

Government *WORLD*TM

Winter 2012 Edition

A photograph of a winter landscape. In the foreground, there is a snow-covered bank with some dry, brown grasses. To the left, a pond is partially frozen with several ice floes. The background is a dense forest of tall, thin trees, some evergreen and some bare, under a clear blue sky.

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ISSN 1744-6996



Cover picture: Winter at Whithaugh

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Overseas visitors spend £4.5 billion a year in Britain's shops

Our world-class department stores prove a hit with tourists, new figures show.

The UK's high streets are a major attraction for foreign visitors, according to research by VisitBritain.

Findings by the tourism agency estimates that 18 million visitors spent £4.5 billion, meaning 25% of all expenditure by overseas visitors is on the UK's high streets.

Clothes are biggest draw

According to the survey, the majority of the shopping spend was on clothes, with an estimated £2.3 billion generated by foreign tourists. Souvenirs, gifts and household goods were also popular; accounting for around £1.6 billion.

The survey shows London's world-class shops, stores and markets are a major attraction, with around 81% of holiday visitors going shopping during their visit to the capital. The regional benefits are also clear, with between two thirds and three quarters of holiday visitors shopping across the UK.

Further analysis of the research found that a 'shopping' tourist spends more, an average of £680 per trip, than an 'ordinary' overseas tourist who typically spends £580.

Building on 2012

Minister for Tourism Hugh Robertson said: "Britain's world class retail sector is a big attraction to overseas visitors whose spend in our

shops makes a significant contribution to our economy. We will continue to promote what is great about Britain in key international markets to help grow tourism further, on the back of a fantastic 2012."

Sandie Dawe, Chief Executive at VisitBritain said: "Our shopping experience is world class, with high quality, desirable British brands enticing international visitors at all times of the year and providing real value for money against our competitors."



Cash boost to get England cycling

An extra £20 million for cycle infrastructure

Cities, towns and villages across England are set to benefit from an extra £20 million for cycle infrastructure. The new funding was announced 28 November 2012 by Transport Minister Norman Baker, at a conference in Leicester.

This new funding will help people take to 2 wheels. Projects could include better cycle facilities at railway stations, improved cycle links, or projects to improve the layout of road junctions to make them more cycle-friendly. Previous investment has seen some great projects making a real difference in communities, including better cycle routes from residential areas to schools to encourage the next generation of cyclists to cycle more regularly.

The conference in Leicester, attended by Public Health Minister Anna Soubry and Norman Baker, explores how councils' health and transport officials can work better together to deliver better options for cycling and walking in their local areas.

Think, Act, Report

More than 1 million people are now working in organisations signed up to our Think, Act, Report initiative.

The latest companies to sign up are: GMS Security, Accenture, PwC UK, Wragge & Co, Northern Careers, Southbank Centre and Northern Rail.

Think, Act, Report is a voluntary initiative to help improve gender equality in the workforce. It sets out a simple, step-by-step framework to help companies think about key issues such as recruitment, retention, promotion and pay.

Signing up commits organisations to think about gender equality, take action where they identify areas for improvement where needed and report on

their progress. It is flexible, recognising that every business is at different stages, so it is up to the business to decide what steps to take and what they publish. There is no requirement to publish pay data but companies are encouraged to publish as much as they can.

Listen to the CIPD podcast with Jo Swinson MP, the Minister for Women and Equalities, to find out why retail giant Tesco, law firm Eversheds LLP and housing association Metropolitan



signed up to Think, Act, Report and how they are tackling gender inequality in the workplace.

If you are already one of the best employers for women, why not sign up and champion the principles of Think, Act, Report? Be a leader in your sector and encourage others to follow. You can also email us at thinkactreport@geo.gsi.gov.uk or call the Government Equalities Office on 020 7035 8701.

More protection for homeowners

The Justice Secretary Chris Grayling will bring forward legislation to give householders even greater protection from burglars, via amendments to the Crime and Courts Bill.

The changes will mean someone who is confronted by a burglar and has reason to fear for their safety, or the safety of their family, and in the heat of the moment uses force that is reasonable in the circumstances but in the cold light of day seems disproportionate they will not be guilty of an offence.

Force which is grossly disproportionate will still not be permitted. Justice Secretary Chris Grayling said:

'The public should be in no doubt that the law is on their side, that is why I am toughening up the current law for those who defend themselves and their loved ones. Householders who act instinctively and honestly in self defence are victims of crime and should be treated that way. We need to dispel doubts in this area once and for all.'

The current law states that householders can use force that is reasonable in the circumstances as they believed them to be to defend themselves or their property, but states that the use of disproportionate force will never be reasonable in the circumstances.



Memorial bench standard model



Memorial bench with extended base plinth and planters

Chiltern Memorial Bench Collection

Memorial benches that grow with your needs

The **welters**® Chiltern Memorial Bench provides a range of affordable solutions for commemorative and memorial seating arrangements.

