

Green recovery at the heart of this year's Bees' Needs Week

The Defra-coordinated annual Bees' Needs Week got underway today (Monday 13 July) with an online launch to highlight what everyone can be doing at home to care for pollinators.

Bees and other pollinators play a crucial role in food production and agriculture – they contribute the equivalent of more than £500 million a year to UK agriculture and food production, by improving crop quality and quantity – and are also vital to our wider, natural ecosystems.

The Coronavirus pandemic has provided an opportunity for being in nature, according to [Natural England's People and Nature Survey for England](#), 60% of adults in England said that they had spent time outside in green and natural spaces in the previous two weeks.

These spaces are vital homes for our insect pollinators, of which there are thousands of species in the UK, including moths and butterflies as well as our beloved honeybees, bumblebees and many solitary bees. But their populations are under threat from risks such as habitat loss and fragmentation, invasive species, pests and disease, climate change and pesticide use.

Through the [National Pollinator strategy](#), we are working with farmers, business and conservation organisations to provide pollinator habitat on farmland, in urban areas and in gardens.

Bees' Needs Week 2020 will see Defra and many other organisations working together to encourage everyone who can to do simple things at home – like growing more flowers and cutting grass less often – to help our precious pollinators thrive, and to engage further with nature through citizen science initiatives such as the [Pollinator Monitoring Scheme's \(PoMS\)](#) insect counts.

Defra Minister for pollinators, Rebecca Pow, said:

This year, we have seen an increased appreciation for nature in England in response to the Coronavirus pandemic with the nation building back greener.

Bees' Needs Week is about celebrating the fact that everyone can get involved by leaving patches of garden to grow wild, growing more flowers, cutting grass less, not disturbing insect nests, and carefully considering how we use pesticides.

Our ambitious [Environment](#) and [Agriculture Bills](#) will enable us to enhance and protect our precious natural environment and diverse ecosystems, improving habitats for pollinators, for years to come.

Natural England Chair, Tony Juniper, said:

Bees maybe small, but they have a huge impact on how our world works. These wonderful insects are a kind of natural glue, holding the environment together by moving pollen between plants, enabling whole systems to be sustained and replenished. Without bees, we could not live.

Although overall the status of pollinators has declined, the good news is that everyone can do something to help. Many of us have been more connected with Nature during the pandemic lockdown and I very much hope that this newly-found reverence for our environment can be harnessed to ensure pollinators' habitats, populations and products are protected for the future.

Whether you are a farmer, a gardener, or a land manager, there is something you can do to help support our valuable insect pollinators.

Here are five simple actions you can take to help pollinators and make sure their populations are sustained:

1. Grow more flowers, shrubs and trees
2. Let your garden grow wild
3. Cut your grass less often
4. Don't disturb insect nest and hibernation spots
5. Think carefully about whether to use pesticides

Another way people can help is by monitoring your local bee and pollinator populations. Spend 10 minutes in the sun to count insects for the UK's Pollinator Monitoring Scheme (PoMS), and get involved on social media using #beesneeds.

[Consultation launched on doubling maximum sentence for assaulting an emergency worker](#)

- Consultation seeks views on increasing maximum penalty from 12 months to two years in prison
- Ministers deliver on manifesto commitment to consult on tougher sentences
- Maximum sentence could be doubled for the second time in two years

In 2018 this Government changed the law (Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act 2018) so that anyone found guilty of assaulting a police officer, firefighter, prison officer or paramedic faced a maximum of 12 months in prison. Judges must also consider tougher sentences for more serious offences – such as GBH or sexual assault – if the victim was an emergency worker.

Now the Government is seeking views from stakeholders, including representative bodies from the emergency services and the judiciary, on whether the maximum penalty should be doubled to two years behind bars.

It delivers on a manifesto commitment to consult on tougher sentences, with ministers determined to recognise the debt of gratitude the public feels towards our emergency workers – for the courage, commitment and dedication they show every day in carrying out their duties, including during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Justice Secretary & Lord Chancellor, Rt Hon Robert Buckland QC MP, said:

Being punched, kicked or spat at should never be part of the job for our valiant emergency workers who put their lives on the line to keep the public safe.

Now more than ever they must be able to do their extraordinary work without the fear of being attacked or assaulted, which is why we're determined to look at how our laws can protect them further.

We will continue to do everything in our power to protect our police, prison officers, firefighters and paramedics – and ensure those who seek to harm them feel the full force of the law.

Home Secretary, Rt Hon Priti Patel MP, said:

Our police officers, firefighters and other emergency workers go above and beyond every single day – running towards danger to protect us all.

They are our frontline heroes who put their lives on the line every single day to keep us safe, and yet some despicable individuals still think it's acceptable to attack, cough or spit at these courageous public servants.

