

New laws to end mobile coverage 'no bar blues'

- New rules to connect countryside to 4G quicker and accelerate 5G roll out
- Law changes will reduce need for new phone masts and boost signal on roads
- Comes with protections to preserve rural scenery and minimise impact of new infrastructure

Reforms to planning laws will mean fewer phone masts will be needed overall to level up the country with improved 4G and 5G mobile coverage as telecoms firms will be able to upgrade existing infrastructure over building new masts.

Mobile network operators will get more freedom to make new and existing phone masts up to five metres taller and two metres wider than current rules permit. This will boost the range of masts, create room for the extra equipment needed for faster networks and make it easier for operators to share infrastructure.

The government will put tough new legal duties on operators to minimise the visual impact of network equipment, particularly in protected areas such as national parks, conservation areas, world heritage sites and areas of outstanding natural beauty.

Digital Infrastructure Minister Julia Lopez said:

We've all felt the frustration of having the 'no bar blues' when struggling to get a phone signal, so we're changing the law to wipe out mobile 'not spots' and dial up the roll out of next-generation 5G.

Phone users across the country will benefit – whether they are in a city, village or on the road – and tighter rules on the visual impact of new infrastructure will ensure our cherished countryside is protected.

5G offers download speeds up to 100 times that of 4G and is set to revolutionise our daily lives, industries and public services by powering game-changing technologies such as virtual and augmented reality services and autonomous cars.

The move will help deliver the government-led £1 billion [Shared Rural Network](#) being built to eliminate 4G mobile 'not spots' in the countryside and enable communities to enjoy the revolutionary benefits of 5G technologies sooner, including specialised robots and drones driving productivity in agricultural industries.

The plans will also bring better mobile coverage to road users by allowing building-based masts to be placed nearer to highways. Families and businesses will also benefit from faster 5G roll out by making it easier for operators to use buildings to host their kit.

Hamish MacLeod, Chief Executive of Mobile UK, said:

Building the mobile networks that provide the connectivity on which we all rely is both complex and challenging. The industry welcomes the reforms to planning regulations proposed by the Government. They will enable operators to deploy mobile networks more efficiently to meet ambitious targets for rural and urban coverage, including next-generation 5G.

In its [response](#) to an extensive consultation on the plans published today, the government confirmed it will make amendments to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015.

The changes to existing permitted development rights include:

- Existing mobile masts to be strengthened without prior approval, so they can be upgraded for 5G and shared between mobile operators. This would allow increases to the width of existing masts by up to either 50 per cent or two metres (whichever is greatest) and, in unprotected areas, allow increases in height up to a maximum of 25 metres (previously 20 metres). Greater increases will also be permitted subject to approval by the local authority;
- New masts to be built up to five metres higher – meaning a maximum of 30 metres in unprotected areas and 25 metres in protected areas, subject to approval by the planning authority;
- Buildings to host smaller masts (up to six metres in height above building) in unprotected areas without prior approval to accelerate network upgrades and reduce need to build new masts;
- Building-based masts to be set up nearer to public roads subject to prior approval to improve mobile coverage for road users;
- Cabinets containing radio equipment to be deployed alongside masts without prior approval and to allow greater flexibility for installing cabinets in existing compounds (fenced-off sites containing masts and other communications equipment) to support new 5G networks;
- Conditions to ensure telecoms equipment does not block pavements and access to properties.

Mobile operators will still need to obtain agreement from the landowner before building any new infrastructure. All new ground-based masts will also need to be approved by local authorities which will continue to have a say on where they are placed and their appearance.

Robust conditions and limits will also remain in place to make sure communities and stakeholders are properly consulted and the environment is protected. A new [Code of Practice for Wireless Network Development in England](#)

has been published today to provide operators and councils with guidance to ensure that the impact of mobile infrastructure is minimised and that appropriate engagement takes place with local communities.

Housing Minister Stuart Andrew said:

Ensuring as many people as possible, wherever they live in the country, have access to fast, reliable mobile coverage and digital connectivity is crucial to our levelling up vision.