The memorial bench collection comprises a range of options beginning with the standard bench and plinth arrangement with two inscription plaques on the back rest. Upgraded versions include end planters and extended base plinth.

A unique feature is the optional addition of four cremated remains niches providing two interments in each niche. These can also be enclosed in an attractive polished stainless steel frame furnished with toughened glass and used as keepsake storage niches for photographs, flowers and memorabilia.

Made in England

The Chiltern Memorial Bench Collection is manufactured in **welters**® UK factory using high quality stone and polished granite creating an adaptable and elegant addition to their furniture range.



Memorial bench with full niche and planter specification



Niche and Keepsake arrangement



Keepsake niche option

Councils cut congestion through driving innovation

A project to reduce congestion reached a milestone this week as the number of road works logged on the roadworks.org site passed 2 million.

Part of an industry drive to save costs and maximise efficiency by promoting partnership working across highway authority boundaries, roadworks.org is helping to reduce journey times on the UK network by providing reliable, instant and up-to-date information about road works.

Since its launch in May 2012, the site has become the country's national road works database, using data from over 140 different local highway authorities. It currently publishes the details of 7,000 new road works started in Britain

every single working day.

This data has been accessed more than 1 million times over the course of the past 10 months by motorists, the emergency services, businesses, local authorities and utility providers.

Councils are also now syndicating road works information across their own websites, leading other organisations to use this data to develop new transport applications and services.

Local Government Minister Baroness Hanham said:

“Getting councils to open up their information is revolutionising local government and

encouraging a spirit of innovation and entrepreneurship.”

“I am delighted with the success of roadworks.org , councils have worked together to turn their raw data into a really useful web app for local people. Having information about roadworks in your area at the touch of a button is invaluable to anyone about to undertake a journey, particularly for local businesses, mothers doing the school run and our emergency services .”



Green light for Lincolnshire wind project

Ecotricity have been granted permission by Government to construct a 66MW wind farm in East Heckington, Lincolnshire.

Ecotricity have been granted permission by Government to construct a 66MW wind farm in East Heckington, Lincolnshire.

The developer estimates that the turbines will provide enough electricity to power the equivalent of as many as 39,700 homes a year.

A Department of Energy and Climate Change spokesman said:

“Onshore wind has an important role to play as part of a balanced energy mix. This development will enhance our energy security and help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.”



Anti-piracy centre open for business

Foreign Office Minister, Alistair Burt, today welcomed an important milestone in the fight against piracy in the Indian Ocean.

financiers of piracy.

Commenting at the ceremony for the Regional Anti-Piracy Prosecution & Intelligence Coordination



President James Michel and Minister Alistair Burt

Alistair Burt officially opened the Regional Anti-Piracy Prosecution & Intelligence Coordination Centre (RAPPICC) in the Seychelles. The RAPPICC will bring together experts from around the world to share intelligence and information which will help to tackle the king-pins and

Centre (RAPPICC), the Minister said:

“I welcome the vital work of the RAPPICC, which begins in earnest today. This centre will play a vital role in targeting the heart of the piracy operations: the leaders and financiers of piracy who feel as if they

are able to act with impunity. By targeting those at the top the RAPPICC will perform a vital and unique function, and will support regional capacity in tackling serious organised maritime crime in Somalia and across the Indian Ocean.”

At the London Conference on Somalia 2012, the Prime Minister signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the President of the Seychelles, during which the UK committed £550,000 towards the construction costs of the RAPPICC. We are also providing the centre’s first co-Director and one other UK officer.

The RAPPICC will be staffed by a number of international partners, including from the region. We currently expect participants in the centre from the UK, the Seychelles, the US, Tanzania, Mauritius, the Netherlands, Australia,

Department of Health statement – Horsemeat

Chief Medical Officer Dame Sally Davies said: “We are working closely with the FSA and DEFRA to investigate how horsemeat got into the UK food chain. There is nothing to suggest a safety risk to consumers who may have eaten the products. All of the retailers involved so far have removed potentially affected products from their shelves.

“Phenylbutazone is used in some people who suffer from ankylosing spondylitis, a type of arthritis. However, there are international checks to prevent phenylbutazone from entering the food chain because there is a low risk of serious effects - such as aplastic anaemia - in some people. As such, it presents a limited public health risk and I support the FSA advice that it should be excluded from the food chain.

“There is currently no indication that phenylbutazone - bute - is present in any of the products that have been identified in this country but the FSA has ordered further tests to confirm this.

“It’s understandable that people will be concerned, but it is important to emphasise that, even if bute is found to be present at low levels, there is a very low risk indeed that it would cause any harm to health.”

