

Inspired by Tim: How space inspired a generation

Today (18 June) marks the fifth anniversary of Tim's Soyuz space capsule landing in the Kazakhstan desert as he returned from a 6-month expedition to the International Space Station.

The UK Space Agency and Tim Peake launched the Inspired By Tim campaign to uncover the impact of his mission. More than 400 people shared their stories of how the mission inspired them, including people who went on to study astronautics or took up stargazing as a hobby; one student shared how they went on to start a career as a rocket engineer.

Tim Peake, British ESA Astronaut, said:

It's humbling to hear how my mission encouraged people to explore a future in STEM. If it wasn't for the scientists, aviators and explorers who inspired me when I was younger, I wouldn't be where I am today.

The space sector in the UK is thriving, and you don't have to be an astronaut to play your part. There are opportunities for analysts, engineers, entrepreneurs, and environmentalists. I'm looking forward to seeing where the young people who followed my journey are in five years and learning about the positive changes they have made to the world.

Hannah Albery, a teacher in North East England, transformed classrooms into scenes from space for her class of 9 and 10 year-olds. Hannah's décor inspired students to study STEM subjects in their further education, and one student is pursuing their dream of one day becoming an astronaut.

Hannah Albery, head teacher at Yarborough Academy, said:

Tim's mission was a huge experience for our school. We planned a project for Year 5 about relocating to the moon, transformed our classrooms into space scenes, virtually met the Virgin Galactic Team and even visited the National Space Centre.

The pupils who were involved have left our school now. I saw one young man, Ethan, only a few months ago and he now wants to be an astronaut like Tim and is choosing STEM subjects as part of his further education. Tim impacted on a whole generation of people, inspiring them about the wonder and importance of STEM learning.

Tim's Principia mission led David Honess to change his career. He went from

being a software engineer to working in the European Space Agency's Education Office, where he still works today.

Tim inspired a cohort of students to go on to study STEM subjects at university. Like many others, what Chloe French, a secondary student from London took away from Tim's mission was the realisation that you can achieve all you set out to do with a little hard work and determination.

During the six-month mission, the UK Space Agency worked with Tim on more than 30 outreach projects, including experiments to grow salad from seeds in space, create imaginative films inspired by spaceflight and exercise like an astronaut. Over two million students took part in the outreach programme, with one in three UK schools participating.

Jenny Horrocks from Surrey was studying a PhD in geology during Tim's flight and was mesmerised by the photos Tim took of the earth. Jenny was selected at random to speak to Tim on a video call which she is gifting to her old school, while 10 others who shared their stories received a space-themed goodie bag.

Today also marks the closing date of the latest ESA call for astronauts in which UK citizens can apply to become part of the next space exploring cohort. Although an astronaut is just one possible career path in the UK space industry, which employs close to 42,000 people in various roles from aerospace engineers, satellite technicians, research scientists to entrepreneurs and lawyers.

You can read about the people Tim inspired at the [UK Space Agency blog](#).

UK Government marine experts to support Sri Lanka with X-press Pearl pollution response

Following the X-Press Pearl container vessel fire that started in May and raged for 12 days, the UK Government is providing marine pollution expertise to help respond to the potentially devastating impact on the marine life and coastal habitats of Sri Lanka.

At the request of the Sri Lanka Government, the UK Government's Centre for the Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) will provide expertise and analytical capacity to support plastic pollution monitoring, as well as environmental and socioeconomic impact assessments. The team will partner with Sri Lanka Government Departments, academics and responsible authorities to support effective emergency response and implementation of a post spill integrated monitoring plan.

In the first instance, Cefas is working to assist in the laboratory analysis of post spill monitoring samples, particularly plastic pellets, and potential chemical contamination. From their UK laboratory in Lowestoft, the experts will work collaboratively with in-country teams to support understanding of expected consequences for key marine and coastal habitats and species, including mangroves, seagrass and coral reefs, as well as contributing to socioeconomic analysis to assess impacts on local communities and livelihoods.

Following the initial response, Cefas will continue to collaborate with the emergency response teams in Sri Lanka to provide guidance and training to build their expertise further for future incidents, with the aim of protecting biodiversity and safeguarding livelihoods, dependent on the marine environment. Work will also be done to assess the impact of the pollution on the surrounding area, by contributing to modelling to understand the dispersal of the pollutants, to help with short-term mitigation and clean-up action, as well as longer term risk prevention.

International Environment Minister, Lord Goldsmith said:

The X-Press Pearl vessel fire and the release of plastic pellets and chemicals along the Sri Lankan coast has already had devastating impacts, and it will likely cause long term harm to the environment, local fisheries and livelihoods.

