

UK, D-Cast help students learn how to mitigate plastic pollution

The workshop aimed to use art to connect with young people, raise awareness of the issue, change behaviours toward plastic pollution, and protect marine life.

Supported by the British High Commission in Honiara together with the British Council and Dreamcast Theatre Solomon Islands, students aged between 9 to 11 years, worked remotely with renowned UK artist Mandy Barker to create pieces of artwork made from everyday plastics. Their artwork will be exhibited at the Dreamcast Theatre Art Hub from Tuesday 18 October onwards.

Plastics can be detrimental to both humans and marine biodiversity once used and thrown into our waterways, streams, and river systems. While some are recyclable, others cannot, and sadly most waste on land often ends up in our oceans.

In Honiara city, single-use plastics can be seen along the drains, streets, beachfront, streams, and rivers. Whilst there have been significant waste management efforts by the Honiara City Council, more needs to be done to raise awareness of the issue and prevent plastic pollution.

This is why a group of students from schools in Honiara is coming together to create an art exhibition at Dreamcast Theatre turning plastic waste into art.

Themed “Our Ocean and Plastics”, the workshop aims to use art to connect with young people and raise awareness of the issue, changing behaviours towards plastic pollution, and protecting the marine biodiversity in the Solomon Islands.

Mandy Barker is an international award-winning photographer whose work involving marine plastic debris, over the past 12 years, has received global recognition.

Working with marine scientists Mandy’s artwork aims to raise awareness about plastic pollution in the world’s oceans, highlighting the harmful effect on marine life and ourselves.

Acting British High Commissioner to Solomon Island, Nicola Noble said:

I’m delighted the UK is working in partnership with Dreamcast Theatre to support this special program on Ocean Plastics. Over eight million tonnes of plastic are discarded into the world’s oceans each year, putting marine wildlife under serious threat.

This workshop will provide children in Honiara with a unique opportunity to work remotely with Mandy Barker to raise awareness of this important issue through creative art. I very much look

forward to seeing the children's creations at the art exhibition on Tuesday and thank everyone involved in this important work.

The workshop has been developed as a result of discussions by the British High Commission in Honiara, the British Council in New Zealand, Aotearoa, and Dreamcast Theatre Group, and is funded through the UK's Climate Diplomacy Fund.

Natasha Beckman, Director of the British Council New Zealand and the Pacific said:

British Council New Zealand and the Pacific are very excited to work together on this project with the British High Commission, Honiara, and Dreamcast Theatre Group, and school children between 9 to 11 years old in the Solomon Islands.

We need our children to be aware of the problem of plastic pollution but also to help them have creative ways of dealing with the problem. Our children are our future and equipping them with the right knowledge of plastic pollution, and its effects on marine biodiversity are vital.

Meanwhile, UK artist, Mandy Barker joined the two-day workshop virtually via Zoom and she was excited to be working with children in the Solomon Islands. She said:

It's a pleasure to be involved in such a unique opportunity and to connect across the ocean from the UK to the Solomon Islands. To be able to share my work, raise awareness, and inform young people about the plastic pollution issue, in a location that is in much need of help, is an honor. I hope it will make a difference in the community and go on to inspire change.

About 30 schoolchildren from Koloale, Coronation, Perch, Tuvarufu, and the Honiara Integrated Community Schools in Honiara took part in the workshop. They had the opportunity to listen to Mandy Barker on creating art out of plastic waste. The students used collected plastic waste materials from the beachfront in Honiara to create art pieces for display.

Their completed artwork will be on exhibition at the Dreamcast Theatre Art Hub in China Town from the afternoon of 18 October (Tuesday) onwards and will be open for public viewing for one week. A film and other informative materials will also be produced during the workshop and will be posted online for the wider world to see.

Foreign Influence Registration Scheme to make clandestine political activity illegal

For the first time, new legislation will compel those acting for a foreign power or entity to declare political influencing activity – and criminalise those who do not.

This change is being brought about by the Foreign Influence Registration Scheme (FIRS), which has been introduced to the UK Parliament via an amendment to the National Security Bill.

The bill brings in vital new measures to protect our national security and modernise existing counter-espionage laws to tackle covert influence.

The new scheme will increase the transparency of political influencing activity being carried out for a foreign power or entity; help safeguard UK democratic institutions from covert influence; and better inform us as to the nature, scale, and extent of foreign influence in our political affairs.

The public register will exist on a government website for political influence activities.

Tom Tugendhat, Security Minister, said:

Unfortunately, there are people working in secret to undermine the UK's democracy and cause harm to our citizens.

For years I have advocated for the establishment of a foreign influence registration scheme to deter foreign powers from pursuing their pernicious aims through the covert use of agents and proxies.

I am delighted that the scheme we are introducing will help ensure our political affairs are protected, whilst embracing open and transparent engagement with foreign governments and entities which we continue to welcome.