Whithaugh Tower House in winter snow



Nature

New powers to check doctors' language skills

Health Minister, Dr Dan Poulter has today announced new checks to make sure all doctors who work for the NHS can speak English well enough to treat patients.

From April 1st 2013, for the first time, there will be a legal duty to make sure a doctor can speak the necessary level of English to perform their job in a safe and competent manner, before they can treat patients in a hospital or GP practice.

There will also be single national list which every GP will have to be on before treating NHS patients. Previously every Primary Care Trust held a list of GPs. One centrally held list will protect patients - ensuring poor performers will no longer be able to slip through the gaps between different local lists. To

be accepted on to this list every GP will have to demonstrate their ability to speak English.

The Government is also proposing to give the GMC new powers from 2014 to prevent all doctors from being granted a licence to practise medicine in theUK, where concerns arise about their ability to speak English.

A consultation on new powers for the GMC will be launched later this year. It will set out proposals for the GMC to be able to insist that a doctor provides evidence of their ability to speak English before a licence to practise medicine is granted, where concerns arise about their language ability.

It will also include plans

to create a new category of impairment relating to deficient language skills. This would allow the GMC to investigate concerns about a doctor's language skills and apply appropriate sanctions where concerns arise after registration.

All of these new checks will mean that for the first time there will be a comprehensive system so that European doctors wanting to work for the NHS will be have to demonstrate their ability to speak English when applying for a job.

Doctors from outside of the EU are already subject to language checks, but current EU law requires theUKto automatically recognise the medical qualifications of doctors from countries in the European Economic Area - and to register them to work in theUK.

The Government is also working hard to negotiate the revision of the EU law so that tougher mandatory checks can be applied to all European doctors when they apply to work in theUK. The Government hopes to have an agreement on a revised directive this Autumn.

Health Minister Dr Dan Poulter said:

"Patients should be able to understand and be understood by their doctor if we are to give them the best care they deserve.

"These new checks will ensure that all doctors who want to work in the NHS can speak proficient English and to prevent those who can't from treating patients.

"There are lots of excellent doctors from around the world working in the NHS - this is simply about protecting patients and having proper checks on a doctor's ability to speak English.

"By introducing these steps we will be able to put an end to doctors treating patients without proper checks on their language."

The business in me

Wendy Hallett, founder and managing director of Hallett Retail and member of the Women's Business Council on life as an entrepreneur.



Wendy Hallett, MD of Hallett Retail

I never really had a burning ambition to be an entrepreneur, but looking back the entrepreneurial spirit was in me from a young age, when at 14 I convinced the local newsagent in my home town of Colchester to let me make and sell sandwiches.

After leaving university I spent 13 years with retail giant, Arcadia. I started

as a graduate trainee and quickly progressed to store manager and area manager roles, including overseeing Topshop's Oxford Street flagship store, all of which was fantastic training and experience.

I decided to set up my own business in 1999 when my children were very young. My motivation was the need to juggle work and family life. I wanted flexible working hours and I knew I had hit upon a good idea with the concept of taking smaller brands into large department stores, so I set up on my own. Originally, I did not think about becoming very successful and expanding.

I put my success down to an entrepreneurial streak, a strong work ethic and a love of what I do. I also put my success down to playing

to other people's strengths and employing people to do the things that I am not good at, and that includes my husband, Kevin, who joined me in the company as Financial Director in 2008, and is now chief operating officer.

My advice to anyone thinking of setting up their own business is to do something you are passionate about and that you know. Running your own business can be all consuming, but if you are passionate about what you are doing, it does not seem like work. Make use of the advice and help of experts in areas you are not strong at and learn from role models. Also, setting up a business with the sole intention of making money rarely works. Do what you love, work hard and smart and the rewards should come.

Four in five parents now paying for their children

Figures released show the vast majority of parents who use the Child Support Agency (CSA) are now paying for their children.

The number of parents using the CSA who are paying towards their children has jumped in recent years - and now stands at almost four in five (79.5%).

Minister for Child Maintenance Steve Webb said: "These figures show we now live in a society where parental financial responsibility after separation is just considered the norm by people.

"A third of children now live in separated families and we know that the overwhelming majority of parents want to do what's right by their kids - even if they're no longer with the other parent.

"Wherever possible we want parents to work together for the sake of their children - not against one another. Supporting your children after a break up is just what most parents do these days.

"Recent You Gov research shows 9 in 10 people believe children are better off when both parents work together to agree child support between themselves after they break up. And the evidence backs that up.

Programme aims to boost construction success

Looking at the impact London 2012 has had on getting women involved in sport.

The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games produced outstanding performances from our female athletes and raised the profile of women's sport. The impact was immediate: nearly 626,000 more women are playing regular sport since we won the Games bid. But though nearly 7 million women play sport weekly, 9 million more would like to start playing or to play more sport.