I'm pleased that the UK is able to use its world-leading scientific expertise to advise on the clean-up effort and support plastic pollution monitoring. But this disaster again shines a light on the fragile nature of our marine environment.

We are determined to play our part in supporting developing countries to protect and restore their coastal ecosystems with our £500 million Blue Planet Fund launched at the G7 by the Prime Minister.

Director General of Ocean Affairs, Environment and Climate Change, Ministry of Foreign Relations of Sri Lanka, S. Hasanthi Urugodawatte Dissanayake, said:

Damage to the marine environment is a cause for concern for all those who are looking towards the oceans for the future progression of mankind. In this spirit of cooperation on environmental issues, Sri Lanka appreciates this initiative by the Government of UK offering assistance to understand the impact on marine environment, with opportunities for long term collaboration.

Cefas Marine Litter Scientist, Dr Umberto Binetti said:

Throughout the past weeks, we have been closely following the situation. We are concerned by the possible effects of the pollutants spilled from the vessel, not only on the environment, but also on local communities in Sri Lanka.

We are preparing a series of actions to provide support in monitoring the situation. Our UK laboratory is available to analyse samples collected by our in-country research partners and we stand ready to support Sri Lanka in understanding the serious environmental and socio-economic impact of this incident and possible mitigation measures.

For more information visit www.cefas.co.uk or follow [@CefasGovUK](https://twitter.com/CefasGovUK). For UK media enquiries contact communications@cefas.co.uk or newsdesk@defra.gov.uk.

Response to rape overhauled

- Action Plan to increase the number of rape cases reaching court
- new approach to investigations places greater emphasis on suspect behaviour
- performance of entire criminal justice system to be rated regularly
- no victim to be left without a phone for more than 24 hours

The ambitious plans include clear actions for the police, prosecutors and courts – to roll out a new approach to investigations, reduce the number of victims withdrawing from the process, increase the volumes of trials being heard, protect the public and put more rapists behind bars.

Crucially, it aims to return the volumes of cases being referred by the police, charged by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and going to court, to at least 2016 levels – when the decline in prosecutions began to appear. Each part of the criminal justice system will also be held to better account, with performance scorecards – on key metrics such as timeliness and victim engagement – being published every 6 months for the first time.

The Action Plan follows an end-to-end review by the government into how the criminal justice system handles rape. It comes after charges, prosecutions and convictions for rape fell over the last 5 years. Sadly, one in 2 victims who report being raped also withdraw from the investigation.

Ministers have today promised to do everything possible to reverse these worrying trends and build back confidence in the system – pledging to go even further if improvements are not seen.

Lord Chancellor Robert Buckland QC MP said:

Too many victims of rape and sexual violence have been denied the justice they deserve as a result of systemic failings.

We are deeply sorry for this and will not rest until real improvements are made – from transforming the support given to victims, to ensuring cases are investigated fully and prosecuted robustly.

Alongside new laws we have introduced in Parliament to make sure rapists spend longer behind bars, our action plan will drive the wholesale change needed to tackle this horrific crime and restore faith in the criminal justice system.

The Action Plan has been shaped with the help of Emily Hunt who was appointed as an independent advisor by government to ensure that there was a strong advocate for victims at the centre of the rape review.

Emily Hunt, victim and independent advisor the End-to-End Rape Review said:

I am really proud to have made a difference by bringing my own experience to the Review.

We can and must do better for rape victims. We must investigate suspects rather than doubting victims and we need to support victims through every stage of the criminal justice system. Because everyone who reports this crime is not just doing so to secure justice for themselves but to protect all of us.

The review revealed wide-ranging reasons behind the fall in cases reaching court, including a strained relationship between different parts of the system, delays in the investigation process, a lack of specialist and consistent support for victims, and an increase in invasive requests for their personal data. The Action Plan seeks to directly address these issues and increase the number of cases getting to court, without compromising defendants' right to a fair trial.

It includes plans for better data extraction technology to reduce the time that victims are without their phones – with an aim to have devices returned by police within 24 hours. At present, this process can take months, causing distress for victims who are left phoneless at a time when they most need support from friends and family. The money will include funding for more 'cyber vans' that allow devices to be analysed without the need to send them to a laboratory which can add to delays – with 'swap-out' phones given to victims when it is not possible to return a phone within 24 hours. In addition, new guidance for the police will ensure any request for information is necessary and proportionate to the investigation, with victims often citing handing over their personal data as a reason why they may not pursue their case.

