their 'best ever' due to HAF.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Simon Clarke said:

We are committed to levelling up opportunity across the country and improving access to high quality, affordable childcare. That's why we're building on the success of this year's expanded holiday activities and food programme, by investing over £200 million a year in the programme for the next three years.

I have seen for myself the difference this support makes to children's holiday experiences and to their getting a proper nutritious meal, and it's really powerful.

Jamie Noble, Head of Community at Rotherham Community Sports Trust and HAF provider, said:

I'm really excited for the Christmas delivery of our programme as, through our summer and Easter provisions, I've seen first-hand the amazing benefits that the HAF scheme can have on kids who attend. It was great news for everyone here at Rotherham United Community Sports Trust when we heard the funding had been extended for the next three years, and I'm looking forward to using everything we've learned so far into making this the best edition yet.

The new data confirms that over 495,000 participating in the HAF clubs this summer were eligible for free school meals, with the remainder of the 600,000 attendees considered to be otherwise in need.

HAF clubs – extended to become a national programme in 2021 – provide free activities and meals for children eligible for free school meals, with flexibility for councils about how they can best serve the needs of children and families in their area. The extension of the programme builds on the government's commitment to improve access and outcomes for all children and

young people regardless of background, levelling up not just their educational experience but also their extra-curricular opportunities. An independent evaluation, exploring how the programme was implemented and its impact on children, is due to be published in 2022.

Family Action, the government's delivery partner for the current programme running 2021-23, has also revealed that of the 1,200 schools signed up, 800 are already providing the nutritious breakfasts to their pupils.

---

## **It is only through dialogue that we can improve stability across the Middle East**

Thank you Mr President. Thank you also to the Special Coordinator for his briefing, and for the Secretary-General's detailed report on the implementation of Security Council resolution 2334.

The report highlights worrying trends across the region, including an increasing level of violence and incitement to violence across a number of fronts. We call on all parties to condemn incitement wherever and whenever it occurs.

Just last week, we were horrified to see attacks on three Israeli citizens near Nablus, in which a young man lost his life. Our hearts go out to the family of Yehuda Dimentman. We fully support Israel's right to ensure its security and bring the perpetrators to justice.

The report also highlights the acute risks to stability facing the region, and the need to ease tensions. These include the immediate financial crises facing both the Palestinian Authority and UNRWA; the rising tension in East Jerusalem and Sheikh Jarrah following a number of violent attacks; and an increase in settler violence against Palestinians. We call on all parties to urge calm and prevent this cycle of violence.

Mr President, the UK continues to urge the Government of Israel to permanently end its settlement expansion and settlement activity in the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. The plans to advance construction in E1, and the demolitions and evictions affecting the Palestinian populations in East Jerusalem and Area C, directly threaten the viability of a future Palestinian state.

We welcome the decision by the Jerusalem district planning committee to postpone the decision to construct housing units in Atarot beyond the 1967 lines. We urge the Israeli authorities not to move forward with these plans.

Mr President, we must not forget the toll this prolonged conflict has taken on the people of Gaza. As our Minister for the Middle East set out on 17 December, the UK is proud to have provided \$2.6m to UNICEF to launch their Child Sensitive Cash Assistance Programme in Gaza – to help vulnerable households, especially children, access basic services.

We do welcome the positive progress made this year to improve relations between the parties and encourage dialogue at a senior and ministerial level. We encourage further progress in this regard. We hope economic cooperation will continue to develop, building on the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee in November and, we hope, through a meeting of the Joint Economic Committee early next year.

Mr President, as we look towards a new calendar year, we urge a continuation of increased dialogue between the parties and a reversal of the negative trends we have heard about today. It is only through dialogue that we can improve stability across the region and build the foundations for peace. The UK remains firmly committed to a two-state solution, based on 1967 lines and with Jerusalem as a shared capital.

Mr President, before I conclude, may I join others' thanks to you as Presidency during this busy month and to our colleagues and their teams from Estonia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia and Vietnam for their time on the Council.

Dag Hammarskjöld reminded us; "We are not permitted to choose the frame of our destiny. But what we put in it is ours." Your time on the Council has been remarkable.

Thank you Mr President.