

UK minister to strengthen ties across the pacific in first overseas visit

- Minister for the Indo-Pacific Anne-Marie Trevelyan will visit Vanuatu and Australia this week.
- She will attend the Conference of the Pacific Community to boost diplomatic links with the region.
- Minister will then travel to Australia for talks on trade and security.

Underlining the UK's commitment to deepening ties with the Pacific Islands, Minister for the Indo-Pacific Anne-Marie Trevelyan will today (23 November) arrive in Vanuatu for her first overseas trip, following her appointment as an FCDO Minister last month.

Minister Trevelyan will hold talks with Vanuatu's Prime Minister Ishmael Kalsakau and Minister of Foreign Affairs Jotham Napat about the priorities of their recently-elected government. As a Commonwealth partner on the front line of climate change, the UK works closely with Vanuatu to strengthen maritime security, climate resilience as well as capacity building in the region.

The Minister will then attend the [12th Conference of the Pacific Community](#) to build closer diplomatic ties with leaders from across the region. Representatives of the 26 countries and territories that constitute the bloc will attend for talks on climate change, development, science and innovation. The region remains critical to delivering on key UK priorities, including securing an open and stable Indo-Pacific, tackling climate change and biodiversity loss.

Many Pacific Islands have small populations and face geographic isolation and vulnerability to natural disasters. Rising sea levels could see some countries uninhabitable within four decades. The UK is working with these small island developing states to build a cleaner, safer and more resilient future, including through the [Blue Planet Fund](#), which will support economic development while protecting nature and increasing climate resilience.

Minister of State for the Indo-Pacific, Anne-Marie Trevelyan, said:

On my first trip as Minister for the Indo-Pacific, I want to underline the UK's steadfast commitment to the region and how we can work together to bolster global prosperity and security.

The UK will deepen our engagement in the Pacific, a region where we have a close history, many friends, and share the values of sovereignty, territorial integrity and free trade.

Vanuatu is on the front line of the climate emergency, and we are working with them alongside other partners to accelerate global action on tackling climate change.

During the conference, Minister Trevelyan will hold talks with her counterparts from across the Pacific and support their work addressing climate change, security and prosperity.

The UK is working with the region to deliver its 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, which sets out Pacific countries' vision for a cleaner, safer and more resilient future.

While in Vanuatu's capital, the Minister will co-host a dinner with the New Zealand High Commissioner to celebrate women in leadership across the Pacific, alongside Vanuatu's Deputy Speaker Gloria Julia King.

She will also join young volunteers with community group and non-profit organisation Wan Smolbag to hear how they are affected by and adapting to climate change. The group operates across the South Pacific, running programmes to boost youth engagement on education, health and the environment.

Following her visit to Vanuatu, the Minister will travel to Australia, arriving on 25 November. She will attend talks with her Foreign and Defence Ministry counterparts to discuss UK-Australia security and defence cooperation, including the AUKUS agreement.

The Pacific Community (formerly the south Pacific Community and still referred to as SPC) is the principal scientific and technical organisation in the Pacific region, supporting development since 1947. It works in over 20 sectors including climate change, disaster risk management and human rights.

The conference will be the first in-person meeting since UK re-joined as a metropolitan member in 2021. Current UK support to SPC is delivered through the [CSSF-funded Extended Continental Shelf Programme](#).

Members of the Pacific Community are: American Samoa, Australia, Cook Islands, Fiji, France, French Polynesia, Guam, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Niue, Northern Mariana Islands, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Pitcairn Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, United Kingdom, United States, Vanuatu, and Wallis and Futuna.

[Consultation launched to protect patients from silent pandemic of antimicrobial resistance](#)

- Recent estimates suggest that AMR causes 1.27 million deaths globally

each year and 7,600 deaths in the UK each year

- Views sought to inform next five-year plan to tackle what has been described as the next potential global pandemic

The increasing risk to patients of superbugs resistant to existing medicines will be the focus of a new consultation launched today [Wednesday 23].