Additionally, a new approach to investigations will be rolled out to more

police forces across the country – one that places greater emphasis on understanding a suspect’s behaviour rather than placing undue focus on a victim’s credibility. Pioneered by Avon and Somerset police, it also partners officers with academics to scrutinise decisions and ensure all reasonable lines of inquiry are explored. Understanding the victims’ experience is also paramount, with investigators working closely with Independent Sexual Violence Advisers.

Meanwhile, more rape victims will be spared the trauma of needing to attend a trial by having their cross-examination video-recorded earlier in the process away from the courtroom. A pilot of this provision will be trialled at a further three Crown courts, with government working closely with the judiciary to consider a wider subsequent rollout. The measure is already available in all Crown courts for vulnerable victims and witnesses, including children.

Minister for Crime and Policing, Kit Malthouse MP said:

We’ve taken a hard and honest look at how the entire criminal justice system deals with rape and in too many instances it simply has not been good enough.

That is why today we are seeking robust action from the police, CPS and courts to better support victims and make sure more perpetrators answer for their crimes.

Criminal justice agencies will also be more accountable than ever with greater scrutiny of decisions and we will monitor progress closely.

The plan details specific actions for each part of the criminal justice system. Key measures include:

- Returning volumes of rape cases going through the courts to at least 2016 levels by the end of this Parliament – meaning over a thousand more victims will see their cases proceed.
- Publishing regular scorecards including metrics on timeliness, quality of cases and victim engagement to show how the whole criminal justice system is performing – providing transparency and accountability for the first time with an inaugural scorecard due to be published by December.
- Better data extraction technology – enabling up to 10,000 devices each year to be processed at the earliest stages of an investigation.
- Working with the mobile phone industry to support police efforts in providing ‘swap out’ phones for victims where it is not possible to return a phone within 24 hours.
- Launching new ‘Pathfinder Projects’ across four more police forces which allow external scrutiny of police decisions, a more active focus on perpetrators’ offending patterns and drive victim confidence in police and CPS.
- Establishing a culture of more effective joint working between police

and CPS so that they can better support victims and build better cases – driving more guilty pleas as defendants realise that conviction is likely.

- The Law Commission will also begin a review into ‘rape myths’ to ensure courts are tackling them at every opportunity while also examining the use of a victims’ sexual history as evidence and whether expert evidence can be used in court to counter misconceptions about rape.
- Pre-recorded cross-examination – which allows victims to provide evidence on video prior to a trial – will be piloted in a further three crown courts with a wider national rollout considered following evaluation of the pilots.
- A ministerial-led criminal justice taskforce has been set up to drive forward these actions. The taskforce will be advised by a Ministerial chaired expert group including representatives from the criminal justice system who will be able to provide valued external scrutiny to, and support of, the implementation of our actions.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

Rape and sexual violence are horrific crimes that devastate lives. Tragically, brave victims who have come forward to report are too often let down by the criminal justice system.

This must change immediately. While work is already underway to address these unacceptable issues, I am calling on the police to urgently consider what more they can do to strengthen their response.

The police must give victims the support and treatment they deserve whilst ensuring that the vile perpetrators face justice.

The Attorney General, the rt. Hon Michael Ellis QC MP said:

This landmark publication has made one thing clear – that we must all do better to improve the system’s approach to securing justice for victims of rape and sexual offences.

At the heart of this is a collaborative approach, from the moment a complaint is made, through to the investigation and prosecution and post-trial. We must ensure that victims are supported every step of the way.

Director of Public Prosecutions, Max Hill QC said:

Rape is a truly devastating and life changing crime. Our prosecutors see the trauma and lasting impact on victims every day.

The stark drop in the number of cases that have gone before a jury

in recent years means too few victims are seeing justice and reversing that is an absolute priority for the CPS.

This review presents an unprecedented opportunity across the whole criminal justice system, and I am determined to lead meaningful and lasting change in every aspect of how these cases are handled, in partnership with the police and the courts.

Today's announcement follows extensive government action in recent years to protect women and girls from violence. It comes as more than £176 million has been invested into victim services, funding more specialist help such as rape support centres. This includes £27 million to recruit more Independent Sexual Violence and Domestic Abuse advisors who provide advice and support for victims, acting as the link between police, support services and criminal justice agencies. This investment means there is an ISVA support for every victim that wants one.

Meanwhile, a further £2 million has been made available for smaller specialist organisations helping ethnic minority, LGBT or disabled victims with male-specific services benefiting from a 60 per cent funding increase this year.

In addition, the landmark Domestic Abuse Act (2021), introduced a swathe of measures to boost protections for survivors, while clamping down on perpetrators. The government's Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill will also see rapists face longer jail terms.