Ken McCallum, Director General of the Security Service (MI5), said:

The UK is in strategic contest with states that seek to undermine our national security, democratic institutions and commercial advantage at an unprecedented scale. We need new, modern tools and powers to defend ourselves, proportionately but firmly.

Alongside the other vital measures introduced in the National Security Bill, the new Foreign Influence Registration Scheme will

make it harder – and riskier – to operate covertly in the UK at the behest of a foreign power. It will also increase openness and transparency around the scale of foreign influence in our political affairs and make it harder for our adversaries to undermine our democracy. The Foreign Influence Registration Scheme is a modern power designed to tackle a modern threat, and I welcome its inclusion in the National Security Bill.

The scheme will be 2-tiered.

The primary tier will require the registration of political influence activities within the UK at the direction of a foreign power or entity. The person would need to declare who they are in an arrangement with, what activity they have been directed to undertake, and when the arrangement was made. They must do this within 10 days of the direction, or in any case, before the activity is carried out. Foreign entities will also be required to register their own political influence activities before carrying them out.

Notable exceptions to those who would need to register include those working for a foreign power in their official capacity, those with diplomatic immunity, those who provide legal services, those working for domestic and foreign news publishers and those in an arrangement to which the UK government, or someone acting for or on behalf of the Crown is party.

The penalty for failing to register, carrying out activities that aren't registered, providing false or misleading information or any other foreign influence offence is a maximum of 2 years' imprisonment, a fine or both.

The enhanced tier allows the Home Secretary to specify a foreign power or foreign power-controlled entity where necessary to protect the safety or interests of the UK, and with parliamentary approval, make it an offence for anyone to carry out any activity in the UK at their direction without it being registered. There is no restriction on which states could be named, to enable the UK to respond to emerging threats from any foreign power. The penalty for these offences is up to 5 years' imprisonment, a fine or both.

Further powers added to the bill include those to protect UK interests from corrupt financial influence, covered by 'Powers of arrest and detention.' This will give investigators powers to monitor a suspect's account in real-time; identify accounts held by suspects in UK financial institutions; and compel individuals or organisations to provide relevant information, produce documents and/or answer questions in relation to an investigation into foreign power threat activity. Obtaining a material benefit from a foreign intelligence service will also be made an offence.

The National Security Bill is currently passing through Parliament.

'Noise camera' trials to detect rowdy drivers coming to Bradford, Bristol, Great Yarmouth and Birmingham

- new noise-detecting traffic cameras deployed in 4 trial areas to crack down on 'boy racers' revving engines and using illegal exhausts
- trials backed by £300,000 government investment as annual social cost of road noise pollution estimated at £10 billion
- Bradford, Bristol, Great Yarmouth and Birmingham declared winners of a nationwide competition host cameras

A new-age road camera designed to identify and track drivers who break the law by revving engines and using modified exhausts will be installed in Bradford today (18 October 2022), before travelling to Bristol, Great Yarmouth and Birmingham as part of a trial to clampdown on antisocial driving.

The Transport Secretary has confirmed these 4 locations will host the new 'noise camera' following a government-backed competition to tackle noise pollution on some of the loudest streets in Britain.

The new technology uses a video camera in conjunction with a number of microphones to accurately pinpoint excessively noisy vehicles as they pass by. This means that if drivers break the law by revving their engines unnecessarily or using illegal exhausts, they will be automatically detected. The camera takes a picture of the vehicle and records the noise level to create a digital package of evidence which can be used by local police to fine drivers.

Road noise is known to contribute to health problems, such as heart attacks, strokes and dementia, and the annual social cost of urban road noise, including lost productivity from sleep disturbance and health costs is estimated to be up to £10 billion.

The trials, backed by £300,000, start with the camera in Keighley, Bradford from today and will then be placed in the other 3 locations over the next 2 months.

Transport Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

Rowdy road drivers beware – these new cameras will help the police clampdown on those who break the legal noise limits or use illegal modified exhausts to make excessive noise in our communities.

We'll be working closely with the local authorities and police to share any findings, and I hope that this technology paves the way for quieter, peaceful streets across the country.

The department launched a competition to identify the areas to host the cameras in April and extensive testing at a private test track facility took place to perfect the technology. Now in the next phase, the locations for these roadside trials have been decided based on the impact to local residents of illegal noisy vehicles, after MPs across the country applied for the camera to be set up in their local area. If successful, the cameras could be rolled out nationwide.

Noise Abatement Society chief executive Gloria Elliott OBE said:

Excessively noisy vehicles and anti-social driving causes disturbance, stress, anxiety and pain to many. It is unsafe and disrupts the environment and people's peaceful enjoyment of their homes and public places.

Communities across the UK are increasingly suffering from this entirely avoidable blight. The Noise Abatement Society applauds rigorous, effective, evidence-based solutions to address this issue and protect the public.

