

New Global Coalition launched to address impacts of Climate Change

Prime Minister Boris Johnson is set to announce a new international coalition to tackle the impacts of climate change.

In a virtual address to the Netherlands-hosted Climate Adaptation Summit, the first ever global summit focused solely on adaptation and resilience, the Prime Minister will launch the Adaptation Action Coalition.

Developed by the UK in partnership with Egypt, Bangladesh, Malawi, the Netherlands, Saint Lucia and the United Nations, this new Coalition will work to turn international political commitments made through the United Nations Call for Action on Adaptation and Resilience into on-the-ground support for vulnerable communities.

Many countries across the world are already experiencing the impacts of climate change, from forest fires in Australia to the recent cyclones in Mozambique. Without action, many more will experience significant disruption and extreme weather, devastating communities and livelihoods.

With support, countries and communities can adapt and build resilience to the impacts of climate change. Measures like early warning systems for storms, investing in flood drainage and drought resistant crops are cost-effective, saving not just money, but lives and livelihoods.

In the UK for example, where we are experiencing more high rainfall events as a result of climate change, the Government has committed an additional £5.2 billion to new flood and coastal defence schemes.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson is expected to say at the Adaptation Summit:

It is undeniable that climate change is already upon us and is already devastating lives and economies. We must adapt to our changing climate, and we must do so now.

I'll be making the need for a resilient recovery a priority of the UK's G7 presidency this year. To make sure we get not just warm words but real change, I am today launching an all-new Adaptation Action Coalition to set the agenda ahead of COP26.

Let's work together to adapt, to become more resilient, and to save lives and livelihoods all around the world.

COP26 President-Designate Alok Sharma said:

We know that the most vulnerable are at the greatest risk from

climate change, and that they have done the least to cause it. Action to address this and build resilience is needed now, before more people lose lives or livelihoods.

I am calling on all countries to come forward with ambitious adaptation plans. This important new coalition will crucially focus minds around the world to accelerate adaptation delivery in the areas most in need.

UK Commissioner to the Global Commission on Adaptation Emma Howard Boyd said:

Last week, flood defences protected tens of thousands of people in England from record river levels during Storm Christoph. Investments in flood protections help economic development and also improve health and wellbeing by enhancing green and blue spaces.

The Environment Agency, government and local partners have a lot of expertise to share with the world, and we also have a lot to learn. International collaboration, as championed by this coalition, is vital.

The Coalition will draw on the expertise of scientists, businesses, civil society and more, and will act as a forum for developed and developing countries to share knowledge and best practice on local, regional and global solutions to deal with climate change.

The [UN High-Level Climate Champions' Race To Resilience campaign](#) and new Dutch-led Adaptation Action Agenda will help inform the Coalition to host a series of sector specific events, bringing together governments, private sector, communities and funders to deliver action to safeguard people and economies from the impacts of climate change.

The UK is already taking action both at home and internationally to improve resilience to climate change, becoming one of the first countries in the world to fulfil a key commitment of the Paris Agreement by publishing its Adaptation Communication at the end of last year.

Notes to editors

1. The Adaptation Action Coalition takes forward the 2019 Call for Action on Adaptation and Resilience from the United Nations Climate Action Summit, committing countries to act now on adaptation, integrate climate risk into all decision making, and increase the availability of adaptation financing. It has now been signed by over 120 countries, the European Union, and 86 organisations, including a number of UN agencies.
2. The Climate Adaptation Summit brings together institutions, government leaders, mayors, private sector, civil society and youth movements, to

drive forward the critical changes needed for societies to manage the effects of our climate emergency. It will deliver enhanced ambition, accelerated actions and tangible solutions to the challenges of a world that is heating up, demonstrating how a climate-resilient future can and must be achieved.

3. UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson appointed [Anne-Marie Trevelyan MP](#) as the UK's International Champion on Adaptation and Resilience for the COP26 Presidency in November 2020 to drive forward global ambition and action to support countries on the frontline of climate change to adapt to its impacts and build resilience. In her role, she regularly engages with the governments of the countries most affected by climate change and works to drive support from the international community and private sector.

[E3 statement on attempted aerial attacks on Riyadh](#)

News story

The governments of France, Germany and the UK have strongly condemned the attempted aerial attacks on Riyadh, Saudi Arabia



A Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office spokesperson said:

The E3 – France, Germany and the UK – strongly condemn the attempted aerial attacks on Riyadh on 23 January 2021.

Proliferation and the use of missiles and drones undermine the security and stability of the region, to which we are strongly committed. We reiterate our firm attachment to the security and integrity of Saudi territory.