This consultation sends a clear and simple message to the vile thugs who assault our emergency workers – you will not get away with such appalling behaviour and you will be subject to the force of the law.

The consultation will run for four weeks and, depending on the response to the consultation, legislation could be brought forward – which would see the maximum sentence for assaulting an emergency worker doubled for the second time in two years.

Assault can cover acts such as a push, shove or being spat at. When an emergency worker is seriously injured, prosecutions will take place under more serious offences such as ABH, GBH, or attempted murder that have far longer sentences.

Notes to Editors:

- The Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act modified the offence of common assault or battery where it is committed against emergency workers acting in the course of their functions, with a maximum penalty of 12 months imprisonment. This doubled the maximum penalty for common assault from 6 to 12 months for those who assault emergency workers, including police, prison staff, custody officers, fire service personnel, search and rescue workers and frontline health workers.
 - The Assaults on Emergency Workers (Offences) Act also created a statutory aggravating factor. This means that when a person is convicted of a range of offences including sexual assault, assault occasioning actual bodily harm (ABH), assault occasioning grievous bodily harm (GBH) and manslaughter, the judge must consider the fact that the offence was committed against an emergency worker as an aggravating factor meriting an increase in the sentence within the maximum allowed for the particular offence.
 - In line with the manifesto commitment, this consultation, which will run for around four weeks, will focus on whether the maximum penalty for this offence should be increased from 12 months to 2 years.
 - In 2019, more than 11,000 people were prosecuted for assaulting an emergency worker, with a quarter of those found guilty receiving a suspended sentence or immediate custody.
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Priti Patel and new French Interior Minister agree action on Channel crossings

Press release

Agreement reached to create an intelligence cell to crack down on gangs facilitating illegal crossings and people smuggling



Priti Patel met the new French Interior Minister Gérald Darmanin today (Sunday 12 July) to discuss how the French and UK governments can do more to tackle illegally-facilitated Channel crossings by small boats.

It was the newly appointed French Interior Minister's first meeting with an international counterpart. The two ministers reiterated their determination to stop the crossings and bring the ruthless criminal gangs behind them to justice.

The Home Secretary and M Darmanin reaffirmed their shared commitment to returning boats in the Channel to France, rather than allowing them to reach the UK.

Through a Declaration of Intent, it was agreed that a Franco-British Operational Research Unit to combat migrant smuggling will be established.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

I have been in France today seeing first-hand the significant work undertaken on that side of the Channel to address the unacceptably high levels of small boats, alongside the efforts of Border Force and the National Crime Agency in the UK.

But despite all of the action taken by law enforcement to date – intercepting the boats, making arrests, returning people back to

France and putting the criminals responsible behind bars – the numbers continue to increase.

This simply cannot be allowed to go on. Today, I have signed an agreement with the French to create a joint intelligence cell which will crack down on the gangs behind this vile people-smuggling operation and impressed on my French counterpart the need to stop these illegal crossings for the benefit of both our countries. This is the start of a new operational approach with the newly appointed French Interior Minister.

The new unit will collate, centralise and analyse operational intelligence to prevent crossings from taking place and to dismantle the gangs behind them.

It will be staffed by French and UK officers and will feed into the already established teams working tirelessly to end the illegally-facilitated crossings.

Both the Home Secretary and M Darmanin stressed that migrants should not risk their lives to reach the UK, given France is a safe country with a well-run asylum system.

The Home Secretary also paid tribute to the work of law enforcement agencies on both sides of the Channel. In 2019 UK Immigration Enforcement made 418 arrests, leading to 203 convictions for a total of 437 years. Of these 259 arrests and 101 convictions were for people smuggling.

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£705 million investment for GB-EU border

- Unprecedented £705 million investment for new infrastructure, jobs and technology at GB-EU border
- This will include £470 million to build infrastructure such as border control posts, and allocating £235m for IT systems and staffing, including 500 more Border Force personnel to ensure our borders are safe and secure and that the UK is ready to take full advantage of its newly sovereign status

Today (Sunday 12 July) the government has announced an £705 million funding package in 20/21 for border infrastructure, jobs and technology to ensure GB border systems are fully operational when the UK takes back control of its border after the end of the transition period.

The new funding will include up to £470 million to build the port and inland infrastructure needed to ensure compliance with new customs procedures and controls, and take the UK's border facilities to the next level. The government is taking exceptional action to build new border infrastructure inland where there is no space at ports. Where ports have space to build on site they will get one-off financial support to ensure the right infrastructure is in place.

The government has been intensively engaging with industry in recent months to ensure that the processes we introduce and the infrastructure we develop is fit for purpose, and that they are ready to manage changes and capitalise on opportunities at the end of the transition period.