The consultation will bring together the latest evidence and data from leading experts on antimicrobial resistance (AMR). It will help inform a new 5-year action national action plan to protect patients from deadly infections and will capture learnings from the Covid pandemic.

The consultation has been launched to coincide with World Antimicrobial Awareness Week 2022 – with this year's theme focussed on ensuring that affected sectors – such as food, plants, environment and health – collaborate together to fight AMR.

Resistance to antimicrobials is increasing, creating a new generation of 'superbugs' that cannot be treated with existing medicines. Without working antibiotics, routine surgery like caesarean sections or hip replacements will become too dangerous to perform, cancer chemotherapy will become too high risk and certain infections will require long and complex treatment or will no longer be treatable.

Prof Dame Sally Davies, UK Special Envoy on AMR said:

Antimicrobial Resistance may be the defining health challenge of this century.

I am proud of the UK's efforts on research and development, stewardship, surveillance and international engagement across all sectors.

I hope that our next National Action Plan will show that we can learn from the COVID-19 pandemic and collaborate to step up our actions.

A report published by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) this week showed there were more than 50,000 severe antibiotic-resistant infections in England last year including bloodstream infections, skin infections, surgical site infections and skin and soft tissue infections.

The report also found the number of severe antibiotic resistant infections rose by 2.2.% in England compared to 2020, the equivalent of 148 infections per day. It warns that progress made on antibiotic use may not be sustained unless we continue to use antibiotics appropriately.

Dr Colin Brown, Deputy Director of Antimicrobial Resistance and Healthcare

Associated Infections at the UK Health Security Agency, said:

Antimicrobial resistance is not a distant problem that we can ignore – infections caused by antibiotic resistant bacteria are killing thousands of people every year in this country and globally, as well as having a huge economic impact.

Our extensive data and surveillance programmes have identified the immense scale of the issue in this country. It has pinpointed areas for action, with targets to improve prescribing and limit antimicrobial-resistant and healthcare-associated infections over the last 5 years. We will continue to work with partners to respond to current threats and prepare for future challenges.

It is vital the future National Action Plan targets include measures to limit resistance, incentivise best practice in prescribing, and facilitate novel diagnostics and therapeutics.

The new 5 year national action plan will form the next stage of the government's existing 20-year AMR strategy, published in 2019. It set out an initial 5 year plan which will run until 2024. This consultation will seek views to ensure that the next five year plan – continuing up until 2029 – is informed by the most up to date evidence.

Since the publication of the 2019 strategy, Government has made significant progress in tackling AMR, for example reducing the use of antibiotics in food producing animals, piloting novel and innovative ways of evaluating and paying for antibiotics on the NHS through a subscription model – a world first, and securing commitments to tackle AMR on several ministerial tracks during the UK's G7 presidency.

Input from technical experts (including on human health, animal and plant health, food, and AMR in the environment) is encouraged as part of the consultation, to help shape the UK's 2024-2029 national action plan.

It is also aiming to attract context from how we helped to tackle the Covid pandemic, as the tools we use will be similar – such as with vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostics and public behaviours.

Top tips for keeping antibiotics working longer for the public:

- Always take antibiotics as prescribed.
- The outbreak of COVID-19 has highlighted the action we can all be taking to prevent infection, such as prioritising hygiene and practising social distancing where appropriate. [Wash your hands](#) regularly and prevent the spread of infections.
- Taking antibiotics when you do not need them means they are less likely to work in the future. Not all infections need antibiotics and many mild bacterial infections get better on their own. People can learn how to be an [Antibiotic Guardian](#) by making a pledge to keep antibiotics working.
- Make sure you are up to date with your vaccines and inoculations:

preventing infection means there is less likelihood of complications from secondary bacterial infections that require antibiotics.

[A Yemeni-led truce continues to represent the best opportunity for progress](#)

Thank you President. And let me thank Special Envoy Grundberg and Ms Ghelani for their briefing today.

We are encouraged that most truce measures continue to hold since the lack of extension in October, and we call for an end to the disturbing pattern of terrorist attacks on international shipping from the Houthis.