[£30m injection for UK's first uncrewed fighter aircraft](#)

The uncrewed combat aircraft will be designed to fly at high-speed alongside fighter jets, armed with missiles, surveillance and electronic warfare technology to provide a battle-winning advantage over hostile forces. Known as a 'loyal wingman', these aircraft will be the UK's first uncrewed platforms able to target and shoot down enemy aircraft and survive against surface to air missiles.

In a boost for Northern Ireland's defence industry, Spirit AeroSystems, Belfast, have been selected to lead Team MOSQUITO in the next phase of the Project. Utilising ground-breaking engineering techniques, the team will further develop the RAF's Lightweight Affordable Novel Combat Aircraft (LANCA) concept, with a full-scale vehicle flight-test programme expected by the end of 2023.

Northern Ireland Secretary, Brandon Lewis said:

This is fantastic news and underlines the distinct strengths in Northern Ireland's economy, through its advanced engineering and manufacturing capabilities.

This ground-breaking project will involve significant investment which will not only support local employment, but also reinforce Northern Ireland's contribution to the security of our nation.

Team MOSQUITO, which also includes Northrop Grumman UK, will mature the designs and manufacture a technology demonstrator to generate evidence for a follow-on LANCA programme. If successful, Project Mosquito's findings could lead to this revolutionary capability being deployed alongside the Typhoon and F-35 Lightning jets by the end of the decade.

Defence Minister, Jeremy Quin said:

This is a great win for the Northern Ireland defence industry and will showcase some of the most pioneering engineering work currently being undertaken in the UK.

The £30 million project will accelerate the development of the UK's future air power by delivering cutting-edge uncrewed aircraft,

maintaining our position as a world leader in emerging technologies.

Working with innovative partners from across the UK, Project Mosquito is transforming traditional approaches to combat air to enable the rapid development of technology. By utilising the latest software development techniques and civilian aerospace engineering and manufacturing expertise, the project will deliver dramatic reductions in costs and development timelines, so their innovations can reach the front-line quicker than ever before.

This game changing research and development project will ensure the final aircraft design will be capable of being easily and affordably updated with the latest technology so we remain one step ahead of our adversaries. The aircraft's flexibility will provide the optimum protection, survivability and information as it flies alongside Typhoon, F-35 Lightning, and later, Tempest as part of our future combat air system.

Air Chief Marshal Mike Wigston, Chief of the Air Staff said:

We're taking a revolutionary approach, looking at a game-changing mix of swarming drones and uncrewed fighter aircraft like Mosquito, alongside piloted fighters like Tempest, that will transform the combat battlespace in a way not seen since the advent of the jet age.

Director Future Combat Air, Richard Berthon said:

Project Mosquito is a vital element of our approach to Future Combat Air, rapidly bringing to life design, build and test skills for next generation combat air capabilities. Autonomous 'loyal wingman' aircraft create the opportunity to expand, diversify and rapidly upgrade Combat Air Forces in a cost-effective way, now and in the future.

As announced by the Prime Minister in November 2020, the UK's Future Combat Air System (FCAS) programme is set to benefit from a portion of the extra £1.5 billion investment into military research and development, which will help ensure our Armed Forces are prepared to meet the threats of tomorrow.

LANCA originated in 2015 in Dstl to understand innovative Combat Air technologies and concepts that offer radical reductions in cost and development time and is a RAF Rapid Capabilities Office led project under the Future Combat Air System Technology Initiative (FCAS TI). The UK MOD's Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) provides the project management and is the MOD's technical authority for LANCA and Project Mosquito on behalf of the RC0.

Community Champions to give COVID-19 vaccine advice and boost take up

- £23.75 million funding for councils and voluntary groups to expand covid communications with at risk groups
- Community Champions will share COVID-19 vaccine advice and information to boost local vaccination take-up
- Funding will support extra school programmes, helplines and phone calls to those in at risk groups

Over £23 million funding has been allocated to 60 councils and voluntary groups across England to expand work to support those most at risk from COVID-19 and boost vaccine take up, Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick announced today (Monday 25 January).

Through the Community Champions scheme councils and voluntary organisations will deliver a wide range of measures to protect those most at risk – building trust, communicating accurate health information and ultimately helping to save lives. This will include developing new networks of trusted local champions where they don't already exist.

Today's funding is specifically targeted at areas with plans to reach groups such as older people, disabled people, and people from ethnic minority backgrounds who according to the latest evidence are more likely to suffer long-term impacts and poor outcomes from COVID-19. Each of the sixty councils have developed their own plan to improve communications with these groups including helplines, school programmes, workplace engagement, phoning those in at risk groups as well as training sessions to help people provide information and advice.

