

Extra £8.6 billion for Wales since start of the Covid-19 pandemic

Wales has benefitted from £8.6 billion of UK government funding to the devolved administrations, figures released by the Treasury show.

The annual publication of the Block Grant Transparency shows that since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic the Scottish Government has received an additional £14.5 billion, the Welsh Government an additional £8.6 billion and the Northern Ireland Executive an additional £5.0 billion.

This funding has enabled the Welsh Government to provide support to individuals, businesses and public services across Wales in response to Covid-19 and will continue to support the recovery through 2021-22.

This comes as part of the unprecedented package of support for the whole of the UK throughout the pandemic, with £352 billion spent right across the UK on Covid-19 measures. In Wales this included protecting more than 460,000 jobs through the furlough scheme, £173 million in self-employment support, help for businesses and the procurement of vaccines.

Secretary of State for Wales, Simon Hart MP said:

The UK Government has supported Wales throughout the pandemic, not only by securing an additional £8.6 billion block grant for the Welsh Government so it could fund its response, but also by providing unprecedented UK-wide funding to ensure individuals and businesses across the country were supported throughout.

This support, which also included supplying vaccines to Wales, remains essential as we continue to build back better. We provided the necessary support through the pandemic, and now we will lead the recovery as we build our way out of it.

Chief Secretary to the Treasury Steve Barclay said:

Throughout the pandemic the UK government has always ensured Wales is getting the right support – with £8.6 billion of additional spending.

Over the past year in we've protected millions of jobs and businesses in Wales with furlough and support schemes, our vaccine rollout is unlocking the economy, and our Plan for Jobs is levelling up opportunity and helping us build back better across the UK.

The UK government's Plan for Jobs is helping to support, create and protect jobs across the UK. The Kickstart scheme is already helping thousands of 16-24 year-olds into work, the Restart scheme will help around a million people who've been out of work for more than a year, and 13,500 new Work Coaches have been recruited to give tailored support to people out of work.

[Environment Agency and eBay crack down on illegal vehicle breakers](#)

A number of vehicle breakers offering illegal car parts have been removed from one of the world's biggest online marketplaces, as part of an education campaign of 20,000 sellers.

During a two-week trial in February, the Environment Agency (EA) and eBay UK joined forces to target vehicle breakers and parts sellers using the marketplace to advertise vehicle parts, including catalytic converters, without the correct environmental permits.

The clampdown saw 10 traders suspected of selling without the correct permissions in place having their accounts suspended. This led to over half of the sellers then applying for the correct permits.

Hotspots identified by the Vehicle Recyclers' Association (VRA) where illegal sellers operate are in Yorkshire, the West Midlands and Lancashire. Many traders are unaware that they need a permit or how to correctly dismantle a vehicle, dispose of the hazardous waste, deal with fire risks and the subsequent risk to the environment.

Malcolm Lythgo, Head of Waste Regulation at the Environment Agency, said:

Our partnership with eBay has been very successful in preventing and disrupting illegal vehicle breaking and parts dealers, and we are pleased that our intervention has led to an increase in businesses applying for the correct permit.

Hazardous components such as engine oil, coolant and batteries can contaminate plants, animals, soil and groundwater – even entering drinking water and risking human health – if not disposed of correctly. This is why it is so important for car breakers and parts dealers to operate within the law.

We want to work constructively with businesses so they can trade compliantly, but it's also important to stress that sellers who continue to operate illegally will be reported to the police and HMRC, and that we will carry out our own on-site enforcement

action.

The UK has a strong track record of recycling vehicles at the end-of-life cycle, and we are taking action to ensure this will successfully continue.

Delphine Dauba-Pantanacce, Director, Legal Counsel, Global Regulatory at eBay, said:

Our partnership with the Environment Agency has been vital in better protecting the public who may unknowingly purchase parts from illegal traders.

We hope that this successful partnership, which is still growing and progressing further in 2021, leads the industry and sets an example of effective collaboration between private companies and the public sector, with everyone working towards a common goal of consumer protection.

As part of action to tackle illegal vehicle breakers, eBay is contacting around 20,000 active sellers to prompt them to trade legally. The marketplace is also introducing a requirement for traders to display their EA permit numbers when listing second-hand car parts.

eBay actively suspends traders' accounts on receipt of intelligence from the EA around illegal operations. The platform does not reinstate traders until the appropriate permit is supplied, which can only be issued by the EA if traders meet specific criteria.

Charles Ambrose, Association Secretary at the Vehicle Recyclers' Association, said:

VRA is very pleased that the Environment Agency and eBay are working together with VRA to bear down on the scourge of unpermitted and illegal vehicle dismantlers. This joint initiative to disrupt the waste criminals profitable activities is an excellent example of what can be achieved.

Preliminary results have been extremely encouraging and we hope that the recent pilot exercise can be extended into an ongoing sustainable and effective disruption programme.

The trial period comes amid wider action by the EA to tackle waste and metal crime. In October last year, officers from the Environment Agency and the British Transport Police undertook a week of action which saw over 1,100 vehicles being stopped and 550 sites visited. Over 150 offences were detected and 29 arrests made.

Vehicle breakers can only operate with an environmental permit and the EA offers support with permit applications via its [pre-application service](#). When obtaining vehicle parts from dismantled vehicles, you must use a source that has a permit to depollute and dismantle end of life vehicles. [Information about the regulations can be read here](#).

Customers buying end-of-life vehicle (ELV) parts from an unlicensed breaker or source risk being involved in criminal activity. [You can check the seller has a permit from the Environment Agency to dismantle parts safely here](#).

