

London Borough of Croydon Improvement and Assurance Panel: adult social care panel member

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179th Commonwealth Points of Light recipients from Ghana

On 8 June 2021 in Accra British High Commissioner, Iain Walker awarded Josephine Marie Godwyll and Martin Bruce with a Commonwealth Points of Lights certificate on behalf of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Josephine and Martin are co-founders of 'Young At Heart Ghana', an initiative improving access to digital education for over 8,000 children and young people in rural and disadvantaged communities. Their mission is to provide solutions to the needs of children in Ghana with regards to their education in Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

The Young at Heart free 'The Teacher App' provides a range of home-learning modules for children aged 8 – 14. These modules focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), as well as literacy and art. Participants receive module instructions and activities every week. The program also enables parents, who are having to act as teachers, to access a network of teachers and mentors who can provide extra support and answer questions.

After meeting with High Commissioner Iain Walker, Josephine Marie Godwyll and Martin Bruce said:

Technology has great potential in filling the gaps of knowledge and skills transfer. We are excited to lead a team of young innovators who are committed to creating solutions that unleash this potential.

We are grateful to Her Majesty The Queen and the British High Commission Ghana for this award – which further strengthens us on our journey as ‘Points of Light’ in our communities and beyond.

The Points of Light awards recognise outstanding volunteers from around the world – people whose service is making a difference in their communities and whose story can inspire others to create innovative solutions to social challenges.

British High Commissioner to Ghana Iain Walker said:

I will never fail to be inspired by the stories of the men, women and organisations who at the height of the global pandemic, pivoted away from their normal work and provided a life-line to some of the world’s most vulnerable.

As schools across Ghana were forced to close last year the Young at Heart team supported the work of the Ministry of Education to make sure that children continued to receive quality and vital education despite the restrictions and difficulties caused by COVID-19. It is an honour to meet Josephine and Martin in person to congratulate them on their success.

As part of the legacy of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London 2018, Her Majesty The Queen, awards a Point of Light to inspirational volunteers from across the 54 Commonwealth nations.

[Lt Gen Richard Nugee opens Nesscliff NetCAP buildings](#)

The MOD’s Climate Change and Sustainability Lead, Lt Gen Richard Nugee, has officially opened 3 new environmentally friendly buildings at Nesscliff Training Camp in Shropshire.

The accommodation blocks form part of a wider investment being undertaken by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO). The programme is being part-funded using money from a £200-million investment to improve UK Armed Forces accommodation, which was announced by the Defence Secretary last summer. £45-million is being invested in building new carbon-efficient accommodation on the Defence Training Estate in a project called the Net-Zero Carbon Accommodation Programme (NetCAP).

Lt Gen Nugee was briefed on the programme, which will see over 40 new carbon-efficient accommodation blocks, providing more than 1,900 bed spaces, installed across the country by DIO. The blocks are being built by modular construction specialist Redsl0, through DIO's contract with industry partner Landmarc Support Services.

The General also watched the demolition of some 1930s Nissen huts, which will be replaced with more of the NetCAP buildings in a second phase at Nesscliff later this year. He then toured the 3 completed buildings with Paul Ruddick, Redsl0 Chairman, and cut the ribbon to officially open the new accommodation.

The first NetCAP building opened at Westdown Camp on Salisbury Plain last summer and has since been followed by other new carbon-efficient blocks at Castlemartin Training Area in Pembrokeshire, Brunswick Camp in Surrey and Knook Camp, also on Salisbury Plain. Each new block is an iteration on the same design, with the Redsl0 team looking at ways to reduce energy use and embodied carbon for each new version.

The 3 buildings at Nesscliff have improved on the Westdown Camp proof of concept and have an Energy Performance Certificate rating of -5, thanks to solar panels on the roof, air source heat pumps and a heat recovery system in the showers and drying rooms. This means they will be able to generate power for the site, reducing electricity costs.

The team were also able to reduce embodied carbon by 30% at Nesscliff, as compared to the Westdown Camp prototype. Smart technology in the blocks allows Landmarc to monitor energy use, how the buildings are being used and if necessary, make changes remotely to all the NetCAP buildings. This further helps to reduce energy use and running costs.