More than £1 billion funding, from us and the National Lottery, will be invested over five years to help more people enjoy sport, and to develop sporting talent. All this

funding is expected to ensure that, wherever appropriate, sports attract and retain women, but some initiatives have a particular part to play:

- 'girls only' satellite clubs will be established to target the 14-25 age group; by 2017, every secondary school in England will have been offered a satellite community sports club on its site
- the Us Girls project, part of the £10 million lottery-funded Active Women programme, will work to attract into sport 30,000 young women living in disadvantaged areas
- on 14 January 2013 Sport England announced the Women's Place Based

Pilot, providing £3 million investment in locality-based sports schemes for women

- £1,708,383 has been awarded to the Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation to help sports understand how to attract women, and to work directly with county sports partnerships and the education sector
- all of the UK Sport funded elite athletes will offer up time (5 days per year) to provide support and role modelling for youth and community sport

Government also wants to see more coverage of women's sport in the media.

Maria Miller, Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport as well as for Women and Equalities, has written to all the major broadcasters and in

January 2013 hosted a roundtable for broadcasters, journalists and women sports leaders to discuss what we can do to ensure that there is more coverage of all our sporting achievements.



New FRANK adverts mark tenth anniversary

New campaign reminding young people to talk to FRANK for factual and trustworthy drugs advice was launched by the Home Office today.

The TV sponsorship, radio and online advertising campaign is aimed at 13 to 18 year olds and adopts a humorous tone by playing on drug terminology. The three adverts are designed to highlight the confusion many young people feel when it comes to drugs and to point them to FRANK for the facts.

Home office crime prevention minister Jeremy Browne said: 'Distorted information from their peers and popular culture can lead young people to feel confused about drugs and the risks they pose. FRANK aims to give them the skills

and confidence they need to reject drugs and offers parents information to help them talk to their children about drugs.

'We know FRANK works, 67 per cent of young people say they would use it if they needed drugs advice.'

One advert depicts a group of butchers passing around a 'joint' of meat at a party, another shows a young gymnast having a bad 'comedown' when an acrobatic stunt goes wrong, whilst in the final ad a newsagent starts rapping when a young man enters his shop to buy a 'wrap'. The viewer is then asked 'Confused by drugs? Talk to FRANK.' The adverts will run for six months on youth channels, starting tonight during programmes such as 'Keeping up with the

Kardashians' and '8 Out of 10 Cats.'

This year, marking its tenth year in service the FRANK website will be extended to include an online live chat facility with a fully trained FRANK advisor who will provide advice each day between 2pm and 6pm.

FRANK provides a friendly, confidential and non-judgemental service to anyone wanting help, information or advice about drugs through a helpline, website, email and text message service. The service has run continuously since its launch ten years ago and has built up significant credibility and trust amongst young people, many of whom have grown up with FRANK. 76 per cent say they trust FRANK to provide reliable information.

Over 35 million people have used the FRANK website since its launch and millions

have called the FRANK helpline to speak to specially trained advisors. The adverts launched today will help ensure FRANK remains a trustworthy source for young people seeking drugs advice.

FRANK's existence has also coincided with a sustained fall in drug use among young people, from 28.3 per cent of 16 to 24 year olds claiming to have taken drugs in 2003/04 (when FRANK was created) to 19.3 per cent in 2011/12.



British culture and history at heart of new Life in the UK test

An updated Life in the UK test handbook that focuses on British culture and history has been released.

The new book is essential reading for candidates sitting the revised Life in the UK test, which is being introduced in March.

The new handbook and test are part of the government's reforms to the immigration system to help reduce net migration to sustainable levels while ensuring that Britain continues to attract the brightest and the best migrants from across the world.

Life in the UK

The Life in the UK test is taken by migrants wanting to settle permanently in the UK who already speak

English to a sufficient standard.

The test and handbook have been completely re-written, removing questions on topics that those living in the UK should already be aware of like public transport, credit cards and job interviews. Instead it focuses on British culture, history and traditions as well as the events and people who have helped make Britain a great place to live.

Minister for Immigration Mark Harper said: 'We've stripped out mundane information about water meters, how to find train timetables, and using the internet. The new book rightly focuses on values and principles at the heart of being British. Instead of

telling people how to claim benefits it encourages participation in British life.

Immigration

'We have made radical changes to the immigration system and are determined to reduce net migration from the hundred of thousands into the tens of thousands by the end of the Parliament. The latest figures show these reforms are working, with net migration falling by a quarter in the last year.'

In the past, historical information was included in the book but was not tested, meaning that migrants did not have to show they had an understanding of how modern Britain has evolved. The new book and test will focus on events and people who have contributed to making Britain great.

