

Defence Secretary meets Ukrainian counterpart in Kyiv

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace travelled to Ukraine this week for high level talks with his counterpart about the UK's continued support amid Russia's brutal invasion.

The Defence Secretary met with Ukrainian Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov to discuss the Armed Forces of Ukraine's ongoing offensive to recapture and liberate territory seized in Putin's illegal war.

They spoke about how UK equipment has been brought to bear on the battlefield, along with the effectiveness of soldiers trained by the UK and other partners.

The pair also talked about the next steps in the war as Ukraine battles to free itself from Russia's occupation, and what further support the UK can provide.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

I was delighted to have visited my good friend Oleksii Reznikov in Kyiv this week to discuss more military aid and help to Ukraine.

Our support to their fight against Russian aggression goes from strength to strength and will continue all through 2023 and beyond.

The visit came in the same week as Russia orchestrated sham referenda in the Ukrainian regions of Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Luhansk and Donetsk ahead of a plan to illegally annex them, while the Ukrainian offensive continues to take back territory in the north-east of the country.

The UK is one of the leading donors of military aid to Ukraine, committing £2.3 billion in 2022 – second only to the US – and the PM last week [announced that this amount would be matched or exceeded in 2023](#).

Just weeks before the Defence Secretary's visit, the UK committed to donating more than 120 logistics vehicles in the latest tranche of gifted military equipment.

The UK has also trained more than 27,000 members of the Armed Forces of Ukraine since 2015, including thousands of new recruits in the UK this year, with help from allies and partners.

The training teaches troops key skills such as weapons handling, first aid, fieldcraft, patrol tactics, vehicle-mounted operations and trench and urban warfare, which will give them a crucial edge on the battlefield.

Over 500 criminals and immigration offenders removed

More than 500 foreign criminals and immigration offenders have been removed from the UK by the Home Office during September.

In total, 533 people were returned, including 105 to Albania on 3 dedicated charter flights and scheduled flights this month.

The Home Office also returned 26 Romanian nationals and 9 individuals to Zimbabwe on separate charter flights.

The foreign national offenders removed had received combined prison sentences of more than 337 years and were convicted of crimes including sexual and violent offences, supplying Class A drugs and facilitating illegal entry to the UK.

More than 300 people who had no right to remain in the UK, including 3 Albanian nationals who entered the UK illegally – 1 via small boat and 2 through other clandestine means – have also been removed.

Home Secretary, Suella Braverman said:

We are taking a zero-tolerance approach to anyone who comes to the UK and breaks our laws.

Returning such a high number of dangerous criminals sends a clear message that they are not welcome here.

We are also clamping down on those who come here illegally, and I am exploring every avenue to accelerate their removal.

Since signing our returns agreement with Albania in 2021, we have removed over 1,000 Albanian criminals and immigration offenders, including some who crossed the Channel illegally to come to the UK.

To date this year, the UK has removed 8,175 people via enforced, voluntary and other return types, including 2,250 foreign national offenders.

The Nationality and Borders Act will further deter illegal entry into the UK, breaking the business model of people-smuggling networks and speeding up the removal of those with no right to be in the UK.

Figures for recent returns totals are sourced from provisional operational data. Comprehensive statistics on returns are published in the [Home Office quarterly immigration statistics and migration transparency data](#), and the

latest available data was published on 25 August.

Welsh Secretary sees community renewal projects in Torfaen

Secretary of State for Wales Robert Buckland has viewed two community projects in Torfaen which are receiving UK Government funding to increase the amount of locally-produced food and combat food poverty.

The Welsh Secretary was in Cwmbran on Wednesday 28 September to see how £618,403 allocated to the Food4Growth initiative under the UK Government's Community Renewal Fund, was being used in the community.

The launch of the Community Renewal Fund in Autumn 2021 saw £46m granted to 160 projects across Wales, including £3.8m allocated to seven different local initiatives in Torfaen, including Food4Growth.

On Wednesday, Robert Buckland visited two of Food4Growth's projects – radio station Able Radio which has opened a community food shop and food distribution scheme Tasty Not Wasty.

Secretary of State for Wales Robert Buckland said:

It was fantastic to be in Cwmbran to see how the injection of funding we made a few short months ago is doing good in our communities.

We want to unlock the potential of all our local areas and target significant funding to places that need it and where it can make a real difference to people's lives.

Councillor Joanne Gauden, Executive Member for Skills and Regeneration, said:

We were thrilled that the Secretary of State for Wales came to visit two projects in Torfaen.

