

Nagorno-Karabakh: UK to provide food and medicine to people affected by the conflict

Thousands of people affected by the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict will receive urgent medical supplies, food and safer shelters from a new UK aid package, announced today by the Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab.

The conflict escalated on 27 September. Since then, tens of thousands of people have been forced to flee their homes, with growing numbers of civilian casualties and damage to homes and vital infrastructure.

Now much-needed medical supplies, including dressing kits and bandages, will be provided for civilians caught up in the crisis through a new £1 million UK aid package, in response to an appeal by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). People injured in the fighting, including children caught in the crossfire, will receive life-saving treatment at health facilities or from emergency responders supported by the ICRC.

Many of those affected have limited access to food and other essentials, and UK support will provide blankets, food parcels and basic hygiene items to vulnerable communities near to the fighting.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

Today's UK aid package will help deliver vital food, medicine and urgent healthcare to those affected by the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. We continue to urge both sides to engage with the OSCE Minsk group and seek a peaceful, negotiated, political solution which the people of the region so desperately need.

ICRC Regional Director for EURASIA, Martin Schuepp said:

The ICRC is most grateful to the UK for its contribution to the ICRC's response in the region. The high-quality funding the ICRC receives from its donors, including the UK, enables the ICRC to deliver neutral, impartial and independent action to those affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence.

UK support will also help to improve the quality of often overcrowded shelters by installing or improving water tanks and toilets. It will also ensure the shelters are suitably equipped to keep warm as the region's bitter winter approaches.

The UK, along with Canada, [has repeatedly called](#) for both sides to work

towards a peaceful, political resolution to the conflict through the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's (OSCE) Minsk process and has expressed its full support for the work of the Minsk Group.

Background

- The new funding is in addition to our core funding to ICRC. In recent years, the UK has been the second largest donor globally to the ICRC, helping them to respond quickly to situations of armed conflict.
- The ICRC is an independent, neutral organisation ensuring humanitarian protection and assistance for victims of armed conflict and other situations of violence.

Government review to boost the provision of toilets for women and men

Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick has today (31 October 2020) launched a review to ensure better provision of toilets for women and men.

Evidence shows that increasing numbers of publicly accessible toilets are being converted into 'gender neutral' facilities, causing problems for women and the elderly in particular.

The review will also look at signage, which should be clearer and use sex-specific language, to avoid confusion.

Women often have to face excessive queues for toilets or don't have access to appropriate facilities that meet their needs when out. This can mean that women are reluctant to go out or take trips that many take for granted, and are less likely to feel comfortable using mixed-sex facilities.

Over recent years there has also been a trend towards replacing female only facilities with 'gender neutral' toilets – something that has caused concern and is against legislation where public authorities have a duty to provide safe spaces for women in lavatories in buildings. This was illustrated last year by the controversy over the abolition of toilets for women in the Old Vic theatre in London.

The [technical review](#), led by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, aims to address this by considering the ratio of female toilets needed versus the number for men, given the need for women to always use cubicles, and will address misconceptions that removing sex-specific toilets are a requirement of equality legislation.

This is already the case for regulations and guidance for the provision of toilets in schools, where separate provision of male and female toilets is required.

It would also take into account the needs of all members of the community, to ensure there is a fair provision of accessible and unisex toilets for the disabled and families with children. Ahead of providing clearer guidance to all those operating public toilets in England.

Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick said:

The review that I have launched today will help women be assured of the necessary provision of toilets. This is a necessity, and I have listened to the concerns raised by many women and the elderly in relation to this issue.

I have launched a review to establish the best way to deliver this as a priority and make sure that women can expect a sense of dignity, security and safety when using facilities. We want to maintain safeguards that protect women and the proper provision of separate toilets, which has long been a regulatory requirement, should be retained and improved.

The government has already taken a number of steps recently to increase provision of 'Changing Places' toilets for disabled people, as well as encouraging councils to open up public toilets following the COVID lockdown and increasing business rate relief for public toilets.

There needs to be a public service provision for everyone in our community, and this review will help to deliver on that objective.

The review will look to gather views from all those interested as well as calling on the technical knowledge of industry experts.

This is separate to the recent government consultation aimed at increasing provision of Changing Places toilets to better support those providing care to severely disabled people.

When the review is concluded, alongside providing clearer guidance the government will also consider updating building regulations or building standards to specify the number of toilets provided for each sex.

[Personalised career support for](#)

hundreds of military spouses

- the new scheme will provide advice from specially trained career coaches
- support partners from all experience and skill levels to fulfil career aspirations
- follow the introduction of flexible working, wraparound childcare and £200-million to modernise accommodation

Hundreds of spouses and partners of UK Armed Forces personnel will receive personalised career support as part of a targeted training scheme, the Minister for Defence People and Veterans Johnny Mercer announced today (Saturday 31 October).