This includes writers like

William Shakespeare and Robert Burns, the great scientists Isaac Newton and Alexander Fleming, engineers and industrialists like Isambard Kingdom Brunel and Richard Arkwright and politicians including Winston Churchill and Clement Attlee.



Aggressive bailiff tactics outlawed

Vulnerable people will be protected from aggressive bailiffs but businesses will still be able to collect debts fairly under new laws.

Vulnerable people will be protected from aggressive bailiffs but businesses will still be able to collect debts fairly under new laws to clean up the industry announced by Justice Minister Helen Grant.

Bailiffs will be banned from entering homes at night or when only children are present and new safeguards will prevent them from using force against people who owe money. They will also no longer have free reign to fix their own fees, as new set costs are brought in.

Until now there has been insufficient legal protection

against aggressive bailiffs but that will change with the new laws and a mandatory training and certification scheme which they must pass before going into business. Bailiffs who do not follow the rules will be barred from the industry.

Justice Minister Helen Grant said:

‘For too long bailiffs have gone unregulated, allowing a small minority to give the industry a bad name. Too many people in debt have had the additional stress of dealing with aggressive bailiffs who often charge extortionate fees.

‘These new laws will clean up the industry and ensure bailiffs play by the rules or face being prevented from practising. They will also make sure businesses and public bodies can collect

their debts fairly.’

The Government is taking action following a consultation last year on aggressive bailiffs. It announced today that it will:

- Change the law to ban the use of force against debtors and stop bailiffs entering homes when only children are present.
- Ban bailiffs from visiting debtors at night - they will only be allowed to enter between 6am and 9pm.
- Introduce mandatory training and a new certification process for bailiffs
- Legislate on a simple set of rules and fees detailing when a bailiff can enter a property, what goods they can take and a fee structure which will end

excessive and multiple fees.

- Ensure vulnerable people get assistance and advice and train bailiffs to recognise them.
- Ban landlords from using bailiffs to seize property for residential rent arrears without going to court.

Last year the Government updated National Standards for Enforcement Agents and guidance for people in debt on Gov.uk which served as a reminder to bailiffs and creditors of their responsibilities. These changes will protect people in debt from rogue bailiffs and ensure creditors have a better understanding and more confidence in the process being carried out on their behalf.

The changes will be made by enacting parts of the Tribunals, Courts and Enforcement Act 2007 and creating new laws through the Crime and Courts Bill.

The Bill is currently progressing through Parliament.

Summer 2012 was the wettest in 100 years

4 September 2012 - Met Office figures for this summer show that it was the second wettest across the UK in the national record that goes back to 1910 and the wettest since 1912. Figures for June, July and August show that 370.7 mm of rain fell across the UK, making it the second wettest summer on record since the 384.4 mm of rain seen in the summer of 1912. These latest figures follow a record wet April, and an April to June period that was also the wettest recorded in the UK.

August 2012 was the driest and sunniest of the three summer months across the UK with 109.5 mm of rain and 154 hours of sunshine. The mean temperature for August was 15.3 °C, in a month that also saw the hottest day of the year so far, reaching 32.4 °C at Cavendish, Suffolk on the 18th.

Summer 2012 was also one of the dullest summers on record with just 413 hours of sunshine. This makes it the dullest summer since 1987 when the UK saw only 402 hours of sunshine.

To complete the disappointing picture, it has also been a relatively

cool summer with a mean temperature of 13.9 °C, some 0.4 °C below the long term average. Despite this it was a little warmer than the summer of 2011 which saw a mean temperature of only 13.7 °C.

Unsettled weather has never been far from the UK during the past three months. Movements in the track of the jet stream, a narrow band of fast flowing westerly winds high in the atmosphere, have contributed to the weather we have seen. This summer has seen periods of heavy and prolonged rain, as well as short but exceptionally heavy thundery downpours and only brief warm sunny spells.

Looking at the individual countries of the UK, it was the second wettest summer on record in England, third wettest in Wales, eighth in Northern Ireland, and the sixth wettest in Scotland. For sunshine it was the fourth dullest summer in England, the fifth dullest in Wales, ninth in Scotland and the 15th in Northern Ireland.

As the UK's national meteorological service the Met Office holds the official weather and climate records for the UK on behalf of the nation. These historic climate records and series are used to monitor the climate of the UK at a national and regional level.



Employment Law Reform

New steps to give firms more flexibility and confidence in managing their workforce and to reduce employment law red tape, were announced today by Business Secretary Vince Cable. They are most likely to benefit small businesses.

Today's package comes in response to calls from business to simplify and speed up the process of ending the employment relationship when it breaks down, for the benefit of both employers and employees.

