

Foreign Secretary statement on updated travel advice.

Following the death of Qasem Soleimani and heightened tensions in the region, we have decided to update our travel advice for Iraq and Iran. We now advise British nationals against all travel to Iraq, outside of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, where we continue to advise against all but essential travel. We now advise against all but essential travel to Iran. We urge those British nationals in the region to remain vigilant and monitor the media carefully.

Commenting on the change, the Foreign Secretary said:

The first job of any government is to keep British people safe. Given heightened tensions in the region, the FCO now advise people not to travel to Iraq, with the exception of the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, and to consider carefully whether it's essential to travel to Iran. We will keep this under review.

ENDS

Recycle or replant your tree for a greener Christmas

As the country winds down from the festive period, millions of households and businesses will be looking to take down their Christmas decorations – and in total dispose of eight million Christmas trees.

Real Christmas trees are recyclable and can be shredded into chippings, which are then used in parks or woodland areas. Alternatively you can replant them, meaning you can enjoy your tree for years to come.

If not reused or recycled, trees can end up in landfill which is costly to both the environment and the taxpayer, with the cost of landfilling eight million trees being around £22 million.

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow, said:

Millions of families around the UK celebrated Christmas with a beautiful Fir or Spruce tree in their home, but when the decorations are taken down, it's important that we dispose of trees sustainably.

If you have a tree with its roots still attached, then replanting your Christmas tree is a great way to reduce your carbon footprint and help our efforts to plant more trees. But if replanting is not an option, make sure to check what collection and recycling services are available where you live. Alternatively, if you have a compost bin or heap, then you could break up your tree and add it to the compost.

If, however, you have an artificial tree, then make sure to look at ways of keeping them for future Christmases so they don't end up in landfill where they can take centuries to decompose.

Four ways to reuse or dispose of your Christmas tree:

1. Replant your potted Christmas tree in a garden to give it a new lease of life. You could also add bird feeders to provide shelter for wildlife
2. Drop your tree off at a recycling centre where it can be turned into chippings for paths or turned into soil
3. Check with your local council to see if there's a special collection service
4. Look for an organisation or charity that offers a 'treecycling' service where it could be used to build effective flood barriers in communities around the UK

Further information

- Local authorities often arrange drop-off points or special collections of trees in early January and advertise the dates this will take place
- Details for each local authority, including their contact details, can be found by entering your postcode into the [Recycling Locator tool](#) on the [Recycle Now](#) website
- Estimated total cost of landfill is based on average landfill costs per tonne of waste
- According to the [British Christmas Tree Growers Association](#), between six and eight million real Christmas trees are sold in the UK every year; A typical six to seven foot high Christmas tree is between 10 and 12 years old; Nordmann Firs are the most popular in homes, making up 80% of those sold, with Norway Spruce making up 10-15%
- For future Christmases, the [Royal Horticultural Society](#) encourages buyers to ask their supplier where the trees come from and to choose a locally sourced and grown tree, or one that has at least been grown in the UK rather than abroad

Free meals and summer holiday activities for children

Thousands more children across the country will get a healthy and nutritious breakfast to set them up for the school day, thanks to an additional investment of up to £11.8 million by the government to support disadvantaged families.

So far around 1,800 school breakfast clubs have been created or improved by the National School Breakfast Programme in disadvantaged areas and thanks to this additional investment up to 650 more schools will benefit in the next year, with resources specifically targeted at the most disadvantaged areas to help make sure every child gets the best start in life.

Underlining the government's bold manifesto pledge to level up across the country and create a £1 billion fund for more high quality wraparound and holiday childcare places, thousands more disadvantaged children will also be offered activities and free meals during the six week summer holiday in 2020, funded by £9 million from the Department for Education. The department will announce the areas that will benefit from this funding shortly.

Schools Minister Lord Agnew said:

We want every child to lead a healthy, active and happy lifestyle regardless of their background. That's why we are giving thousands more children in disadvantaged areas the opportunity to attend a breakfast club, which will help boost attendance, behaviour and attainment, helping them to achieve their best in school.

Where I want children to succeed, I also want them to grow up happy and confident, ready to take on challenges. Investing in enriching, rewarding summer activities next year will help keep them active and encourage them to get involved in their communities.

Family Action, in partnership with Magic Breakfast, will continue to run the National School Breakfast Programme (NSBP) until March 2021. This one-year extension will kick-start self-sustaining clubs in schools in disadvantaged areas. So far the two charities have recruited over 1,800 schools in disadvantaged areas, and report that over 280,000 breakfasts are served in these schools every day through the programme.

David Holmes CBE, Chief Executive at Family Action, said:

Thanks to the successful National School Breakfast Programme, we are already providing a free, nutritious breakfast every school day to over 280,000 children in some of the most deprived areas of England. Family Action is delighted that the new funding announced today by the Department for Education ensures that the NSBP will now continue for an extra year.