These changes to planning rules will help providers to give more people access to improved 4G and cutting edge 5G coverage, while also protecting our cherished natural landscape.

ENDS

Notes to editors

- The government intends to bring forward the changes via secondary legislation as soon as parliamentary time allows.
- In addition to the changes to permitted development rights, the government will amend the definition of small cell systems to ensure it encompasses new and emerging types of wireless technology.
- Operators will also be required to notify relevant authorities when constructing new infrastructure near to aerodromes and defence assets.
- Planning permission requires a planning application to be submitted to the relevant local planning authority to consider. Permitted development rights grant planning permission, without the need for a planning application, for specific types of development. Some permitted development rights are subject to a requirement to seek the prior approval of the local planning authority for the location and appearance of infrastructure before carrying out development. Where prior approval is not required, the developer must notify the local planning authority of its intention to deploy.
- Planning is a devolved policy area. As such, the reforms will apply in England only.

[UK injects \\$100m into Ukraine's economy as Canadian and Dutch Prime Ministers are welcomed to Downing](#)

Street

- Today the Prime Minister will welcome Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau and Dutch Prime Minister Rutte to Downing Street
- Leaders will visit RAF base to meet members of the UK Armed Forces before conducting a joint press conference
- Comes as the UK pledges extra \$100m to assist the people of Ukraine
- Builds upon recent UK backing of £220 million overall aid support to Ukraine

Today the Prime Minister commences a week of focussed engagement with world leaders to mobilise the global outcry at the atrocities of Russian aggression into practical and sustained support for Ukraine.

On Monday he will work with leaders from Canada and the Netherlands to continue to champion the international response for Ukraine. They will also visit a RAF base to meet members of the UK Armed Forces.

The three Prime Ministers will convene for separate bilateral meetings and a joint trilateral meeting. There will also be a joint press conference at the Downing Street Briefing Room.

It comes as the UK allocates an additional \$100m directly to the Ukrainian government budget to mitigate financial pressures created by Russia's unprovoked and illegal invasion.

This grant could be used to support public sector salaries, allowing critical state functions to keep operating, as well as to support social safety nets and pensions for the Ukrainian people. The grant will be provided through the World Bank.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

In the time since Russia's illegal and brutal assault we have seen the world stand up tall in solidarity with the indomitable people of Ukraine.

UK aid is already reaching those who need it most, delivering essential supplies and medical support.

While only Putin can fully end the suffering in Ukraine, today's new funding will continue to help those facing the deteriorating humanitarian situation.

The new UK \$100m funding announced today comes on top of the UK training 22,000 soldiers, supplying 2,000 anti-tank missiles, providing £100 million for economic reform and energy independence, and providing £120 million of humanitarian aid including £25 million of match funding to the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) appeal.

This follows our offer to guarantee up to \$500 million of Multilateral Development Bank financing. This will unlock further funding in support of the Ukrainian economy.

The UK is proving this support through a World Bank Multi-Donor Trust Fund established this week to support the Ukrainian government.

The Government urges other donors to pool their resources in this Trust Fund to ensure efficient and rapid support to the government and people of Ukraine.

Government over halfway to delivering 50,000 more nurses by 2024

- Progress report published today outlines timing and plans for achieving the milestone
- Extra nurses will help the NHS recover from the pandemic, tackle COVID backlogs and ensure it continues providing world-class care in the years to come

The government is on track to meet its manifesto commitment to deliver 50,000 more nurses in the NHS by 2024, with over 27,000 more nurses now working across the NHS.

A progress report published today shows that overall total nurse numbers now stand at 327,907, as of December 2021, compared to 300,904 in September 2019. By March 2024, there are set to be around 351,000 full-time equivalent nurses to provide world-class care across the health service. The new report also sets out the government's plans for reaching the target.

The government is focused on recruiting and retaining nurses to compensate for those retiring, reducing their hours or leaving the NHS.

The report is published ahead of a speech this week from the Health and Social Secretary on his plans for long-term healthcare reform to support the NHS to recover and tackle the COVID backlogs.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

It's fantastic to see the progress we have made towards our manifesto commitment of delivering 50,000 more nurses by 2024. There are now over 27,000 more nurses providing exceptional care and treatment for patients across the country every day.

