

Bears, chimpanzees and pangolins to be better protected after new funding boost for world's most endangered animals

- Tackling the illegal wildlife trade is essential to halting biodiversity loss and protecting some of our most threatened and endangered species
- Illegal wildlife trade also fuels corruption, creates instability, is linked to organised crime, and can increase the risk of the spread of zoonotic diseases

Endangered and threatened plants and animals, including bears, chimpanzees and pangolins, are set to be better protected thanks to new funding to [tackle the illegal wildlife trade](#) announced by the UK Government today (Friday 01 July), further cementing our position as a leading contributor to the end of this devastating illegal trade.

The illegal wildlife trade not only threatens species with extinction, fuels corruption, creates instability and deprives some of the world's poorest communities of sustainable livelihoods, but is linked to organised crime and zoonotic disease outbreaks.

Grants of up to £1.5 million will be made available to environmental organisations across the world which tackle the vile and devastating illegal trade in animals.

Beneficiaries include two projects in Liberia which are working to reduce the demand for chimpanzee bushmeat and improve wildlife law enforcement, and a project in Laos which will boost the capacity of law enforcement agencies to tackle the trafficking of wild bears by criminal gangs and support wildlife sanctuaries to create livelihood and educational opportunities.

It is thanks to the decisive action taken by this Government that the UK is tackling the illegal wildlife trade head on and leading efforts to bend the curve on biodiversity loss around the world, including through the commitment to halt and reverse global biodiversity loss as set out in the world leading Environment Act.

There are 22 successful projects in total. Other projects being awarded funding today include:

Dismantling illegal pangolin trade in Vietnam

- Building on past successes in three key pangolin habitats, this project will strengthen law enforcement and improve livelihoods to reduce the demand for critically endangered pangolins. (Save Vietnam's Wildlife)

Preventing the extinction of Bolivia's critically endangered red-fronted macaw

- The project will fund teams of local farmer stewards to patrol nest sites and help prevent the trafficking of eggs and chicks which threaten the survival of Bolivia's critically endangered red-fronted Macaws. (Fundacion Natura Bolivia)

Demand reduction for threatened freshwater turtles and tortoises in Bangladesh

- The project will identify freshwater turtle and tortoise consumption and trade hotspots and then conduct a targeted behaviour change campaign to reduce demand for products linked to these species. (Wildlife Conservation Society)

Harnessing technology to end the illegal trade in succulent plants

- This project will address the supply and sale of illegally trade South African succulent plants to stop their extinction. Development of chemical fingerprinting and marking techniques will enable traceability and transparency in trade, while aiding the reintroduction of confiscated plants. (Royal Botanic Gardens Kew and TRAFFIC)

International Environment Minister Lord Goldsmith said:

Biodiversity loss is one of the greatest challenges humanity faces today. The illegal wildlife trade threatens wild animals and plants with extinction, destroys precious ecosystems and increases the risk of zoonotic diseases spreading.

The UK is leading calls to halt and reverse global biodiversity loss and the funding announced today comes less than six months ahead of the crucial COP15 Biodiversity Summit, where we will be leading a coalition of high ambition countries committed to agreeing a new global biodiversity framework with targets for 2030.

Independent Chair of the Illegal Wildlife Trade Advisory Group John Scanlon said:

Illegal wildlife trade drives many species towards extinction. It is also highly destructive to entire ecosystems, including their ability to sequester carbon, and is disrupting their ability to support local and indigenous communities. Preventing and combating these serious crimes is one of the biggest environmental challenges we face today.

The UK Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund is a unique and

highly valuable source of funding dedicated to preventing and combating wildlife crime. Its well-targeted projects – such as reducing the demand for endangered pangolins, protecting the iconic red-fronted macaw and using technology to end the illegal trade in succulent plants – will help ensure that wild animals and plants are not plundered by organised criminals, thereby ensuring their many benefits can flow to the local and indigenous peoples of source countries and the global community.

