

# Government ministers meet to address summer travel disruption

As the UK prepares for another busy weekend of travel, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Kit Malthouse today chaired a meeting of Ministers from across Government to update on how they are supporting industry and port and airport operators to ease potential disruption and ensure families can get away on their holidays, from working with the Port of Dover and French Government to working with Highways England on managing traffic.

The meeting included Ministers from the Department for Transport, Home Office, Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office.

Ministers were also joined by senior officials from UK Border Force, the National Police Coordination Centre and the Kent Resilience Forum, which managed the local impact of the weekend's issues at Dover and Folkestone.

Ministers also discussed how recent measures, such as changing regulations on airport slots rules to help airlines make sensible decisions about schedules, avoid last-minute cancellations and provide passengers with more certainty.

With Birmingham's Commonwealth Games beginning on Thursday, and RMT rail workers on strike on Wednesday, Ministers further discussed preparations being put in place to provide alternative transport and keep the country moving.

Measures include putting extra capacity on lines that are running and laying on coaches for sports fans and spectators.

The Home Office also updated on recent improvements in passport application processing ahead of the big summer getaway. Minister Foster has been meeting with Passport Office seniors on a fortnightly basis to drive forward work to step up processing times. Hundreds of extra staff are being brought in to help increase capacity, and the Passport Office are now processing around a million applications each month, with 97.7% of these being processed within 10 weeks.

## **Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Kit Malthouse said:**

We want to make sure families get away on their holidays smoothly and hauliers aren't delayed unnecessarily.

Ahead of another busy weekend of travel, today I chaired a GRIP meeting with Ministers from across Government, joined by senior officials from UK Border Force, the National Police Coordination Centre and the Kent Resilience Forum.

This was to confirm that work is underway to prevent the scenes of

disruption that we saw last weekend, and that we are in daily contact with the Port of Dover and French Government to work together to remove any grit from the system.

I want to use these GRIP meetings – to coordinate and galvanise Government Resilience, Implementation and Preparedness for potential issues facing the country.

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## [Palestinians and Israelis deserve equal measures of peace, security and prosperity](#)

Thank you, President. And, I thank also Deputy Special Coordinator Hastings for her briefing. I'd also like to thank the United States for the update. We were pleased to see President Biden's visit to Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories this month, and the announcement of US funding for East Jerusalem hospitals and UNRWA.

We welcome Israel's commitment during this visit to restart the Joint Economic Committee and accelerate transition to 4G in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. These are important steps that have the potential to bolster the Palestinian economy. We echo President Biden's calls for urgent progress in both cases, and the UK stands ready to provide support.

Recent direct discussions between Prime Minister Lapid, President Herzog and Defence Minister Gantz, and President Abbas and other PA leaders, are similarly welcome. Such cooperation and dialogue are essential to tackling shared challenges.

However, the situation on the ground remains fragile. We note, with concern, UN OHCHR's report on the increase in fatalities. In the first six months of 2022, 60 Palestinians were killed by Israeli security forces during law enforcement operations in the West Bank. In the same period, 19 Israelis were killed in terror attacks. Terrorist attacks against civilians are abhorrent and unacceptable. We call on all parties to de-escalate tensions and stop the continued loss of life.

We welcome US engagement with Israel and the Palestinian Authority to seek the truth surrounding Shireen Abu Aqleh's death, and we now urge accountability for those responsible.

We continue to be deeply concerned about the imminent risk of forcible transfer of over 1000 Palestinians at Masafer Yatta and recent detention of staff of humanitarian organisations seeking to aid the community.

This month we saw the disbandment of the community at Ras al Tin, following the demolition of their homes and settler attacks. We urge Israel to abide by its obligations under international law to ensure the residents of Masafer Yatta, and other communities in Area C, are protected, that humanitarian access is permitted and to refrain from further evictions and demolitions.

We also call on Israel to halt plans to progress 1900 settlement units in East Jerusalem on 25 July. Settlements are illegal under international law and threaten the physical viability of a two-state solution.

The UK believes that Palestinians and Israelis deserve equal measures of peace, security and prosperity. A negotiated settlement leading to a safe and secure Israel, living alongside a viable and sovereign Palestinian state, remains the best means of achieving that outcome.

Thank you, President.

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## [PM remarks at the Sir Winston Churchill Leadership Award ceremony: 26 July 2022](#)

President Zelenskyy,

Your Excellency Ambassador Prystaiko,

ladies and gentlemen, it's great to see you here today.

It was at 4 o'clock on the morning of 24th February 2022 that you called me Volodymyr to say that the incredible had happened, that insanity had broken out, and Russian tanks were surging across the frontier of a sovereign independent country in Europe and cruise missiles were exploding all over Ukraine.