[Lt Gen Richard Nugee opens new net-zero carbon training accommodation](#)

Brigadier Jonathan Bartholomew, DIO's Head of Overseas and Training Region said:

I was delighted to welcome Lt Gen Nugee to Nesscliff Training Camp and show him these buildings, which are a testament to the MOD's commitment to sustainability. As our Climate Change and Sustainability lead, he took a real interest in all of the steps being taken to make the blocks as efficient as possible.

As well as being as sustainable as we can make them, these new modular built blocks are the sort of high-quality accommodation our serving personnel deserve, which helps them to give their best during a training exercise.

Mark Neill, Managing Director at Landmarc, said:

We are committed to supporting the MOD and DIO with their net zero carbon goals, so this was a great opportunity to show Lt Gen Nugee

how we're driving down carbon by improving building standards across the Defence Training Estate.

Not only is this investment helping to deliver a more sustainable estate but it also supports the government aim to improve living accommodation for our Armed Forces, whilst helping to kick start the economy by using an end-to-end UK supply chain.

Paul Ruddick, Chairman of Redsl0 said:

We are delighted to be delivering continuous improvements to the programme, alongside DIO and Landmarc, with each NetCAP building. The programme is leading the way in the government's commitment to build back better, greener and faster. The buildings at Nesscliff Training Area truly showcase how agile the approach to the programme has been, from the very start. It was an absolute pleasure to be able to show Lt Gen Nugee the buildings personally.

The remainder of the £200-million investment is being spent on Service Family Accommodation and training accommodation at Longmoor Training Camp, and improvements to Single Living Accommodation in army barracks, RAF bases and naval establishments.

[Loneliness minister: "It's more important than ever to take action"](#)

This Loneliness Awareness Week, the Loneliness Minister Baroness Barran has warned we are still in a 'critical stage' of tackling loneliness.

Baroness Barran has said that many of those who felt lonely before the pandemic will continue to do so as lockdown restrictions are eased and recognises that some people will have lost their confidence. The Loneliness Minister is urging everyone who may be feeling lonely, or isolated to reach out to someone, and if they know someone who they feel might be lonely, or isolated, to get in touch.

Small charities and organisations tackling loneliness in their communities can apply to the second round of the £4 million Local Connections Fund from 28 June 2021. The [first round of funding](#) helped more than 840 organisations across England to connect small groups of people through projects and activities they enjoy.

To mark the week, members of the Government's [Tackling Loneliness Network](#) are launching multiple projects to help the country tackle loneliness; including

the Connection Coalition's Loneliness Advice chatbot service on WhatsApp.

This groundbreaking new service will enable people feeling lonely to simply message 07902 922 908 on the app to access information and resources from organisations including the Marmalade Trust, Jo Cox Foundation, Age UK, The Mix, The British Red Cross and the #LetsTalkLoneliness campaign.

TikTok is launching a brand new challenge this week, encouraging creators and users to talk openly about their experiences with loneliness, and their favourite ways to help others using the hashtag #LetsTalkLoneliness. The challenge will run until Friday 18th June.

As part of the government's ongoing [#LetsTalkLoneliness campaign](#), the government is urging everyone to:

- Check in with a neighbour, recognising that some people will be keen to get together in person once possible, while others might be more cautious.
- Keep in touch with friends, family and neighbours – for example calling someone or writing a letter, asking how they feel about getting out and about again, and considering whether going together would help both of you feel more confident.
- Contact organisations – there's a list of organisations on the Let's Talk Loneliness [website](#) which can offer support.
- Set a routine with online activities, regular tasks or by volunteering. Rejoin groups that might not have met for some time, and think about how you can welcome others back, especially people not feeling very confident.
- Help out through volunteering with local groups or by offering a regular conversation to someone feeling isolated. In many cases you will still be able to do this over the phone or online, if you prefer.

UK Government Minister for Loneliness, Baroness Barran, said:

Although life is beginning to feel closer to normal for many people, we are still in a critical stage when it comes to tackling loneliness. There is a large number of people who felt lonely before the pandemic and will continue to do so as lockdown restrictions ease

This Loneliness Awareness Week, I'm urging everyone to take note of our tips to help reduce loneliness. Checking in with someone, making sure you keep in touch with family, finding organisations

who can offer support via www.letstalkloneliness.co.uk, or helping out in your local community.

I'm really excited to see some of the projects launched by the Tackling Loneliness Network come to fruition. The new chatbot service on WhatsApp will make help and advice easily accessible to people across the country, and many more partners are carrying out work to contribute towards ending loneliness.