Atkins-Jacobs Joint Venture is acting as a technical consultant for the trials, providing acoustics expertise, design, modelling and asset management. The noise camera is designed and developed by MicrodB.

Atkins Jacobs Joint Venture Practice Director Andrew Pearce said:

The real-world trials of the technology solution the Atkins Jacobs JV has developed and tested on the track is an important step for the scheme towards solving a problem that affects many communities across the UK.

We are fully expecting the trial in these four chosen locations to confirm what we have seen in testing, which is a highly targeted use of technology to ensure only those motorists making excessive noise will be subject to enforcement.

The trials will continue for 2 months across the country. The department continues to work closely with all local authorities and MPs to tackle rowdy, illegal noise disruption from traffic.

Government to establish expert

Economic Advisory Council

News story

The Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt has today (Monday 17 October) announced that he will convene an expert panel of respected economists as part of a new Economic Advisory Council, as committed to by Prime Minister Liz Truss.



- Group of leading and respected experts will meet regularly to discuss UK and international economies and financial markets
- First Council members announced have decades of economic experience across the private and public sector
- Announcement comes as Chancellor commits to do “whatever is necessary for economic stability”, which is a critical part of the government’s mission to go for growth

The Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt has today (Monday 17 October) announced that the government will convene an expert panel of respected economists as part of a new Economic Advisory Council, as committed to by Prime Minister Liz Truss.

The Council will act as a consultative forum for the government to be advised on UK and international economies and financial markets. The Council will consist of leading and respected economists and will be attended by the Chancellor and the Treasury’s Chief Economic Adviser.

The first Council members are announced today, with further members to be added in due course. All members will be attending in an independent capacity, and have been chosen for their personal knowledge and expertise, as relevant to advising the government on the UK economy

The Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt said:

I look forward to working with such an esteemed group of economic experts, whose advice will be invaluable.

In a period of global economic challenge and volatility,

exacerbated by Putin's illegal invasion of Ukraine, prioritising UK economic stability is vital and will underpin long-term growth.

Care will be taken to ensure Council members are not privy to any material non- public information, or market sensitive information.

Read the [terms of reference for the government's new Economic Advisory Council](#).

Initial list of Council members

- Rupert Harrison, BlackRock
- Gertjan Vlieghe, Element Capital
- Sushil Wadhvani, PGIM Wadhvani
- Karen Ward, J. P. Morgan Asset Management

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[Free legal advice expanded to help thousands more people at risk](#)

Press release

Thousands of domestic abuse victims will be able to access free legal advice and representation under new changes to the legal aid system introduced today (17 October 2022).



- domestic abuse victims to get expert legal advice through new protection orders and notices
- additional £10 million for housing legal aid to help people at risk of losing their home
- new legal support for parents and guardians to resolve family cases away from court

An extra £10 million a year will also be invested in housing legal aid, so that thousands more people can access legal advice when they fall into difficult times and face the risk of eviction.

The extra support for domestic abuse victims will kick in to support the use of new Domestic Abuse Protection Notices and Domestic Abuse Protection Orders, which the Government committed to introducing in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021.

Once in use, police will be able to issue Protection Notices to provide immediate protection for victims following an incident, for example by requiring a perpetrator to leave the victim's home. Protection Orders will be handed out by the court to impose longer-term protection, including ordering the perpetrator to attend behaviour change programmes or wear an electronic tag.

Victims protected by these will now have access to free expert legal advice and representation in court.

Justice Minister Lord Bellamy KC said:

Legal advice should always be available to those who need it, especially victims of domestic abuse who often rely on lawyers to ensure they are protected from abusers.

By making it easier for victims to access legal aid, more people will be better supported through court proceedings and can start the process of moving on safely with their lives.

Reforms to the former Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme also mean that anyone facing eviction or repossession will receive free early legal advice on housing before appearing in court, as well as continuing to get advice and representation on the day of their hearing. By helping people facing the loss of their home at the earliest point, it will potentially avoid the need for court proceedings altogether. Individuals with a repossession notice can also receive early legal advice on debt and welfare benefit matters, to help with the wider issues they may face.

A further change will help domestic abuse victims by allowing doctors to submit letters of evidence for legal aid applications following video or telephone consultations.

Other legal aid changes that are being introduced today will:

- ensure special guardians – family members or friends who take on parental responsibilities for a child – are eligible for legal aid in private court proceedings determining parental control over a child
- standardise the means and merit testing requirements for birth parents involved in placement and adoption order proceedings where a local authority is authorised to place a child for adoption
- ensure victims of domestic abuse applying for indefinite leave to remain

in the UK, under the immigration rules, are eligible for legal aid

This is part of over £2.2 billion investment in civil and criminal legal aid over three years.

Notes to editors

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