Nurses are the absolute backbone of our NHS, without whom we would have been lost throughout the pandemic and who will be vital in

helping the NHS tackle the COVID backlogs. This government will continue to do everything we can to recruit and retain even more nurses and to support our NHS.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

We committed to deliver 50,000 more nurses in the NHS by 2024, and we are over halfway to meeting this target with over 27,000 more nurses already in our NHS compared to September 2019.

I'm grateful to all our NHS nurses who've shown immense commitment during the pandemic, working tirelessly to look after us and our loved ones. It is this dedication that is inspiring the next generation and ensuring the NHS continues to provide world-class healthcare.

As part of the progress report, government is outlining where additional nurses will come from and how they will be recruited. This includes:

- Domestic recruitment, including undergraduates, postgraduates, apprenticeships, nursing associates and assistant practitioners converting to fully qualified nurses;
- International recruitment; and
- Successful retention of existing staff

Overall more than 50,000 nurses will be recruited to offset those who are retiring or leaving the workforce, delivering a net total of at least 50,000.

International recruitment is expected to deliver between 51,000-57,000 more nurses while around 68,000-75,000 more nurses will be trained in England by 2024.

Retention is also a key part of the plan and is expected to contribute between 3,000-9,000 nurses to the overall target by addressing the reasons why staff leave the NHS. The government and NHS are focused on making the NHS the best place to work through providing health and wellbeing initiatives, expanding flexible working and putting a greater focus on career development – initiatives which are already helping to retain more existing nurses.

This includes £37 million to fund 40 staff mental health hubs nationwide, that sit alongside a dedicated helpline and a 24/7 text support services.

Ruth May, Chief Nursing Officer for England, said:

The NHS is caring for more patients than ever before but, to continue doing so, it is vital that we boost the number of nurses in the NHS and reach the target of 50,000 more nurses by 2024.

While there is much more to do, the progress we have made with over

27,000 more nurses now working across the NHS in England than in September 2019, is testament to the tremendous efforts being made to recruit, retain and develop more nurses, and ensure the NHS remains one of the best places in the world to work and receive care.

Professor Mark Radford CBE, Chief Nurse at Health Education England and Deputy Chief Nursing Officer for NHS England, said:

Over the past few years we have seen an increase in the numbers of people signing up to our universities to start their education as nurses, with a record number of college and school leavers applying for a nursing degree in 2021. It is brilliant to see so many people who are keen to start a rewarding and challenging career in nursing which is so critical to all areas of the NHS.

To continue on track to meet the 50,000 target, we will carry on working with our partners in health, social care and education to support and train new nurses as well as welcoming back people who want to return to the profession and ensuring the existing workforce, who have been so crucial to our pandemic response, are supported and given opportunities to develop in their career.

Also set out in the report are plans to respond to any shortfalls, including ramping up international recruitment, whilst maintaining the highest ethical standards and adhering to the Code of Practice.

The 50,000 nurses target is defined as including all full time equivalent registered nurses working in the NHS in England. This covers all NHS providers across acute, community, mental health and ambulance settings, and all those employed in general practice.

It does not include non-NHS providers, including social care providers and social enterprises, though these sectors will benefit indirectly as the numbers of nurses trained increases overall.

Applicants to nursing courses at the January deadline increased by 34% in 2022 when compared to 2019 and all eligible students will benefit from a training grant worth at least £5,000 a year, with up to £3,000 extra available for childcare and those studying certain specialisms.

[**PM call with President Zelenskyy of**](#)

Ukraine: 6 March 2022

News story

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to Ukrainian President Zelenskyy this afternoon.



The Prime Minister spoke to Ukrainian President Zelenskyy this afternoon.

The Prime Minister stressed that the British people stand fully behind the Ukrainian people. He said that international support and admiration for President Zelenskyy and the whole of Ukraine grows every day.

The leaders discussed the increasing threat Russia's barbaric attacks pose to Ukrainian civilians and the Prime Minister underlined the UK's determination to ensure Putin fails.