Niamh Sweeney, director of EMEA public policy, WhatsApp, said:

We know that in challenging times WhatsApp is uniquely placed to help provide support for those who need it most. We wanted to partner with the Connection Coalition to help connect anyone experiencing loneliness with organisations that can provide them with easy and secure access to vital information and advice.

Blondel Cluff CBE, Chair of The National Lottery Community Fund, said:

Loneliness affects people of all ages and from all walks of life and we know that, because of the pandemic, many people are experiencing isolation for the very first time. The first round of Local Connections funding demonstrated the huge impact that small grants can have when tackling loneliness at a local level, empowering organisations to make a change in their communities.

Thanks to National Lottery players we are now able to award £2 million to support hundreds of other organisations and communities across the country, and we are proud to be working alongside Government to encourage people to tackle loneliness and build social connections.

Rich Waterworth, the General Manager of TikTok EU & UK, TikTok, said:

TikTok is built on the idea of community, and that whatever passion you have, whether it's reading or cooking, DIY or skydiving, you will find a community on TikTok. That shared enjoyment and feeling of connection is one of the most powerful tools in the fight against loneliness.

I am incredibly proud that TikTok has been able to support #LetsTalkLoneliness and that our community has come together to share their own stories, provide advice and offer connection. I hope that will inspire others to take action to help someone they know feel a little less lonely at what we know continues to be a difficult time for everyone.

The Tackling Loneliness Network, which is formed of over 70 organisations, includes Royal Mail, which has launched its postmark, so every single letter posted across the country this week will feature the #LetsTalkLoneliness stamp. For those in London, the BT Tower will be displaying tips for alleviating loneliness in yourself and others.

The Local Connections Fund is made up of £2 million from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport and £2 million from The National Lottery Community Fund.

Loneliness Minister Baroness Barran today held the first ever meeting with with her Japanese counterpart Minister for Loneliness, Tetsushi Sakamoto, to discuss how both countries are continuing to tackle the global issue of loneliness.

NOTES TO EDITORS

- Connection Coalition loneliness advice chatbot on WhatsApp – simply add 07902 922 908 to your WhatsApp contacts, and then send a message saying ‘hi’ to bring up a menu featuring information and resources from organisations including Marmalade Trust, Jo Cox Foundation, Age UK, The Mix, The British Red Cross and the #LetsTalkLoneliness campaign. From here, people can choose the support or advice they may need for themselves or to support others.
- [Read the National Lottery Community Fund’s announcement on the Local Connections Fund.](#)

[Following a satisfactory review, MHRA extends authorisation of NHS Test and Trace lateral flow devices](#)

Government response

Information for the public about lateral flow devices (LFDs) provided by NHS Test and Trace



The MHRA has extended the Exceptional Use Authorisation (EUA) for NHS Test and Trace lateral flow devices (LFDs) used as part of the Government's asymptomatic testing programme to 28 August 2021.

This follows a satisfactory outcome of the review undertaken as a result of recent action in USA. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently issued a warning about LFDs manufactured by Innova Medical Group Inc in the United States. Innova are the supplier of NHS Test and Trace LFDs, although the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) take on the responsibilities of the legal manufacturer for the products used in the UK.

Graeme Tunbridge, MHRA Director of Devices, said:

Our priority is to ensure patients and the public have access to safe and effective medical devices and tests. Following our normal process to investigate any product concern, the MHRA immediately began reviewing all available information. A full risk assessment was undertaken by DHSC as legal manufacturer of the LFDs in the UK and the MHRA has undertaken a thorough review to ensure that we were satisfied with the assessment and any action proposed.

We have now concluded our review of the risk assessment and are satisfied that no further action is necessary or advisable at this time. This has allowed us to extend the EUA to allow ongoing supply of these LFDs over the coming months. People can be assured of the MHRA's work to continuously monitor the tests in use; as is our standard process.

These LFDs are authorised for use in detecting positive cases of COVID-19 in asymptomatic people. This means they can be used for one-off testing prior to an activity to reduce risks as well as for outbreak testing.

In exceptional circumstances the MHRA can issue EUAs allowing medical devices to be used that have not followed the standard approval process. The EUA process has been used during the pandemic to ensure that the health system has access to critical products. Once an EUA is issued following an assessment by the MHRA, the products given approval through this process are

closely monitored by the MHRA.

Notes to editors

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