The Government has given details of:

- its support for settlement agreements to help end employment relationships in a fair and consensual way. A consultation on how best to make this work in practice starts today and Acas has agreed to provide a new code of practice
- how it might reduce the cap on compensation for unfair dismissal claims
- proposals to streamline employment tribunals by making it easier for judges to dismiss weak cases
- responses to its call for evidence on the TUPE rules, when staff transfer to a new employer. Government has

heard that businesses want this to be more efficient, and will consult on specific proposals before the end of the year, and

- recommendations on how to improve guidance for small businesses on the Acas code of practice on discipline and grievance.

The Government also responded formally to the call for evidence on proposals for compensated no fault dismissal for micro-firms. Based on the evidence presented by business the Government will not be taking forward the proposal.

The UK has a lightly regulated, flexible labour market that the OECD considers to be amongst the best in the world, behind only USA and Canada. The recent World Economic Forum Global Competitiveness Report cited the flexibility of the UK's labour market as one of the main reasons for its improvement in the global rankings to 8th from 10th.

But the Government has committed to look at ways to make it more responsive to businesses through a parliament long review of employment law, in conjunction with the Red Tape Challenge on employment law, with the aim of clearing away unnecessary and complex regulation that has damaged flexibility, created perverse incentives, increased business risk and unnecessary administration.

Business Secretary Vince Cable said: "We have been looking across the range of employment laws with a view to making it easier for firms to hire staff while protecting basic labour rights.

"Our starting point is that Britain already has very flexible labour markets. That is why well over one million new private sector jobs have been created in the last two years, even when the economy has been flatlining.

"But we acknowledge that more can be done to help small companies by reducing the burden of employment tribunals, which we are reforming, and moving to less confrontational dispute resolutions through settlement agreements."

The Government is already delivering significant reforms of employment law, including extending the period for eligibility for unfair dismissal from one to two years, encouraging more effective ways to resolve disputes and thereby reduce the number of employment tribunals, creating a universally portable Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check and removing the default retirement age. The Government has considered, or is already taking forward, 80 per cent of proposals from Adrian Beecroft's report on employment law, published earlier this year.



Business Secretary Vince Cable





When a gargoyle is not a gargoyle

Gargoyles have been used for centuries as architectural scarecrows to ward off 'evil spirits' and are usually found on buildings such as cathedrals and churches. But behind the grotesque figures and distorted faces there lies a very practical function upon which the medieval stonemason crafted his sculpture work around.

Before guttering and down pipes became the common method of managing rainwater runoff from buildings it was channelled into outlets which carried the water away from the stonework. These outlets became decorative sculptures which spewed out the water and the majority of these took the form of the 'gargoyle'.

Removing the superstitions of the past this method of water removal still has its place and **welters®** had the opportunity to create a modern adaptation in stainless steel to elegantly manage water away from mausolea buildings using their 'Doves and Leaves' motifs.



Industrial strategy must embed environmental sustainability

Commenting on proposals set out by Vince Cable today on the UK's industrial strategy, WWF said it was significant that the business secretary clearly recognised the need to address market failures such as addressing the costs of environmental damage as well as long-term structural challenges in the global economy including environmental sustainability.

WWF also said that the government as a whole needed to give much more support and recognition to the environmental goods and services sector, arguing that increasingly, the green economy was outperforming other sectors and should not be seen as somehow separate from the 'real' economy.

David Norman, director of campaigns at WWF-UK, said: "Dr Cable's recognition of the need to embed environmental sustainability and plan for the long term in the UK's industrial strategy is important. However, the government must remember that the low-carbon and environmental services sector is growing strongly and also needs vocal government support; action to support the renewable energy sector is going to be a test of this.

"The green economy has grown at 4-5 per cent since 2008 and is expected to continue to grow at around five per cent a year [1] so is clearly a safe bet for a government looking for a growth strategy. It's important, though, not to see the green economy as somehow separate from the 'real' economy. As others, like the CBI, have pointed out, there's no dichotomy between green and growth – green is growth, and the government must embed environmental sustainability across their whole strategy."

WWF also said that the government needed to deliver the strategy for the renewable energy sector at the earliest opportunity, as putting real resources and commitment behind an ambitious renewables strategy will be a test of whether the government genuinely understands environmental sustainability.



Natural England's Dersingham Bog National Nature Reserve (NNR) has welcomed some new residents to keep the heathland in top condition.

Dersingham Bog is of international importance for its wildlife and now four pedigree Black Galloway cattle and their calves have joined the Reserve team to help keep the heath healthy.

During the last two hundred years, 85% of the UK's heathland has been lost and Dersingham now stands out as one of the last remaining fragments of lowland heath in Eastern England. But like all heathlands it would quickly become scrubby and overgrown if it were not actively managed, losing its character and many of the species that it supports. Livestock grazing at Dersingham helps to prevent scrub and grasses from dominating the heath and crowding out more sensitive species, and the Black Galloways will be perfectly suited to the rough grazing that Dersingham provides. These handsome animals will remain at Dersingham for the rest of their lives so they can develop an intimate knowledge of their surroundings. By being 'hefted' to the Reserve in this way, they will learn where the best grazing is and which areas to avoid. In turn, they will pass on this information to their young, ensuring a happy, healthy herd of cattle.