The Prime Minister outlined the steps the UK is taking to support Ukraine and the two leaders discussed the Prime Minister's six-point plan for international action.

The leaders discussed the urgent needs of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and the Prime Minister undertook to work with partners to provide further defensive equipment.

The Prime Minister and President Zelenskyy also discussed the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Ukraine, precipitated by Russia's indiscriminate attacks and ceasefire breaches.

The Prime Minister outlined what the UK is doing, both to provide humanitarian support and impose economic costs on Russia which strike at the heart of Putin's war machine. This includes calling on other countries to take further action to remove Russia from SWIFT.

The leaders agreed to continue speaking to ensure the wishes of the Ukrainian people are at the forefront of the international response going forward.

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PM: We must match our words on Ukraine with action

- PM to meet leaders from Canada, Netherlands and Central Europe in London next week
- Comes as the Prime Minister set out a six point 'plan of action' for the international community
- In the last few days the UK has upped humanitarian and military support to Ukraine and doubled down on diplomatic efforts to isolate Russia

This week the Prime Minister will call on the international community to make a renewed and concerted effort to ensure Putin fails in Ukraine.

In the days since Russia invaded Ukraine we have seen an unprecedented wave of international condemnation from across the globe. On Wednesday evening 141 nations voted to denounce Russia's actions in only the 11th Emergency Special Session of the UN General Assembly ever held.

The same day, 38 countries, coordinated by the UK, led the largest ever referral to the International Criminal Court to ensure Putin will be held to account for his war crimes.

At the same time, more and more countries have stepped up to provide much-needed humanitarian and military support to the people of Ukraine. Nations across the globe have imposed the largest ever package of sanctions against a major economy.

On Monday the Prime Minister will welcome Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau and Dutch Prime Minister Rutte to Downing Street for discussions on how to turn these commitments into a concerted campaign of solidarity with Ukraine. On Friday he spoke to President Macron and the leaders of Turkey and Serbia.

On Tuesday, he will host leaders of the 'V4' group of Central European nations – the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. These are countries already experiencing first-hand the humanitarian crisis rapidly engulfing the European continent.

The Prime Minister will tell leaders that, to ensure Putin fails in his ambitions, the international community must come together under a six-point plan of action to:

1. Mobilise an international humanitarian coalition for Ukraine

2. Support Ukraine in its efforts to provide for its own self-defence
3. Maximise the economic pressure on Putin's regime
4. Prevent the creeping normalisation of what Russia is doing in Ukraine
5. Pursue diplomatic paths to de-escalation but only on the basis of full participation by the legitimate government of Ukraine
6. Begin a rapid campaign to strengthen security and resilience across the Euro-Atlantic area

Setting out his six-point plan today, the Prime Minister will say:

Putin must fail and must be seen to fail in this act of aggression. It is not enough to express our support for the rules-based international order – we must defend it against a sustained attempt to rewrite the rules by military force.

The world is watching. It is not future historians but the people of Ukraine who will be our judge.

Last week the UK increased its humanitarian support to Ukraine and the region to £220 million announced this year, including £25 million of match funding to the DEC appeal. The UK continues to supply defensive and lethal weaponry to Ukraine and the Prime Minister has spoken to Ukrainian President Zelenskyy daily to understand the Ukrainian Armed Forces' needs.

The UK has already implemented the largest and most severe package of economic sanctions ever imposed on a major economy. We have brought in sanctions on President Putin, Sergey Lavrov, five Russian banks and more than 300 individuals and entities at the heart of Putin's regime, and Belarus. We are preventing the Russian state from raising debt here and isolating all Russian companies from access to UK capital markets.

The government will continue to ratchet up pressure and use sanctions to degrade the Russian economy on a scale that the Kremlin, or any major economy, has ever seen before. On Friday the government announced new provisions to streamline the current legislation so we can respond even more swiftly and effectively to the current crisis.

The Prime Minister will host both Prime Minister Rutte and Prime Minister Trudeau in Downing Street for separate bilateral meetings and a joint trilateral meeting.

Tuesday's meeting of the V4 will take place in London and include both a plenary session of all five leaders and separate bilateral meetings.