With a week to go until the nation commemorates Remembrance Day, the programme marks an important milestone in the government's ongoing commitment to supporting military families and making the armed forces a more modern and inclusive employer.

The pilot for the scheme, known as the Partner Career Support Programme (PCSP), launches tomorrow and will offer bespoke advice from specially trained career coaches and expert guidance on how to build a strong CV.

The pilot, which will run for 6 months and will initially be open to 750 partners, will host online self-assessment tests to help partners identify their key strengths and skills.

This follows the recent introduction of flexible working, free breakfast and after-school childcare, extended Help to Buy access and £200-million of new funding to modernise accommodation as part of the government's ambitions to continue to attract and retain talented personnel.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Johnny Mercer said:

As the nation gets ready to commemorate Remembrance Day, we rightly use this time of year to show our gratitude to the armed forces and their families for the sacrifices they make.

We know that service life can bring travel and interrupt a partners' job prospects, which is why it is vitally important we support and nurture their professional development.

Spouses are at the core of our military community, and this scheme will not only give them the tools they need to find the right role but give them a confidence boost as well.

The PCSP aims to help people from a wide range of backgrounds and levels, from the less experienced to those already working in highly skilled roles. The programme will help partners learn more about which jobs they're most suitable for and get a better idea of the skills, knowledge and experience to

fulfil their career aspirations.

To suit the demands of service life, the programme will take place entirely online, giving participants the flexibility to work around their other commitments.

The programme will be delivered by the Career Transition Partnership which provides career support and advice to UK Armed Forces personnel and Service leavers.

Read more about the Career Transition Partnership at <https://www.ctp.org.uk/>.

Millions of jobs will continue to be supported as Job Support Scheme launches

- combined with the Job Retention Bonus (JRB), the Job Support Scheme (JSS) will cover at least 95% of the total employment costs for average previously furloughed employee until February
- when factoring in the JRB analysis shows employers will receive the full employment costs of around half of people on JSS Open – which is available to businesses across all parts of the UK from Sunday
- data shows the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) has successfully protected jobs – with 90% of people returning to the same job after being furloughed

It comes as analysis reveals the generosity of the government's income support schemes – with many firms receiving the full employment costs of staff.

Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, said:

I'm pleased that the IMF this week called our response to the pandemic one of the best examples of coordinated action globally – the furlough scheme has been central to that, supporting 9.6 million jobs through some of the most challenging economic times.

But it's right that as we move towards a more targeted approach to tackle the virus, our support becomes more targeted too.

The Jobs Support Scheme will continue to protect jobs throughout the difficult months ahead and is part of our comprehensive Plan for Jobs.

The JSS scheme launches on Sunday and is designed to support businesses across the whole of the UK who are either legally required to close or facing lower demand over the winter months. Under the JSS Open part of the scheme, which was made more generous last week, the government contributes 62% towards the wages of staff for the hours they do not work, whilst the employers pay just 5% plus NICS and pensions contributions. Employees receive a minimum of 73% of their wages.

Under JSS Closed, which is for businesses legally required to close due to coronavirus restrictions, the government will pay two thirds of each employees' salary with employers just covering NICs and pension contributions, a very small proportion of overall employment costs.

Firms who retain staff that have previously been furloughed until the end of January will also receive a £1,000 per eligible employee payment under the JRB.

Taken together, the two schemes (JSS0 and JRB) will cover 95% of the employment costs of the average previously furloughed employee until the end of January. For those earning less than £1,100 per month the JRB offsets all the employer costs of the JSS Open— meaning businesses will not have to make any contributions. Under the original CJRS around half of furloughed workers had earnings below this level.

For many lower earning employees on Universal Credit (UC), the combined impact of the support of the JSS and UC will mean they could receive around 90% of their normal net income (whilst working only 20% of the hours).

The CJRS closes on Saturday 31 October ahead of the JSS launch on Sunday 1 November. As the scheme draws to a close new data published by HMRC shows that during the scheme's eight month life it has protected 9.6 million jobs through some of the most challenging economic times the country has ever faced – with 90% of those coming off furlough by August returning to the same job.

The JSS and JRB are just one part of our generous package of measures, that includes the extended business grants and Self-Employed Income Support Schemes announced last week, which will continue to support businesses and livelihoods across the country over the winter months.