Natural England's Senior Reserve Manager, Ash Murray said "The good-natured Galloways will help us keep the heathland open and save us years of back-breaking work; their efforts will help make the Reserve attractive to birds like nightjar and woodlark and create space for rare plants like sundew and bog asphodel to thrive."

The Galloway Cattle Society's Dorothy Golding said "Galloways are ideal for this sort of land and will do an excellent job, they will work in perfect harmony with mother nature to help the other species and the heath; they will also produce quality calves to continue this good work."



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MPs Challenge “Greenest Government Ever” to put nature at heart of economy



The Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister must lead a programme of action to put nature at the centre of the country's economic decision-making, says the cross-party Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee.

Launching the report of an inquiry into the Natural Environment White Paper published today, Committee Chair, Anne McIntosh MP, said

"Our natural environment supplies us not only with food and materials but also with vital services that ensure society's well-being, such as clean air and water, soil nutrients and recreational spaces. These ecosystems services are worth billions of pounds to the UK

economy and we cannot afford to let government policies ignore them."

Ms McIntosh added: "It should not be solely the preserve of the public sector to protect and enhance nature. Significant funding can be harnessed from the private sector, for example to help prevent flooding and to provide clean water supplies. But Government must act now to set up the right regulatory frameworks to support such payments."

MPs are concerned that, more than one year on from publication of the Natural Environment White Paper, The Natural Choice, Defra has failed to set out clear plans to

deliver its commitment to ensure that government decision-making fully values the services nature provides.

The report tells Cabinet Office and Treasury Ministers that they must lead a cross-Government campaign to ensure that all government policy fully values natural capital. Government Ministers must also:

- Publish an action plan with a timetable to deliver each of the White Paper's 92 commitments
- Give planners and developers guidance on how the National Planning Policy Framework can be used to protect Nature Improvement Areas.
- Fully assess the benefits as well as the costs of environmental regulation, to prevent a perception that environmental protection imposes a drag on the UK economy.
- Publish the Government's response to advice from the Natural Capital Committee and require the NCC to make an annual report to Parliament.

Commenting further, Committee Chair Anne McIntosh added, "We heard of some successful

examples of payments for ecosystems services that reduce the need to build costly infrastructure to clean up polluted water resources such as the United Utilities project which manages 20,000 hectares of land in North West England. But there are too few examples in the UK of the use of such payments to improve the environment. The National Ecosystem Assessment provides a wealth of evidence which must now be used to help sectors develop such schemes."

The report also concludes that:

Biodiversity offsetting can deliver positive impacts on the natural environment but Defra must ensure that the long-term benefits from individual schemes are locked in so that habitats are maintained for the future;

- Peat extraction destroys irreplaceable habitats and causes greenhouse gas emissions. The White Paper's target to end all peat use by 2030 shows a lamentable lack of ambition. A review of progress must be brought forward to 2014;
- Defra must set a target to increase public engagement with nature, since local authorities, NGOs and charities can only secure funding for environmental projects when they can demonstrate measurable success;
- The Department for Health and the Department for Education must define measurements which demonstrate how greater public engagement with nature delivers gains in public health and educational attainment;
- Defra should ensure that the entire coastal path around England is in place within 10 years.



MPs say Government must do more to keep public safe online

Malicious software - designed to infect computers to steal bank details and identity information - poses a growing threat in the UK as more people use the internet and an increasing proportion of economic activity takes place online. MPs on the Science and Technology Select Committee say the Government must do more to help the public understand how to stay safe online.

Andrew Miller MP, Chair of the Commons Science and Technology Committee, said:

"Despite the increasing use of malware, the internet is still a reasonably safe place to go about one's business, provided users take a few sensible precautions. Government departments need to realise that better public information about computer safety could save huge numbers of people the hassle of having their personal details stolen. Knowledge is the best defence against fear, so the Government should focus on raising awareness of how to stay safe online - rather than scaring people about the dangers of cyber crime."

The Committee is calling on the Government to launch a prolonged awareness raising campaign to increase public understanding of personal online security. The report points out that eighty percent of protection against cyber-attack is routine IT hygiene. Yet currently there is no single first point of advice and help for consumers and much of the information about internet security that does exist online is often technical or jargon filled.

Television exposure is crucial to gain the widest possible exposure to the safety message, the MPs believe. They also want to see more done to promote and resource the existing Government website Get Safe Online. Advice from Get Safe Online should be provided with every device capable of accessing the internet and all Government websites should link to the website and highlight the latest security updates.