[UN Economic and Social Council:UK statement on gender equality](#)

We all know that the pandemic has halted progress on the long march toward gender equality. Tragically, we have seen a sharp increase in all forms of violence against women and girls. Meanwhile, climate change continues disproportionately to affect women and girls, as a result of displacement, food insecurity and its impact on those living in conflict-affected areas.

We also know that greater gender equality is vital for effective humanitarian action, not least because it harnesses the voices and capabilities of women and girls, alongside men and boys, as leaders, decision-makers, and first responders. The UK remains committed to tackling gender inequality and sexual and gender-based violence in all its forms.

The G7's first ever Compact to tackle the drivers of famine, agreed last month under the UK Presidency, doesn't just mobilise urgent funding for humanitarian assistance. It also commits the G7 to support action to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence and exploitation, and reduce the economic harm and health impacts experienced by women and girls in conflicts and crises.

The Grand Bargain provides a unique platform for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of humanitarian action. Through membership of its Facilitation Group, we have supported an increased focus on gender equality in the next iteration of the agreement, including funding for national and locally-led women's organisations that is flexible, predictable and transparent. We also recently renewed our commitment to support and promote gender equality and inclusion in humanitarian action through the Call to Action on Protection from Gender Based Violence in Emergencies.

The climate crisis and the pandemic risk reversing progress towards gender equality. We can't let this happen. At COP26 in Glasgow we will champion inclusion and amplify the voices and solutions of women, girls and others whose views are often marginalised, empowering them as decision-makers, advocates and leaders. We believe this will support women and girls, their

families, and their communities to be more resilient in the face of climate change.

We are also working to ensure all girls can access twelve years of quality education by tabling, with the UAE, an ambitious resolution at the Human Rights Council. And, next month, we and Kenya are co-hosting a Global Education Summit to raise funds for the Global Partnership for Education to get children back into school and learning. Education empowers and equips girls to lead change in their communities.

It is vital to ensure the systematic and meaningful participation of women and girls, and women-groups, as change agents and leaders, and prioritise and finance responses to sexual and gender based violence, if we are successfully to address the differential and disproportionate humanitarian and climate impacts faced by women and girls. The UK is and will remain at the heart of this global effort.

[Change of Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Iraq: Mark Bryson-Richardson](#)

Press release

Mr Mark Bryson-Richardson MBE has been appointed Her Majesty's Ambassador to the Republic of Iraq in succession to Mr Stephen Hickey. Mr Bryson-Richardson will take up his appointment during July 2021.



Curriculum vitae

Full name: Mark Bryson-Richardson

Dates	Role
2021	Full-time language training (Arabic)
2019 to 2020	DFID / FCDO, Director, Middle East, North Africa and Eastern Europe
2014 to 2019	Cross Whitehall, Director, Stabilisation Unit
2013 to 2014	Baghdad, Deputy Head of Mission
2013	Mogadishu, Deputy Head of Mission
2011 to 2012	FCO, Head, Libya Group, Middle East Operations
2008 to 2010	Kabul, Political Counsellor
2008	Khartoum, Deputy Head of Mission (temporary duty)
2006 to 2008	FCO, Head, Middle East Peace Process Team
2003 to 2006	Khartoum, Deputy Head of Mission and Head, Political and Press Sections
2000 to 2002	Full-time language training (Arabic)
1999 to 2000	FCO, Desk Officer, European Union – Gibraltar
1999	Joined FCO

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[UK one step closer to spaceflight launches as government publishes environmental consultation response](#)

- government publishes consultation response to spaceflight environmental objectives
- guidance sets out how regulator should consider climate change, air quality, noise and the marine environment when deciding launch and spaceport licence applications
- paves the way for a range of spaceflight activities to take place from the UK in the future

The first launch into space from British soil has taken another leap forward as the government today (25 June 2021) publishes its [response to a consultation setting out how the regulator should meet environmental objectives for spaceflight](#).

As part of the 6-week consultation, the government set out [guidance on how the regulator – which will oversee all launch and space activity from the UK – should consider the environment when deciding launch and spaceport licence applications](#), helping to ensure space travel fits into a modern, greener Britain.

Following consultation responses, the government is not proposing to make changes to the 4 environmental objectives covering climate change, air quality, noise and the marine environment but will make minor clarifications to the guidance.

This includes specifying that where spaceports are located on the coast, the regulator is required to assess impacts on the shoreline, estuaries and internal waters as well as the sea, and the requirement for operators to use specific methods for estimating the likelihood of waking people from night-time launches.

This work forms part of the government's spaceflight programme and will pave the way for a range of commercial spaceflight and scientific endeavours to operate within the UK in the future.

Transport Minister Rachel Maclean said:

Earth observation is essential for improving our understanding of climate change and the UK's world-leading efforts to tackle it.

Today is an important step towards our commitment to growing the UK space sector and cementing our role on a global scale by unlocking a new era in spaceflight for the country. And as we embark on this exciting development, we're making sure launches into space from UK soil reflect our green ambitions for the future.

The UK space sector has established technical expertise that already makes a significant contribution to global efforts to monitor and understand the Earth's environment. By bringing spaceflight to UK soil, this expertise can be put to further good use while benefiting the economy and jobs market.

The [Space Industry Act 2018](#) and regulations made under it are a critical part of the government's commercial spaceflight programme. It aims to enable the UK to be the first country in Europe to achieve small satellite launch, generating growth for the UK's economy and establishing the foundations for ongoing market growth and commercial sustainability.

Under the act, applicants for a spaceport or launch operator licence are required to submit an assessment of environmental effects as part of their application and this will form part of any decision making when it comes to deciding licence applications and conditions.

It is expected that the regulator will start receiving licence applications later this summer when the regulations come into force, enabling the first launches from UK spaceports from 2022.