To date, the IWT Challenge Fund has supported 136 projects in over 60 countries to a value of over £43 million. Previously supported projects have included efforts to protect the endangered Royal Bengal Tigers in Nepal by building capacity in park rangers and strengthening wildlife enforcement, as well as protecting elephants along the Nigeria-Cameroon transboundary Green Corridor by improving co-operation between agencies tasked with conserving this iconic species.

Round 9 of the IWT Challenge Fund is now open for applications. For more information on previous projects as well as how to apply please visit:

<https://iwt.challengefund.org.uk/>

Combating illegal trade of bears and diversifying livelihoods in Laos (Free the Bears Fund Inc)

- The placement of confiscated wildlife remains a major obstacle to effective law enforcement in Laos.
- By increasing capacity to house confiscated bears, this project will enable government agencies to effectively implement legal deterrents in order to end the trafficking of bears in Laos and help maintain the ecological intactness of forest ecosystems.
- Additionally, it will demonstrate the role that well-run wildlife sanctuaries can play in poverty reduction through the creation of diverse livelihood and educational opportunities.

Successful Round 8 Applicant and regional director of Free the Bears, Brian Crudge, said:

Bear bile farming and illegal trade are major threats to the survival of sun bears and Asiatic black bears in Southeast Asia. With limited possibilities for returning animals to the wild, rescue facilities are necessary to allow for confiscation and rehabilitation of threatened species.

With support from the Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, Free the Bears is supporting the efforts of the Government of Laos to tackle the issue of wildlife farming and illegal trade through the development of sanctuaries which provide space for confiscated animals as well as providing forest-edge communities with sustainable livelihood opportunities.

Increasing chimpanzee guardianship values to reduce the illegal wildlife trade in Liberia (PCI Media Impact)

- Illegal trade of endangered Western Chimpanzees in Liberia is a complex issue driven by poverty, systemic development challenges, and insufficient management of demand.
- This project aims to reduce demand for chimpanzees by fostering guardianship values among urban consumers.
- It will work with a coalition of local partners to design an effective Social and Behaviour Change Communications strategy model that drives the revival and cross-ethnic expansion of existing chimpanzee guardianship values, ultimately reducing IWT.

Successful Round 8 Applicant and project lead at the Livable Plant Program, Brett Matulis, said:

Even though trade in chimpanzees is illegal, the demand for bushmeat and household pets is driving a decline in this iconic species – with only about 35,000 Western Chimpanzees remaining.

Our project in Liberia will tackle this demand by forging a coalition of environmental, gender equity, and poverty alleviation charities with an aim to reduce the consumption of chimpanzee meat and foster local guardianship values for this critically endangered species. If successful, this could be scaled up across Liberia and the region to protect even more animals. The funds we have received today will play a key role in achieving this.

IWTCF schemes expanded:

This latest round is the first time we have introduced 'evidence' and 'extra' schemes, expanding the eligibility criteria for both the grant size and length. The criteria for all three schemes are:

- Evidence – Projects which gather evidence to design an intervention will be funded between £20,000 and £100,000.
- Main – Projects which test new and innovative interventions to provide proof of intervention on a smaller scale will be funded between £100,000 and £600,000.
- Extra – Projects which have already demonstrated success and can have a bigger impact at a larger scale will be funded between £600,000 and £1.5 million.

These new schemes will help better support projects at different points in their development.

Launch of Round 9 of IWTCF

- Today's announcement also marks the launch of Round 9 of IWTCF funding for projects working to tackle the illegal trade of any species of

flora, fauna and fungi in sub-Saharan Africa, East and South-East Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. Applicants have until 22 August to submit their Stage 1 application.

More healthcare professionals can certify fit notes from today

- The change is set to support patients getting advice and fit notes from their healthcare professional – without having to separately see a doctor
- The reform follows fit notes going fully digital as they no longer need to be signed in ink.