Today's announcement also includes a significant £235 million investment in staffing and IT systems. This includes:

- £10 million to recruit around 500 more Border Force personnel and £20 million for new equipment so they can continue to keep our country safe and secure;
- More than £100 million to develop HMRC systems to reduce the burden on traders, alongside additional investment in technology to ensure that new controls can be fully implemented in the "Roll On, Roll Off" environment;
- £15 million to build new data infrastructure to enhance border management and flow helping us on our way to the world's most effective border by 2025 .

This package is on top of the £84 million already provided in grants to ensure there is sufficient capacity in the customs intermediary sector to support traders. This funding will support intermediaries through increased recruitment, training, and by supplying IT equipment to help handle customs declarations.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Michael Gove said:

We are taking back control of our borders, and leaving the single market and the customs union at the end of this year bringing both changes and significant opportunities for which we all need to prepare. That is why we are announcing this major package of investment today.

With or without further agreement with the EU, this £705 million will ensure that the necessary infrastructure, tech and border personnel are in place so that our traders and the border industry are able to manage the changes and seize the opportunities as we lay the foundations for the world's most effective and secure border.

On 1 January 2021 the transition period with the European Union will end and the UK will leave the single market and customs union, regardless of the agreement the UK reaches with the European Union on its future trade relationship. The government has been working closely with industry to help them prepare for these changes and will shortly be publishing the Border Operating Model setting out in detail how the GB-EU border will operate.

This major funding package comes ahead of the launch of a new public information campaign to ensure the UK is ready to seize global opportunities at the end of the transition period. As part of this campaign, detailed guidance will be given to traders and hauliers explaining what they may need to do to prepare for the end of the transition period.

[Outside the EU, a bright future awaits Britain](#)

Leaving the European Union is, I've often argued, a bit like moving house. Instead of being lodgers under someone else's roof we are choosing a new place in the world where we're in control. Four years after we made the decision to leave the EU, the reasons for moving are stronger than ever. Taking back control of our economy means we can put in place the right measures for our Covid recovery.

Taking back control of the money we send to Brussels means we can spend it on our priorities: investing in the NHS, spreading opportunity more equally across the UK and strengthening our Union. We can build a trading relationship with our European neighbours that serves all our interests and develop new economic partnerships across the world.

The deal the Prime Minister struck last year, and which the country backed in the general election, ensured we left the EU in January and means we can look forward with confidence to the end of the transition period on December 31. But, just like a house move, we need to make sure all the practical arrangements for our new future are in place.

Everyone has their part to play, starting with the government.

That's why on Sunday we're investing £705 million to make sure our borders

are ready for full independence. We're investing in new infrastructure, more jobs and better technology to help goods move smoothly, make our country more secure and our citizens safer. The money will ensure that Great Britain's new borders will be ready when the UK takes back control on January 1 2021, and will also lay the foundations for us to build the world's most effective border by 2025.

Modernising our border means we can introduce a migration policy that ensures we're open to the world's best talent. A new points-based immigration system will ensure we can attract the scientists, innovators and entrepreneurs who can power future economic growth. It will also help us ensure our NHS has the very best professionals from across the world working in our hospitals. And the new technology we're introducing will allow us to monitor with far greater precision exactly who, and what, is coming in and out of the country, enabling us to deal more effectively with organised crime and other security threats.

Alongside the investment we are making in infrastructure we're also launching a major new public information campaign, "The UK's new start: let's get going" to give everyone the facts we need to be ready for January 1 2021. Whether you're the managing director of a multinational conglomerate or a family business; a UK citizen resident in the EU or planning to work abroad, the new campaign will clearly set out the steps that will help this big change go as smoothly as possible.

A straightforward checker tool at gov.uk/transition will quickly identify the specific steps any business or individual needs to take to be ready, and will allow companies and citizens to sign up for bespoke updates. Taking these steps will equip everyone for this new chapter in our country's story.

Helping businesses adjust to life outside the EU Customs Union will enable them to more easily access the new opportunities being an independent trading nation will bring, such as those presented by trade deals with the Japan, Australia, New Zealand and other growing Pacific economies as well as deeper ties with North America and the developing world.

We're negotiating hard, of course, to get the best possible trading relationship with our neighbours in the EU but we won't back down on the essential principles the country voted for when we chose to leave. We won't accept control of our laws by the EU or allow our new-found independence to be compromised. Whatever the nature of our trading relationship with the EU we'll be outside the single market and the customs union – and that means the preparations for new export arrangements and new border processes will be needed whatever the negotiations bring.

These have been challenging times for our country, but, as the Chancellor reminded us this week, government can help lay the foundations for recovery and future growth. That's what we're doing this week as we prepare for our new life fully outside the EU. We're building the border that allows us to take back control. Let's get going.