Meanwhile, the courts continue to prioritise urgent cases where there is a risk to the public, such as sexual violence. This is alongside the hundreds of millions the government is investing to help courts recover from the pandemic, deliver swifter justice and support victims.

Notes to editors

- The government's [End-to-End Rape Review](#) can be found on GOV.UK
- Alongside this Review, the government is publishing a [Social Research report](#) which outlines the underlying primary research in more detail and can be found on GOV.UK.

What government will do:

- Ambition to return volumes of rape cases being referred by police, charged and going to court back to 2016 levels by the end of the Parliament.
- Publish regular scorecards including metrics on timeliness, quality of cases and victim engagement to show how the whole criminal justice system is performing – providing transparency and accountability for the first time with the first scorecard published by December.

What we will do for victims:

- Use the upcoming Victims' Bill to guarantee victims' rights in law and

hold criminal justice agencies to account for delivering them.

- Give victims access to 24/7 support through a helpline and online service – ensuring no matter when someone needs support it is available.
- Consult on the provision of community-based support for victims of sexual violence and the role of the Independent Sexual Violence Advisors in the forthcoming Victims' Bill consultation.
- Consult on how to enhance support for rape victims to understand and challenge disclosure decisions.

What the police and Crown Prosecution Service will do:

- Better data extraction technology – enabling up to 10,000 devices each year to be processed at the earliest stages of an investigation
- Work with mobile phone industry to support police efforts to provide 'swap out' phones for victims.
- Move to a default investigative process that focusses on suspect's behaviour rather than victim credibility.
- Launch new 'Pathfinder Projects' across four more police forces which allow external scrutiny of police decisions, a more active focus on perpetrators offending patterns and drive victim confidence in police and CPS.
- Establish a culture of effective joint working between police and CPS so that they can better support victims and build better cases.
- The CPS will relaunch pre-trial witness interviews which aid CPS decision making and can deal with inconsistencies earlier on in the process

What will happen at court:

- The Law Commission will begin a review into 'rape myths' to ensure courts are tackling them at every opportunity while also examining the use of a victims' sexual history as evidence and whether expert evidence can be used in court to counter misconceptions about rape.
- Pre-recorded cross-examination – which allows victims to provide evidence on video prior a trial – will be piloted in a further three crown courts with a wider national rollout considered following evaluation of the pilots.

Boxing stars champion COVID-19 vaccine as the 'best jab' of 2021

- Some of the biggest names in boxing have come together to urge fans to get the COVID-19 vaccine, backing the biggest vaccination programme in our history
- In a new short film, Eddie Hearn, Ricky Hatton, Conor Benn, Terri Harper and Campbell Hatton reveal which current and former boxers have the best

jab

- As everyone aged over 18 is invited for vaccines in England, stars encourage all eligible people to book their jab as soon as they can

Boxing legends Eddie Hearn, Ricky Hatton, Conor Benn, Terri Harper and Campbell Hatton have weighed in to encourage their fans to get COVID-19 vaccines, hailing them 'the best jab' of 2021.

In a new film released today, the boxing stars debate which fighter has the best jab, before awarding the title to the UK's COVID-19 vaccination programme, which has saved more than 14,000 lives and prevented 42,000 hospitalisations in England so far.

In the film, while Hatton praises Klitschko's jab and Hearn says the ultimate punch is unquestionably from Muhammad Ali, the stars all agree that the COVID-19 jab claims the knockout and they encourage the public to take-up the vaccine when offered.

This renewed support comes just weeks after the success of the vaccination programme paved the way for spectators to be welcomed back to sports events and following the Prime Minister's announcement that the government is on track to offer a first vaccine to all adults by 19 July, 2 weeks earlier than planned.

Health and Social Care Secretary, Matt Hancock said:

The vaccine is key to defending us from whatever punch this virus throws at us, with each jab bringing us one step closer to defeating this virus.

We're hugely grateful to these boxing stars for getting the message out there that the vaccine is the best possible way to protect yourselves and your loved ones.

It's vital that everyone books and attends their appointment when the offer comes, and to crucially come back for that second dose.

Vaccines Minister, Nadhim Zahawi said:

I am thrilled that our boxing heroes are backing the vaccine. It is indeed the best jab, and it is the key to getting this country back in the ring so we can build back better from this virus.

We've recently extended the invite of a jab to everyone aged 18 and over. So let's roll up our sleeves, get the vaccine and put this pandemic behind us.