From today (Friday 1 July 2022) nurses, occupational therapists, pharmacists and physiotherapists can all legally certify fit notes, reducing the pressure on NHS doctors, particularly GPs and scrapping unnecessary bureaucracy.

Updated guidance to health care professionals and their employers on these changes is also being published today, setting out how to support people to remain in work while managing a health condition.

This has been worked up and agreed with health professionals and DHSC to ensure these changes deliver benefits for both patients and clinicians. The existing guidance for [employers and patients](#) has also been updated.

This significant change recognises the importance of supporting people to remain in work, while managing a health condition by providing advice to an employer about how to support someone. By leveraging the expertise of a wider range of healthcare professionals, the change also streamlines the process.

The change, which applies across England, Scotland and Wales and is being mirrored in Northern Ireland, will support and empower better conversations about work and health between employers and staff by making it easier to get advice certified by the most relevant healthcare professional.

It will also improve a patient's experience and reduce pressure on doctors, as people will no longer have to be sent to a doctor to have the fit note signed when seeing and receiving treatment from an alternative professional for their health condition.

The change is being delivered in GP surgeries, hospital and other NHS settings where healthcare professionals delivering NHS services will have access to the new fit note form.

Fit notes provide evidence to employers about a person's absence and any relevant advice on how to support their employees to remain in or return to work. They also provide evidence for claims to benefits for those who are out

of work.

Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work Chloe Smith MP said:

Having a health condition doesn't have to take you out of a job. This change will make it easier for people and employers to get the advice they need so people can stay in work, whilst also reducing bureaucracy and freeing up doctors' time.

Too often we see people being faced with unnecessary challenges to get a fit note. More professionals being able to offer this vital service will speed up the process and support people to return to or remain in work.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid MP said:

Slashing unnecessary bureaucracy is key to ensuring more patients can see their GP quickly and get the care they need as we bust the Covid backlogs.

That's why we have introduced these powers to ensure certifying fit notes can be carried out by other healthcare professionals – helping to relieve pressures on GPs so they can focus on patients and deliver an extra 50 million appointments a year by 2024.

Director of Practice and Development at Chartered Society of Physiotherapy Ashley James said:

Physiotherapists are already at the forefront of patient care but these new powers to certify fit notes will ensure a more efficient process to support patients' return to work.

Physiotherapist expertise is often key in having health and work conversations and providing effective rehabilitation throughout the return to work journey. Getting treatment and support right can help patients remain in work and manage conditions effectively or return to work in a timely manner.

These new measures remove the need for a separate appointment with a GP. This can only be good news for patients as well as help to take some pressure off primary care services.

Chair of the Royal College of Occupational Therapists Specialist Section for Work Dr Jain Holmes said:

This new opportunity will mean more people can get expert advice from occupational therapists. The profession is keen to show how we

identify work and health needs and then provide tailored advice for the people we see.

As Chair of the Royal College of Occupational Therapists Specialist Section for Work, we will be providing support to help the transition to this change which will benefit people's everyday working lives.

The changes to the fit note deliver on commitments made last year to reduce ill health related job loss in the government's [Health is Everyone's Business](#) consultation response.

Additional information

- Regulations were laid on 10 June 2022 to allow more healthcare professionals to certify fit notes in addition to doctors. These professions are nurses, occupational therapists, pharmacists, and physiotherapists. The changes came into effect on 1 July 2022.
- Updated guidance for healthcare professionals, employers and patients will be published on 1 July 2022 on [gov.uk](#).
- Fit notes can only be issued following an assessment of a person's fitness for work.
- This follows legislation changes in April 2022 which removed the need for fit notes to be signed in ink. This change made it possible for eligible healthcare professionals to certify fit notes digitally and also for patients to receive their fit note via digital channels (where GP IT systems support this).
- Fit notes provide evidence of an absence of more than 7 days.