The new funding means that we can offer an additional term of support to more than 1,800 existing NSBP schools and support up to 650 new schools to kick start or improve their breakfast provision. Every single meal that is being provided through this programme is making an immediate difference to children across the country every day. It is literally fuelling learning.

Carmel McConnell, MBE, founder of Magic Breakfast, said:

A hungry pupil cannot learn, simple as that, so in the spirit of levelling up and unleashing Britain's potential, it is great news that NSBP funding has been extended. Headteachers tell us that the Magic Breakfast model creates improvements in pupil behaviour, punctuality, attendance and wellbeing as a result of the NSBP.

This funding allows the award-winning Family Action and Magic Breakfast NSBP partnership to reach even more hungry schoolchildren with the nourishment they so urgently need. It's a fantastic investment in their future and the future of this country.

The Holiday Activities and Food scheme follows successful programmes in 2018 and 2019, which saw charities and community groups provide meals and activities such as football, play sessions and cooking classes for children across the country. Around 18,000 children benefited in 2018, and the programme was expanded in 2019, with around 50,000 children enjoying this free holiday provision this year. The Department launched a recruitment process to find co-ordinators to run similar programmes in 2020.

Through these breakfast and holiday programmes, parents will also have access to information so that they can learn how best to provide their children with healthy food, as an additional new strand of our overall provision next year.

[Jenrick overhauls tenancy agreement to help end pet bans](#)

Help us improve GOV.UK

To help us improve GOV.UK, we'd like to know more about your visit today. We'll send you a link to a feedback form. It will take only 2 minutes to fill in. Don't worry we won't send you spam or share your email address with anyone.

Email address

Send me the survey

[£40 million investment to reduce NHS staff login times](#)

The government will provide £40 million to transform slow login times, one of the main technology frustrations facing NHS staff.

NHS staff currently have to log in to multiple computer programmes when tending to a patient, with each programme requiring its own login details. Some staff need to log into as many as 15 different systems.

This can be time consuming, and also requires staff to remember multiple complex passwords or use the same one on multiple systems, which is potentially a cybersecurity risk.

The investment will ease the administrative burden on NHS staff, freeing up time for more one-to-one patient care.

The investment will support projects similar to that seen at Alder Hey Hospital in Liverpool, which implemented single sign-on technology and reduced time spent logging into multiple computer systems from 1 minute 45 seconds to just 10 seconds.

With almost 5,000 logins a day, it saved over 130 hours of staff time and freed up their time to focus on patient care.

The 'logins project' will focus on 3 main areas:

1. working with IT system suppliers to standardise logins and provide multi-factor logins, like finger print access, rather than password-led

logins

2. ensuring trusts update their processes to give staff appropriate access permissions for the systems they need to treat patients
3. integrating local and national systems so staff can access the full range of clinical and workforce systems to support their needs

To bridge the technology gap between the NHS and social care, a further £4.5 million will be given to local authorities to develop digital adult social care projects to support the most vulnerable in society to live independently for longer and improve information sharing across the NHS and social care.

Examples of initiatives the money could fund include:

- artificial intelligence with assistive technology: using sensors to establish normal behaviour for individuals, for example sleep patterns, use of kettles and walking routes, and alerting carers where there are variances
- creating shared care records which combine both medical and social care information, with NHS and care staff able to access the record
- allowing information held by the care home to smoothly integrate into hospital IT systems as a person is admitted to hospital

To further improve the digital capability of NHS trusts, a new 'digital aspirant' programme will be set up. This will provide funding over several years to assist with digital transformation projects so that trusts can provide safe, high-quality and efficient care.

The programme will aim to raise the bar across the NHS by making sure organisations have a core set of capabilities in place.

The Health and Social Care Secretary will also commit to designing a model of what excellence looks like, so that every provider – from mental health trusts to care homes – knows what they need to do to be outstanding on technology in the 2020s.

This will be assessed as part of the Care Quality Commission's (CQC) inspection regime, with trusts expected to meet minimum technology standards.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

I want to harness the best digital technology to improve care for patients and ease the burden on our staff. And to do that, we need to get the basics right. Too often, outdated technology slows down and frustrates staff, and prevents them from giving patients their full attention and the care they deserve.

It is frankly ridiculous how much time our doctors and nurses waste logging on to multiple systems. As I visit hospitals and GP practices around the country, I've lost count of the amount of times staff complain about this. It's no good in the 21st century having 20th century technology at work. This investment is committed to driving forward the most basic frontline technology

upgrades, so treatment can be delivered more effectively and we can keep pace with the growing demand on the NHS.

Chief Executive of NHSX, Matthew Gould, said:

If you work in the NHS, the tech should not be getting in the way of your ability to do your job. Tech should be something you rarely think about because it just works. Today's announcements mean we can start to tackle one of the biggest gripes staff have with their tech. It will allow staff across the NHS to spend more time with their patients and less time fighting their computers.