Further information

- there is no gap in support between the CJRS and JSS
- the deadline for submitting CJRS claims is 30 November
- the JSS launches on 1 November, and employers can submit claims directly to HMRC from December 2020
- [HMRC stats](#) show that 90% of those coming off furlough before August returned to the same job
- for more information, see the [Covid-19 Financial Support Package: Fact Sheet](#) (PDF, 189KB, 10 pages)

Case studies

Example 1 – Job Support Scheme Open

- Andrew normally works 5 days a week and earns £1400 a month, working in at a restaurant in the hospitality sector. His company is suffering reduced sales due to coronavirus. Rather than making Andrew redundant, the company puts Andrew on the Job Support Scheme, working 20% of his usual hours.
- His employer pays Andrew £280 a month for these hours.
- And for the time he is not working (80%), he will get 66.67% of his pay for that time. His total wage package is 73%, equal to £1,027. The government will give a grant worth £691 (61.67% of hours not worked) to Andrew's employer to support them in keeping Andrew's job, and his employer will pay a further £56 for hours not worked (5% of wages).
- In addition, the employer will cover the Employer NICs and autoenrollment pension contribution on the payment (£56).
- His employer may also be eligible for the Job Retention Bonus worth £1,000, this would cover 94.6% of employers total costs for retaining Andrew on the JSS between November and January.
- For many lower earning employees on Universal Credit (UC), the combined impact of the support of the JSS and UC will mean they could receive around 90% of their normal net income (whilst working only 20% of the hours).

Example 2 – Job Support Scheme Open

- Elena normally works part-time and earns £1,100 a month. Her company is suffering reduced sales due to coronavirus. Rather than making Elena redundant, the company puts Elena on the Job Support Scheme, working 20% of her usual hours.
- Her employer pays Elena £220 a month for these hours.
- And for the time she is not working (80%), she will get 66.67% of her pay for that time. Her total wage package is 73%, equal to £807.
- The government will give a grant worth £543 (61.67% of hours not worked) to Elena's employer to support them in keeping Elena's job, and her employer will pay a further £44 for hours not worked (5% of wages).
- In addition, the employer will cover the Employer NICs and autoenrollment pension contribution on the payment (£19).
- Her employer may also be eligible for the Job Retention Bonus worth £1,000, this would cover over 100% of employers total costs for retaining Elena on the JSS between November and January.
- For many lower earning employees on Universal Credit (UC), the combined impact of the support of the JSS and UC will mean they could receive around 90% of their normal net income (whilst working only 20% of the hours).

Example 3 – Job Support Scheme Closed

- Charlie normally earns £1,400 a month and his company needs to close due to coronavirus. Rather than making Charlie redundant, the company puts Charlie on the Job Support Scheme Closed.

- The government will give a grant worth 66.67% of Charlie's pay to his employer to support them in keeping Charlie's job.
- That means for the time he is not working, he will get 66.67% of his pay. His total wage package is equal to £933.
- The employer will cover the Employer NICs and autoenrollment pension contribution on the payment.
- For many lower earning employees on Universal Credit (UC), the combined impact of the support of the JSS and UC will mean they could receive around 90% of their normal net income (whilst working only 20% of the hours).

Example 4 – Job Support Scheme Closed

- Dalia normally earns £1,100 a month part-time and her company needs to close due to coronavirus. Rather than making Dalia redundant, the company puts Dalia on the Job Support Scheme Closed.
- The government will give a grant worth 66.67% of Dalia's pay to her employer to support them in keeping Dalia's job.
- That means for the time she is not working, she will get 66.67% of her pay. Her total wage package is equal to £733.
- The employer will cover the Employer NICs and autoenrollment pension contribution on the payment.
- For many lower earning employees on Universal Credit (UC), the combined impact of the support of the JSS and UC will mean they could receive around 90% of their normal net income (whilst working only 20% of the hours).

Committing to safeguarding progress made on the Women, Peace and Security agenda

Mr President,

As proud champions of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, the United Kingdom will not accept any weakening of the hard-fought progress made over the last 20 years.

We have expressed repeatedly our conviction that the WPS normative framework is robust. As we heard from the compelling briefers in the Open Debate yesterday, what remains is for us to address the implementation gap and take action. There is no need for any additional resolution unless it serves to add distinct value to the acquis. Despite our reservations on the proposal for a resolution, we have remained constructive and engaged throughout the process.

We collaborated readily, compromising on some of our own WPS priorities in order to reach a text that, at a minimum, did not set back the agenda. We voiced our concerns about the draft resolution throughout the negotiations, consistently requesting recently agreed language in efforts to maintain the integrity of the normative framework. Our repeated calls for the inclusion of relevant language on women's human rights and the protection of civil society were regrettably not met. We share the widely held view that this text lacks sufficient language on implementation and fails to reflect core components of the framework, such as the essential rights-based approach and the structural barriers to gender equality.

For these reasons, the UK abstained on this resolution, which clearly lacked the support of a broad range of Council members and failed to represent a basis for achieving consensus. The adoption of this text would have undermined the significant achievements made on this critical agenda and the enduring efforts of so many women's rights activists. It is our role as Members of the Security Council not only to listen to the voices of a diverse range of women, but also to stand up for their rights and enshrine their inclusion and participation at all levels.

The UK will remain resolutely committed to safeguarding progress made on the WPS agenda and advancing WPS substantively alongside Member States, UN agencies and civil society. Women's human rights are the concern of all. The WPS agenda is the result of women's actions and belongs to them. It is now for the Council to take women's lead and act. Women play a central role in delivering lasting peace and security.