Media enquiries for this press release – 0115 965 8781

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[New Magnox supply chain strategy](#)

News story

Magnox has launched a new supply chain strategy to support its long-term future, reflecting business model changes and an expansion of the mission to safely decommission 12 nuclear facilities.



The revised business strategy will enable Magnox, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, to seek longer term collaborative arrangements with the supply chain with the aim of encouraging the development of solutions to nuclear decommissioning challenges that deliver value for the taxpayer whilst being innovative, sustainable and providing socio-economic benefits for local communities.

Rob Bellis, Magnox Commercial Director, said: “This is an era of progressive expansion for us at Magnox. We’re proud that the work we do is of national importance and that we continue to be entrusted with the responsibility of managing the UK’s legacy of nuclear power generation and research.

“With our longer-term future secure, we can drive harder to deliver projects that are environmentally sustainable and support local communities. To achieve this, we must continue pushing boundaries in technology and working with supply chain partners who share our core values and are happy to be incentivised to deliver these. We’re keen to work with small and medium enterprises as well as large organisations to reach our goals.

“Safety, people, sustainability and innovation lie at the heart of who we are and what we do, and our new supply chain strategy will support the Government’s levelling-up agenda and ensure the UK remains a centre of excellence for nuclear skills.”

The strategy will be formally launched at the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority’s supply chain conference in Telford on 21 July 2022. You can book your place at the largest event of its kind anywhere in Europe [on the event website](#) and read the full Magnox supply chain strategy 2022 here.

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[**Foreign Secretary statement on the**](#)

25th anniversary of the handover of Hong Kong

Press release

Today marks 25 years since the handover of Hong Kong from the UK to China, and two years since the imposition of the National Security Law.



Today marks 25 years since the handover of Hong Kong. China agreed under the legally-binding Sino-British Joint Declaration to uphold Hong Kong's high degree of autonomy and rights and freedoms.

However, we have seen a steady erosion of political and civil rights since the imposition of the National Security Law on 30 June 2020. Authorities have stifled opposition, criminalised dissent and driven out anyone who can speak truth to power.

The United Kingdom's historic commitment to Hong Kong and its people endures. That is why we continue to challenge China for breaching the legally-binding commitments it signed up to under the Joint Declaration. We have called out their conduct on the world stage and stood together with our G7 partners in condemning the steady erosion of political and civil rights and Hong Kong's autonomy.

The UK has opened its doors to the people of Hong Kong looking for a home where their fundamental rights and freedoms are respected. We offered a new immigration path to British Nationals Overseas, and there have been over 120,000 applications for this route.

Twenty-five years on, the UK continues to stand unwaveringly with Hong Kong. We are working with our allies and partners as part of a global network of liberty to hold China to its international obligations.

[Cornwall man sentenced to longer prison term for historic rape](#)

News story

The offender will spend longer in prison for rape which happened in the late 1970's and early 80's



A man who raped a child in the late 70's and early 80's has received a lengthier jail sentence after the Solicitor General Alex Chalk QC MP referred his case to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme.

The offender, who cannot be named for legal reasons, raped a child who was between 5 and 8 years old at the time of the offending. The offender was aged between 14 and 16 when the offending took place. He threatened to kill the victim if she told anyone about the offences that had taken place.

On 11 March 2022, the offender was sentenced to 4 years and 6 months' imprisonment at Truro Crown Court for rape, indecent assault and indecency with a child.

The Solicitor General then referred the sentence to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme because he did not believe it reflected the severity of the offending that had taken place.

On 30 June the Court of Appeal found the original sentence to be unduly lenient and increased it to 8 years' imprisonment.

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General Alex Chalk QC MP said:

Today's verdict shows that it is never too late for justice to be done, and I wish to commend the victim for her bravery in coming

forward. The fact that this offending happened a long time ago makes it no less serious, and I welcome the decision of the Court to impose a longer sentence.

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