Eddie Hearn, Chairman of Matchroom Sport and boxing promoter, said:

I've seen a few jabs in my time, but the COVID-19 jab is important and will make a big difference. I can't wait to get back ringside as soon as possible!

Ricky Hatton MBE said:

I've been on the receiving end of a few too many of Mayweather's jabs – so I'm definitely up for getting one which isn't going to hurt! The NHS are doing a fantastic job – it's important we all do our part.

Terri Harper said:

In boxing, the jab keeps you safe. As part of the vaccine rollout, this jab is no different – we need to all roll our sleeves up and get the vaccine to make sure we can get back to a more normal way of life.

The 'best jab' film follows the new 'Every Vaccination Gives Us Hope' campaign launched last month to encourage those due to be offered the vaccine in the second phase of the rollout to join the millions of people who have already received their jabs.

Vaccinated people are far less likely to get COVID-19 with symptoms and are even more unlikely to get serious COVID-19, to be admitted to hospital, or to die from it.

New analysis by Public Health England (PHE) shows for the first time that 2 doses of the COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective against hospitalisation from the Delta (B.1.61.2) variant. The analysis suggests that after 2 doses, the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine is 96% effective and the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine is 92% effective against hospitalisation.

A total of 72.4 million doses have been administered across the UK, with 79.8% of the UK adult population having received a first dose and 57.8% of the people receiving both doses.

By 19 July, all those aged 50 and over and the clinically extremely vulnerable will have been offered their second dose.

The government met its target of offering a vaccine to the most vulnerable by 15 April and is on track to offer a first dose to all adults by 19 July, 2 weeks earlier than planned. NHS England has extended the offer of a vaccine to everyone over the age of 18.

As part of step 3 of the roadmap, the government updated guidance to allow spectators to attend both indoor and outdoor sporting events at reduced capacity.

More support for further education teachers to develop

Further education teaching staff will soon benefit from more high-quality professional development opportunities, so they can continue to deliver top class education and training to young people and adults.

Excellent teaching will be vital to ensuring the government's landmark reforms to post-16 education can progress, so more people can gain the skills they need to secure good jobs and support the country to build back better from the pandemic. Evidence also shows that the quality of teaching is the single biggest driver of student outcomes.

The new £9.5 million FE Professional Development Grants pilot launched today (18 June) will support the commitment made in the government's Skills for Jobs White Paper to strengthen the professional development on offer to the workforce and boost teaching practices.

The funding will also provide increased opportunities for providers to collaborate and share the excellent skills and practice that already exists within the sector in three priority areas:

- Training and supporting staff to strengthen skills and confidence to use technology effectively to deliver education.
- Subject specific professional development to improve the quality of curriculum design and teaching, learning and assessment.
- Tailored support for new or inexperienced teachers in the sector to help career progression and keep talent in the profession.

Apprenticeships and Skills Minister Gillian Keegan said:

We are transforming further and technical education so everyone has the opportunity to gain the skills they need to succeed, but that can only be achieved if we have outstanding teachers with the knowledge and skills to inspire future talent.

I've seen first-hand the brilliant work that is already going on up and down the country, with the FE workforce going above and beyond during the pandemic to support their learners.

This investment will help build on that by making sure the sector can develop and grow and unlock even more potential

Kirsti Lord, Deputy Chief Executive – Member Services from the Association of Colleges said:

The £9.5 million investment into CPD for further education is very welcome. The core focuses around technology, subject specific development and the retention of new teachers are timely, as teaching practice evolves through the pandemic and online delivery of CPD can be leveraged in a way which would not have been considered even just two years ago. Colleges are well used to working together on quality improvement and CPD; this fund will enable those collaborating to provide high quality CPD in a variety of areas and specialisms which it would be challenging to deliver individually.

Jane Hickie Chief Executive of the Association of Employment and Learning Providers said:

The pandemic has accelerated changes in the world of work and the way that further education providers respond to them. This pilot programme demonstrates the Government's commitment in the White Paper to support the advancement of high quality professional development in the sector and I am confident that a collaborative approach for bids will bring forward some really innovative ideas that will have a positive impact.

Eligible further education providers are being invited to partner up and submit bids for funding to develop approaches to professional development and training that improve teaching practices and enable career progression.

The fund forms part of £65 million investment in 2021-22 designed to support a number of measures announced in the Skills for Jobs White Paper that will help boost FE teacher recruitment, retention and development. This includes the launch of a new digital platform and national recruitment campaign to get more talented individuals to teach in further education, strengthened initial teacher training and a new Workforce Industry Exchange Programme so that industry experts can bring their skills to FE teaching.