The targeting of ships in the Southern ports of Al-Dabba and Qena poses a serious threat to peace and risks depriving millions of Yemenis from access to basic goods.

We call on the Houthis to take the peaceful route, by pursuing a negotiated, Yemeni-led political settlement under UN auspices.

President,

The humanitarian crisis continues to suffer from interwoven challenges. The Independent Interagency Humanitarian Evaluation found that, despite its growing scale, much of the aid quality was “unacceptably low”.

The relative peace of the last eight months has not alleviated the impact of the preceding years of violent war. 17 million Yemenis remain exposed to an acute food insecurity crisis with many more projected to be affected in coming years.

This humanitarian crisis underlines the importance of the Black Sea Grain Initiative, recently renewed until March. It has facilitated the import of over 60,000 metric tonnes of wheat into Yemen this month and will continue to be an important lifeline for Yemenis as we’ve heard again today from Ms Ghelani.

Internal displacement remains prevalent across Yemen. For those who do choose to return home, the risks of explosive remnants of war is real. The UK is supportive of ongoing demining initiatives, and urges the international community to unite behind this issue.

President,

As we approach the start of the global 16 Days of Activism against Gender-

Based Violence, the UK reiterates its commitment to working towards a future where all women and girls live free from the fear of violence. We call for an end to the Houthi-imposed Mahram restrictions that are directly curbing the freedoms of Yemeni women.

President,

The only permanent resolution to all these issues is long-term peace. And as I said, this will require a negotiated, Yemeni-led political settlement under UN auspices.

The truce continues to represent the best opportunity for progress and for the sake of the Yemeni people, this opportunity must not be squandered.

Thank you.

[Autumn Finance Bill 2022 published](#)

News story

The Autumn Finance Bill 2022 was published today (22 November 2023), legislating for a key tax changes announced by the Chancellor at last week's Autumn Statement.



- The Autumn Finance Bill 2022 was published today (22 November 2022), legislating for key tax changes announced at the Autumn Statement last week, including raising and extending the Energy Profits Levy and lowering the additional rate threshold to £125,140.
- The Bill serves as a down payment on the government's commitment to stabilise the economy through fair policies, where those with the broadest shoulders bear the most burden
- The main Spring Finance Bill 2023 will follow the spring Budget in the usual way, for remaining tax measures needed ahead of April 2023.

Measures in the Bill will see those with the broadest shoulders carry the heaviest burden as the government drives down inflation and restores economic

stability following the impact of the pandemic and Putin's invasion of Ukraine. Measures include:

- The Energy Profits Levy (EPL) is being extended to help fund cost of living support and ensure oil and gas companies pay their fair share of tax. The rate of tax applied to the profits of oil and gas companies is increasing from 25% to 35% and the sunset clause changing to March 2028 rather than December 2025. This measure also reduces the investment allowance from 80% to 29%, except for investment expenditure on upstream decarbonisation, where it will remain at 80%. This broadly maintains the existing cash value of total tax relief for non-decarbonisation investments.
- The threshold for the additional rate of income tax will be lowered from £150,000 to £125,140, making sure making sure those on the highest incomes contribute the most to strong public finances.
- The Dividend Allowance will be reduced from £2,000 to £1,000 from April 2023 and to £500 from April 2024, and the Capital Gains Tax (CGT) annual exempt amount will be reduced from £12,300 to £6,000 in April 2023, and £3,000 in April 2024. These changes make the tax system fairer by bringing the treatment of unearned income closer in line with that of income earned by employees.
- Making sure all motorists pay a fairer tax contribution by introducing Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) for Electric Vehicles (EVs) from April 2025. This aligns their taxation with that of petrol and diesel vehicles, reflecting their permanent role in the net-zero economy of the future. Alongside this, the government will provide certainty on favourable Company Car Tax rates for electric cars until 2028.
- To ensure the tax system supports strong public finances, income tax thresholds will remain fixed at their current levels until 2028, an extension of two years.
- To help support the public finances in a way that is fair, the current thresholds for inheritance tax will also remain in place until 2028, an extension of two years.
- Research and development (R&D) tax reliefs will be reformed to make sure taxpayers' money is spent as effectively as possible, including through reducing error and fraud. From 1 April 2023 the Research and Development Expenditure Credit (RDEC) rate will be increased to 20% from 13%, the SME deduction rate will be reduced to 86% from 130%, and the Small and Medium Enterprise credit rate decreased to 10% from 14.5%.