Many Government services are set to move to online provision either directly or through a range of providers. The Government

'digital by default' policy will increasingly require those in receipt of Government benefits and services to access these online. The committee raises concerns that the scheme will be of greater use in protecting the Government against welfare fraud than the individual user against crime.

Andrew Miller MP added:

"We are asking the Government to provide details of how they intend to engender greater trust in online products and services within the UK population. We are also demanding an assurance that the 'digital by default' approach will mean better and more secure, rather than merely cheaper, government services."

It would be possible to impose statutory safety standards on software sold within the EU, similar to those imposed on vehicle manufacturers, but the MPs say they would prefer a solution based on self-regulation.

The report calls on the industry to demonstrate that self-regulation is an effective way forward and that voluntary commitments can provide sufficient incentive for the industry to improve security in a fast moving competitive marketplace. If it cannot do the Government should investigate the potential for imposing statutory safety standards.

New low cost pension to help millions save for retirement

The Government has set out the expected charges for NEST (National Employment Savings Trust), which will give millions of people the opportunity to save to meet their aspirations for their retirement.

Minister of State for Pensions and the Ageing Society Angela Eagle said: "This is a fair and sensible funding package which delivers the Pensions Commission's vision of a low cost scheme in an affordable way. It balances the needs of members, taxpayers and the interest of the broader pensions industry. Market failure for low and moderate earners means they have not had access to a suitable low cost pension scheme and have not been able to save for their retirement. NEST will put this right."

NEST will meet the Pension Commission's ambition for a low cost scheme with an anticipated 0.3 per cent annual management charge over the longer term. To meet the costs of establishing the scheme, the initial level of charges will also include a small additional charge on contributions of around 2 per cent.

This is comparable to low charges currently being paid by members of large occupational schemes, and means low-to-moderate earners will have the opportunity to enjoy a level of charges that generally only higher earners and those working for larger firms can enjoy.

Until NEST is fully established, it faces an inevitable gap between costs and revenues. The Government has announced that it will make a loan to NEST to cover those costs, ensuring it is delivered at no overall cost to the taxpayer.



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Thirty years of seatbelt safety

A selection of historic THINK! adverts have been made available online to celebrate 30 years of the seatbelt law.

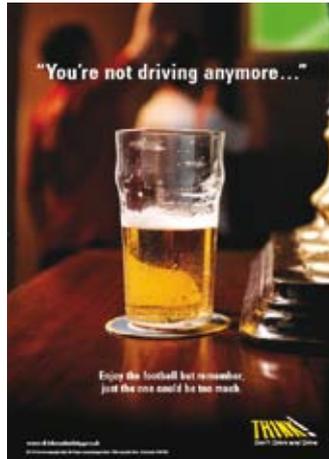
Three decades of compulsory seatbelt use are being marked today as the government made a selection of historic THINK! adverts available online. The law requiring all drivers to wear their seatbelts came in to force 30 years ago today (31 January 2013) - on 31 January 1983.

Car manufacturers have had to install seatbelts since 1965 but the law requiring drivers to wear them did not come in to force for another 18 years. In 1991 the law changed again making it a legal requirement for adults to wear seatbelts in the back of cars.

Road Safety Minister Stephen Hammond said:

“Thousands of lives have been saved and countless injuries prevented over the years because drivers and passengers were wearing seatbelts.

“The combination of effective enforcement and hard-hitting public awareness campaigns mean that, 30 years on, the vast majority of drivers and passengers buckle up when they get in their cars.



“But, unbelievably, there are still some people who do not use a seatbelt - my message to them is simple: a seatbelt could save your life and not wearing one is just not worth the risk.”

The government encourages safer driving through its THINK! campaign which seeks to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in road accidents by providing high quality, clear road safety advice for everyone who uses the roads. A selection of previous seatbelt campaign adverts has been made available on the THINK! website.

Soon after the law came into effect in 1983, 90% of car drivers and front-seat passengers were observed to be wearing seat belts. These high rates of seat belt wearing in front-seats of cars have been sustained since that time.

Conference on freedom of religion or belief

In March 2011 the UN Human Rights Council adopted Resolution 16/18 on “Combating Intolerance, Negative Stereotyping and Stigmatization of, and Discrimination, Incitement to Violence and Violence Against, Persons Based on Religion or Belief.” The resolution focuses on a number of concrete, practical measures that states can take to combat religious intolerance.

December’s conference brings together experts from governments and civil society across the world to share knowledge and skills focusing on particular parts of resolution 16/18, including;

- overcoming obstacles to the equal participation of all groups in society
- combating intolerance through education
- developing collaborative networks between government and civil society

Promoting the right to freedom of religion or belief is a key human rights priority for the British government. Freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief is one of the fundamental freedoms that underpins other human rights and is a key building block of any democracy. It is not only vital to the identity of believers, but to those without a faith too.