The Community Champions will tap into their local networks to provide advice about COVID-19 and the vaccines. Champions will also work with councils to identify barriers to accessing accurate information and to provide tailored support, such as phone calls for people who are digitally excluded, helplines, and linking to GP surgeries.

The funding will also support areas to tackle misinformation and encourage take-up as the vaccination programme expands across the country.

This builds on wider, cross-government measures to engage communities to tackle the disproportionate impact the pandemic has had on certain groups and

to provide accurate information about COVID -19 and the vaccines to everyone.

This is part of over £7.2 billion government funding provided to councils to help them support their communities during the pandemic.

Communities Secretary, Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

It is vital that everyone has access to accurate and up to date information about COVID-19. False information about COVID-19 vaccines could cost lives. Today's funding will help councils and community groups expand some of the excellent work already underway and reach out to their communities to ensure they have the information they need and get their questions answered. Ultimately this funding will help save lives.

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care Matt Hancock said:

Throughout the pandemic, our priority has been to protect the most vulnerable.

It is vital higher-risk groups are able to access the advice and information they need whether it's about testing, accessing the NHS or the benefits of a lifesaving vaccine.

I'm delighted to see further funding going to local areas to support their communities during this challenging time, and I'm thankful for the continued expertise and dedication of community leaders in spreading the word about our historic vaccination rollout programme across the country.

Vaccine Deployment Minister Nadhim Zahawi said:

We want all communities to take up the offer of a free vaccine and I have been working closely with faith and community leaders to ensure those who may be at higher risk of harm from this virus know how they can benefit from a vaccine.

The expansion of the Community Champions scheme will help everyone get the advice and information they need about COVID-19 vaccines.

Community Champions are already in place across many areas of England, and in Birmingham have proved effective in helping communities understand what they need to do to stay safe.

Cllr Paulette Hamilton, Cabinet Member for Health and Social Care, said:

We've seen great success in Birmingham with our community champions network with it helping us reach identified gaps and those sometimes harder to reach communities across the city. Champions are supported through regular live Q&A sessions allowing them to gain access to the latest advice and guidance that is accessible to those with various disabilities and language barriers to share amongst our communities. We also provide the opportunity for them to share their insights and concerns and encourage and welcome two-way communications to help inform local strategy and delivery.

Throughout the pandemic, the government has prioritised protecting the most vulnerable in our society and have invested more than £4 million into research on ethnic disparities in COVID-19, so that we can go further.

Many different communities will be supported, including Gypsy, Roma, Traveller, people with learning disabilities, as well as faith groups. Champions will be drawn from these groups to share accurate health information with their neighbours, networks, and wider community.

Two charities, Strengthening Faith Institutions and Near Neighbours, will be supporting councils in working with grassroot organisations and community leaders, to ensure that communities understand how the pandemic is being tackled and feel empowered to take action to keep themselves safe.

Birmingham case study

Debbie, aged 52 from Birmingham:

I became a Champion because I'm a childminder. I felt that by being a Champion I could lead by example and ensure that I pass accurate and up-to-date information to other childminders and to the families of the children I care for. I do feel that by following the proper government advice sent through the Community Champion scheme, and with the precautions my work setting put in place, the effect of COVID-19 here has been limited.

I also have two children, both in fulltime education: one at secondary school, the other at college. My husband is also in the vulnerable person category as he has Multiple Sclerosis. So, as well as working, I must support the family, looking after two boys who are studying from home.

By no means has our time been easy. My father passed away in February and my father-in-law in October. Fortunately, neither were

COVID-19-related but organising funerals with restrictions was difficult.

As a Champion I send all the updates from the council to a local support group on WhatsApp, which includes everyone in our cul-de-sac. Anyone can also pop on there what they need shopping-wise and we go and get it for them. In fact, my weekly grocery delivery includes three other vulnerable households, as well as my own. So, we wipe everything down, pop it in bags, and deliver the shopping on the doorstep in what looks like a glorified version of 'knock-door-run'!

I'm a member of the Birmingham City Council Early Years COVID-19 group, where we try and support all early-years settings. Here the council has even provided us with PPE, which I have collected to deliver to a number of locations. They have also signposted us to mobile units where we can have lateral flow tests in the hope that parents see that our childcare settings are safe.

I cannot express how great Birmingham City Council has been with latest updates, government advice and much more.