The main Spring Finance Bill 2023 will follow the spring Budget in the usual way, for remaining tax measures needed ahead of April 2023.

The Autumn Finance Bill 2022 had its first reading today (Tuesday, 22 November) and will follow the normal legislative path through Parliament.

Further information

- Read the full contents of [the Autumn Statement 2022](#)
- The below table details the full list of measures contained in the Autumn Finance Bill 2022

| Clause | Measure | Implementation date |
|-----------|---|--|
| Clause 1 | Energy Profits Levy (EPL) – Increase in rate of tax | Has effect for accounting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2023 |
| Clause 2 | EPL – Reducing the amount of the additional investment expenditure | Has effect in relation to expenditure incurred on or after 1 January 2023 |
| Clause 3 | EPL – Extending the period for which tax has effect | Extending the period for which the levy has effect to 31 March 2028 (previously 31 December 2025) |
| Clause 4 | R&D Tax Reliefs – Amount of relief for expenditure on research and development | Changes apply to expenditure incurred on or after 1 April 2023 |
| Clause 5 | Income Tax Thresholds – Basic rate limit and personal allowance tax years 2026-27 and 2027-28 | Sets amount of the personal allowance for the 2026-27 and 2027-28 tax years |
| Clause 6 | Income Tax Additional – Threshold at which additional rate is charged | Will apply from the 2023-24 tax year onwards |
| Clause 7 | Dividend Allowance – Dividend nil rate | Rate will reduce from £2000 to £1000 for tax year 2023-24, and then reduce from £1000 to £500 for tax year 2024-25 and subsequent years |
| Clause 8 | Capital Gains Tax (CGT) Annual Exempt Amount (AEA) | In tax year 2023-24 the AEA will be £6000 for individuals, personal representatives and £3000 for most trustees of settlements (trusts). In tax years on and after 2024-25 it will be £3000 for individuals and personal representatives and £1500 for trusts. |
| Clause 9 | Inheritance Tax – Rate bands etc for tax years 2026-27 and 2027-28 | Thresholds will be fixed at their current levels for a further two tax years, 2026-27 and 2027-28. |
| Clause 10 | Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) – Removal of VED exemption for electrically propelled vehicles etc | Will take effect on or after 1 April 2025 |
| Clause 11 | VED – Taxable benefits: appropriate percentage for cars with a CO2 emissions figure | Will apply to tax years 2025-26, 2026-27 and 2027-28 |

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UK, France and Germany condemn Iran's decision to further expand its nuclear programme

Press release

The UK, France and Germany (the E3) have issued a joint statement condemning the Iranian regime's decision to further expand its nuclear programme.



The E3 said:

We, the governments of France, Germany and the United Kingdom condemn Iran's latest steps, as confirmed by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), to further expand its nuclear programme.

By increasing its production capabilities at Fordow and Natanz, well beyond Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA) limits, and by accelerating its production of enriched uranium, Iran has taken further significant steps in hollowing out the JCPoA.

Especially concerning is Iran's decision to increase its production of High Enriched Uranium (HEU) at its underground facility at the Fordow Fuel Enrichment Plant. Iran's step is a challenge to the global non-proliferation system. This step, which carries significant proliferation-related risks, has no credible civilian justification.

Iran's actions are even more concerning since, 5 months ago, Iran stopped implementing all JCPoA-related transparency measures.

Presenting this escalation as a reaction to the IAEA Board of Governors' adoption of a resolution calling for Iran's cooperation on safeguards is unacceptable. Iran is legally obliged under the Non-Proliferation Treaty to fully implement its safeguards agreement.

We will continue to consult, alongside international partners, on how best to address Iran's continued nuclear escalation.

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