We are really proud of these projects. They have worked so hard to get these projects off the ground and are dedicated to helping the community.

The costs of living crisis really is being felt by all, so it's lovely to see projects like this helping people. It would be wonderful to see more projects like these in Torfaen.

Shaun O'Dwyer- Managing Director, Able Radio, said:

The Food4Growth grant has allowed Able to provide suitable opportunities for those we support.

Importantly it has allowed Able to redevelop our site and install poly tunnels, a sustainABLE shop that operates a pay as you feel model.

Supporting the community is an important objective for Able, the engagement opportunities and relationships fostered from this funding has created strong network in Torfaen, allowing communities to access fresh, sustainable produce whilst recognising the abilities and strengths of the people with learning disabilities we support.

Sabrina Cresswell, Director, Tasty Not Wasty, said:

With support from the Food4Growth project we are now able to increase usage and train local volunteers. It has enabled us to provide healthy food at a lower cost whilst helping to reduce food waste and bring the community together.

Last year UK Government launched three new funds including the Levelling Up Fund which saw £121m allocated to 10 major projects in Wales and the Community Renewal Fund which saw £46m allocated to 160 new programmes in Wales that invest in people, boost skills and support local business.

The £200 million UK-wide funding through the Community Renewal Fund will help local areas prepare for the launch of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the scheme that will see UK-wide funding at least match EU money, reaching around £1.5 billion a year.

Food4Growth is a cooperation project between Torfaen, Caerphilly and Monmouthshire with the aim to find new ways to help develop food supply chains and create a whole system approach

With a huge rise in numbers of people in food poverty the project also launched a Community Food Scheme, where third sector organisations, community groups or public sector services were encouraged to apply for a grant to help create sustainable solutions to food poverty.

The Food4Growth project is funded by the UK Government through the UK Community Renewal Fund.

[North Korea ballistic missile launch: FCDO statement](#)

Press release

A Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office spokesperson statement on North Korea's ballistic missile launch on 29 September.



A Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office spokesperson said:

The UK is deeply concerned by North Korea's decision to carry out further ballistic missile tests on 29 September in violation of UN Security Council Resolutions.

We urge North Korea to refrain from provocations and take concrete steps towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation. Alongside our allies and partners, the UK is committed to peace on the Korean Peninsula, upholding the rules-based international system and securing an end to North Korea's unlawful activities. We strongly encourage North Korea to return to dialogue with the US.

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[Crime news: fee uplifts of 15% take effect from 30 September](#)

News story

Criminal legal aid schemes will see wide-ranging fee increases from 30 September 2022.



Changes to the fees paid for criminal legal aid work from 30 September 2022 mean we are updating the guidance you use when submitting claims.

Which fees are increasing?

A 15% uplift applies to all the following fees:

- police station, including pre-charge engagement
- magistrates' court, including youth court
- Criminal Cases Review Commission work
- advocates' graduated fees
- expert fees
- Very High Cost Cases (VHCC) litigator fees
- basic fee element of litigators' graduated fees, as well as all fixed fees and hourly rates

The increase does not apply to pages of prosecution evidence (PPE) and trial length proxies in the Litigators' Graduated Fee Scheme, or to prison law cases.

The 'elected not proceeded' (ENP) fixed fee is being abolished. These cases will now receive the appropriate graduated fee.

ENP fees have been paid in 'either way' cases. This is when defendants elect for Crown Court trial, in cases that could also be heard by magistrates', but later change their pleas to guilty.

Claiming the new fees

You can claim for the new fees for any cases where the matter starts, or the representation order is dated, on or after 30 September 2022.

Where can I find out more?

Details of the revised fees and hourly rates are set out in the Criminal Legal Aid Remuneration Regulations (amended) 2022.

You can also use the updated guidance on GOV.UK:

1. Fee changes for police station, youth court, and magistrates' court work are set out in the guide to changes in reporting crime lower work.
2. Changes to the litigator and advocate fee schemes relating to ENP matters are dealt with in the Crown Court fee guidance.
3. Expert witness fee changes can be found in the annex 6 of the GOV.UK expert witness fee guidance.

Why is this happening now?

These increases reflect the government's interim response to the recommendations made by Sir Christopher Bellamy's Independent Review of Criminal Legal Aid.

Further information

[Expert witness fee guide](#)

[Crown Court fee guidance](#)

[Guide to changes in reporting crime lower work](#) – first attachment on page

[Criminal Legal Aid \(Remuneration\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2022](#)

[Response to Independent Review of Criminal Legal Aid](#)

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