And in that moment of supreme crisis, you faced a test of leadership that was, in its way, as severe as Churchill's challenge in 1940.

As the Russians launched their lightning assault on Kyiv, you knew that you were at the top of their target list, and you knew that squads of killers were hunting for you.

And you could have left Kyiv, you could have said – and it would have been hard to contradict you – that the survival of the Ukrainian state required the survival of the President.

But of course Volodymyr you did none of those things: you chose to stay in Kyiv, among the Ukrainian people, just as Churchill stayed in London in

1940.

And when one world leader offered you a way out, you replied “I need ammunition, not a ride” and I think Churchill would have cheered – and he would probably have wept too – because he was often moved to tears at the sheer moral and physical courage you showed in those grim weeks.

Now I would like to think that when Ukraine’s tragedy triggered a global outpouring of support, and when dozens of countries came forward to supply your heroic armed forces with weapons, and scores of nations imposed sanctions on Russia, and almost three quarters of the entire membership of the United Nations voted to condemn the invasion, I would like to think this was an inevitable reaction, because never in my lifetime in international affairs has there been a clearer case of right against wrong.

But the truth is that it wasn’t inevitable, that reaction wasn’t inevitable, and the global wave of solidarity for Ukraine was, in large measure generated by your own personal articulation of the cause.

Your defiance, your dignity, your unfailing good humour has moved millions, and as you stand against barbarism, you’ve become a symbol of the heroism of the Ukrainian people.

You’ve addressed so many parliaments that I’ve lost count and you brought both sides of the House of Commons to their feet, something that Churchill would surely have envied, and I can imagine his spirit walking with you, silently urging you on, encouraging you through every ordeal, jabbing the way ahead with his walking stick and perhaps marvelling at your superb indifference to physical danger, something that he himself understood.

And like Churchill you’ve understood that you are not yourself the lion, the Ukrainian people are the lion, but you have been called upon to give the roar, the roar of freedom against tyranny, good against evil, of light against darkness.

And you have delivered that roar magnificently and that’s why it was such a huge stroke of good fortune that you should have been in office at this time of crisis for Ukraine and the world.

And inspired by your leadership, I know not just that Ukraine can win but Ukraine will win, and when that day comes, as it will, Ukraine will rise and take its place, as a free sovereign and independent nation.

Thank you Volodymyr for everything you have done and Slava Ukraini.

Our physical separation notwithstanding, it gives me great pleasure Volodymyr to present you with this award.

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# PM call with Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid: 26 July 2022

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid.



The Prime Minister spoke to Israeli Prime Minister Yair Lapid this afternoon.

He began by congratulating Prime Minister Lapid on his appointment as Prime Minister earlier this month. Prime Minister Lapid thanked the Prime Minister for his ongoing efforts to support the UK-Israel relationship, an international partnership that he said had made enormous progress during the Prime Minister's tenure.

The leaders agreed that ongoing work, including the recent announcement that the UK and Israel have begun negotiations on a new Free Trade Agreement, will take the cooperation between our countries to new heights. The Prime Minister expressed his confidence that the UK-Israel relationship will continue to be of huge importance to his successor.

On the brutality in Ukraine, the leaders both underscored their support for the Ukrainian people. The Prime Minister welcomed Israel's humanitarian efforts in Ukraine, including their provision of field hospitals. He stressed the need for all countries to continue to put pressure on Putin's regime, including through sanctions.

The Prime Minister and Prime Minister Lapid also discussed Iran and agreed on the need to prevent Iran acquiring a nuclear weapon. The Prime Minister stressed that the UK is continuing to encourage Iran to take the deal currently on the table and come back into compliance with the JCPOA nuclear deal.

The Prime Minister concluded the call by saying he will always be a big friend and supporter of both Israel and Prime Minister Lapid.

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# Environment Agency convenes National Drought Group

People across the country have been urged to use water wisely to protect water supplies and the environment during the current period of prolonged dry weather.

Today (Tuesday 26 July) the Environment Agency convened the [National Drought Group](#), made up of senior decision makers from Environment Agency, government, water companies, Water UK, the NFU and environmental protection groups including the Angling Trust and Rivers Trust. The group discussed the current situation and agreed actions to protect water resources and the environment in the UK in the weeks ahead.

Following Tuesday's meeting, the National Drought Group's members agreed to continue to work closely together to monitor and manage the current situation, including convening the National Drought Group's water supply and communications sub-groups.

Harvey Bradshaw, Environment Agency executive director for the environment and chair of the NDG, said:

While last week's extreme high temperatures are now behind us and there are currently no plans for restrictions on essential water use, we can all do our bit by reducing unnecessary water consumption and following advice from our water company to ensure this remains the case whilst our rivers are exceptionally low.