Birmingham allocation

Birmingham will receive £440,000 of funding. This will include; the commissioning of helplines through VCS groups to allow those with limited access to digital to follow guidance and have support for tests and vaccines. This will also include more materials for BSL/audio materials for people with poor literacy, and materials for those with learning disabilities. And an extension of contracts with existing VCS to accelerate engagement around vaccinations.

Further information

- This announcement builds on the work being done by the Minister for Equalities, Kemi Badenoch, to identify and tackle the disparities in health outcomes being faced by black and minority ethnic people as a result of COVID-19 as well as wider, cross-government engagement:
- **Near Neighbours** will receive £1 million funding to help bring people together in communities that are religiously and ethnically diverse, so that they can get to know each other better, build relationships of trust, and collaborate together on initiatives that improve the local community they live in. Near Neighbours provide grass root community

organisations small grants to develop local initiatives. The surge fund they have been provided will be to further the Community Champion Scheme work.

- **Strengthening Faith Institutions** will receive £1.15 million funding to support work in communities to strengthen and professionalise faith institutions. Due to their reach into BAME and particularly marginalised communities, they will be developing community messaging and identifying influential community leaders and developing them into community champions.
- Materials and best practice from local areas will be shared with other areas of the country to ensure that the impact of the scheme and the funding being announced today is maximised, as well as enabling both central and local government to learn lessons about what works locally or for certain communities, and why.

See a full list of [local authorities and funding allocations](#) (ODT, 8.72 KB)

[Deputy Chief Medical Officer Jonathan Van-Tam opinion piece in The Sunday Telegraph](#)

Next Saturday will mark the first anniversary of the World Health Organization's declaration of a Public Health Emergency of International Concern and next Sunday will be one year on from the first case of COVID-19 detected in the UK. It has been a terrible year as the virus has spread across the world causing misery, hardship, death and severely disrupting all of our lives.

The silver lining has been the incredible work of scientists and healthcare professionals across the world. If you had told me 12 months ago, that the UK would have discovered, in dexamethasone, the first treatment proven to reduce COVID-19 deaths, and vaccinated over 5 million people by this point, I would have been astonished. But that is the place in which we find ourselves. Hardship, but also hope.

Many people have played an important role in getting vaccines in arms, including the teams of researchers behind the development of the vaccines, the volunteers who took part in clinical trials, the Vaccines Taskforce who ensured we had supply of vaccine and the NHS staff and volunteers who are now working hard to administer them to people quickly and safely.

Their work has been incredible and we should rightly celebrate this.

Vaccines do offer the way out of the pandemic and a return to life as we knew it – having a pint before watching your local football team, multigenerational family gatherings and big weddings. These really will return! But to make that happen as quickly as possible we need to bring the number of cases down as soon as we can whilst we vaccinate our most vulnerable. To do that there are some important scientific points I want to highlight:

No vaccine has ever been 100% effective so no-one will have 100% protection from the virus. The way to reduce everyone's risk is to break the chains of transmission and really push down the number of cases.

Vaccines work by tricking your body into thinking it has to fight the virus. It trains you for this fight by making antibodies and stimulating T-cells; then you are ready if you do come across the real thing. However, like any training, getting up to 'match fitness' takes time. Your body's response, the immune response, is only fully trained up around 2 or 3 weeks after you have each of your 2 jabs. If you are older it's better to allow at least 3 weeks. You can still get COVID in this time.

Even better and longer lasting protection then comes from the second dose so it is really important that everyone gets the second jab.

Really importantly we do not yet know the impact of the vaccine on transmission of the virus. So even after you have had both doses of the vaccine you may still give COVID to someone else and the chains of transmission will then continue. If you change your behaviour you could still be spreading the virus, keeping the number of cases high and putting others at risk who also need their vaccine but are further down the queue.

We still have a very high number of hospitalisations and deaths. A quarter of hospital admissions for COVID-19 are in people under the age of 55. Despite the speed of the rollout, these are people who will not have the vaccine for a while yet.

Some people are questioning the UK policy of trying to give as many at-risk people as possible the first dose of vaccine in the shortest possible time, inevitably extending the interval before the second dose is given. But what none of these (who ask reasonable questions) will tell me is: who on the at-risk list should suffer slower access to their first dose so that someone else who's already had one dose (and therefore most of the protection) can get a second? Everyone on the JCVI priority list is at risk from this nasty virus, and vaccines just can't be produced at an unlimited rate.

It has been a very difficult year for us all and everyone, including me, is desperate to return to seeing the people we love. The vaccine has brought considerable hope and we are in the final furlough of the pandemic but for now, vaccinated or not, we still have to follow the guidance for a bit longer.