We are working very closely with water companies, farmers and other water users to manage the current situation. Today's meeting was an important step in agreeing joint actions to protect our water resources with further dry weather forecasted for August, including ever-closer working to monitor and manage water supplies and the environment.

Environment Agency teams are doing brilliant work across the country monitoring river levels and responding to environmental incidents, as well as enacting the early stages of our drought plans in many parts of England to protect people's access to water and preserve the environment.

Stuart Colville, Water UK Director of Policy, said

Ongoing warm weather in much of the country follows the driest winter and spring since the 1970s.

Water companies have detailed plans in place to manage water resources for customers and the environment, and are doing everything they can, including working closely with government and regulators, to minimise the need for any restrictions and ensure rivers continue to flow.

As we continue to see extremely high demand, we are urging everyone to carefully consider the amount they are using given the unprecedented conditions. The water industry is running a national water saving campaign called Water's Worth Saving that provides the public with helpful hints and tips on how to do their bit with water use in the home and garden.

## **Current situation**

Regulators and water companies are working together closely to manage water levels and take action where needed, including activating different levels of well-established dry weather plans in the most affected areas.

Most of England has moved into 'Prolonged Dry Weather' status – meaning the EA is now taking precautionary actions to mitigate impacts as hydrological conditions deteriorate and enhancing its monitoring and protection of water resources, along with the water companies.

Nowhere in England is currently considered to be 'in drought' and most water companies are maintaining good reservoir storage for summer demand. If further measures are required, temporary use bans (more commonly known as hosepipe bans) will be determined by individual water companies and drought permits and drought orders by the Environment Agency and Defra respectively.

However, recent abnormally high temperatures have exacerbated conditions resulting from lower-than-normal rainfall so far this year in many parts of England. With the Met Office forecasting potentially several more dry weeks ahead, particularly in the South and East of the country, the EA and water companies are now enacting the early stages of their well-rehearsed and publicly available drought plans and calling on everyone to do their bit in managing water use.

This will become even more vital in the future as we continue to adapt to a changing climate. Projections show that, by 2050, some rivers could have between 50 and 80 percent less water during the summer and summer temperatures are set to be up to 7.4 degrees hotter.

The EA takes a broad range of measures to manage drought risk, with many already in action. These include:

- Managing abstraction licences to balance the needs of users and our natural environment;
- Helping those areas which are the worst affected by prolonged dry weather by operating water transfer schemes that allow rivers to be artificially maintained;

- Applying for Drought orders in order to protect the natural environment, including applying to Defra last week for an order for the [Holme Styes reservoir in Yorkshire](#) to support environmental needs;
- Planning with water companies and ensuring they have and are implementing their drought plans. Every water company in England has a published drought plan available on their website;
- Working with the farming sector to provide greater assistance to farmers in prolonged dry weather areas;
- Reoxygenating water and rescuing fish in distress where river flows are especially low;
- Supporting the Fire and Rescue Service to tackle waste fires and wildfires.

The National Drought Group will continue to work together very closely over the coming weeks and will next meet in August.

## Background

- The following organisations attended the National Drought Group today: Environment Agency; Defra; Natural Resources Wales; Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities; Ofwat; UKHSA; Natural England; Welsh Government; Met Office; AHDB; Yorkshire Water; Southern Water; Anglian Water; Affinity Water; Severn Trent Water; Thames Water; South West Water; South East Water; South Staffs Water; Northumbria Water; Water UK; National Farmers Union; Angling Trust; Energy UK; Canal and River Trust; Rivers Trust; RSPB; MOSL; Waterwise; SES; Consumer Council for Water; Drinking Water Inspectorate.
- The National Drought Group meets twice yearly (spring and autumn) to assess the water resource situation ahead and any risks to water supply and the environment. It met in March ahead of the spring/summer season and is planned to meet in October this year ahead of the winter season. The group convenes at the early stages of drought (known as prolonged dry weather), and it met regularly through 2018-2020 to manage the last drought.
- The Environment Agency has rescued fish from the River Teme in Shropshire, the Tarrant in Dorset and Derbyshire Lathkill and relocated them down stream. Elsewhere, we have deployed aeration equipment at a number of still water fisheries where dissolved oxygen levels have fallen to critically low levels.
- More information on the [National Drought Group](#)
- More information on the [Water's Worth Saving campaign](#)
- For more information, please contact the Defra group Newsdesk: 0330 041 6560 / [newsdesk@defra.gov.uk](mailto:newsdesk@defra.gov.uk)