

Press release: New measures protect animal welfare and increase woodland cover

The Government has announced proposals on new measures to enhance the welfare of animals and increase woodland cover.

New measures protect animal welfare and increase woodland cover

The Government has announced proposals on new measures to enhance the welfare of animals both here in the UK and abroad.

The measures include proposals to ban long journeys of live animals that are being transported for slaughter, and restrictions on the import and export of hunting trophies from endangered animals.

Alongside these measures, the Government has announced plans to create a new forest region in Northumberland to help improve our natural environment and respond to climate change.

The Government is committed to leaving the environment, and the wildlife that depend on it, in a better state for future generations. The UK already has some of the highest animal welfare standards in the world and these proposals aim to raise those standards even further.

Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP, Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs said:

High standards of animal welfare are one of the hallmarks of a civilised society. We have a long tradition of protecting animals in this country, often many years before others follow. Leaving the EU allows us to take even bigger steps forward on this. These proposals will protect our animals in our homes, in agriculture, and in the wild.

I have campaigned for an end to live exports for slaughter and the consultation is a further step in taking forward our manifesto commitment on this issue. This is an important victory for all those thousands of people across the country who have campaigned for tougher measures to protect animal welfare.

The planting of one million trees will also be fundamental in our commitment to be the first generation to leave the natural environment in a better state than we found it. They will enhance our landscape, improve our quality of life and protect the climate for future generations.

Live animal exports

The Government will consult on improving animal welfare in the transport of live animals, including banning long journeys to slaughter. Last year Defra issued a call for evidence in relation to future welfare in transport standards, followed by commissioning external research and inviting the Farm Animal Welfare Committee to conduct a review and make recommendations.

The Government proposes to accept recommendations from the Farm Animal Welfare Committee that live animal journeys should be minimised and that animals for slaughter should not be transported longer distances if suitable alternatives are available. FAWC's report will inform a public consultation on this issue, which will be published in due course.

Pet primates

The Government will issue a call for evidence on primates as pets. Evidence will be sought on a number of areas, including:

- The scale of ownership of primates as pets, and how they are acquired;
- The advantages and disadvantages of restrictions or a ban on ownership, a ban on the trade, import and/or sale of primates as pets; and
- The impact on rescue centres and animal welfare charities if restrictions are in place.

The call for evidence will be published in due course.

Microchipping cats

We will issue a call for evidence on compulsory micro-chipping for pet cats. Evidence will be sought on the benefits and impacts of subjecting cats to similar measures as are required under compulsory dog microchipping. The call for evidence will be published in due course.

Trophy hunting

We will improve protection for animals by launching consultation on banning the import and export of trophies from the hunting of endangered species. This follows the introduction of the UK's world-leading ivory ban in December 2018, with the ban expected to be brought into force early next year. A roundtable on the issue with trophy hunting was held in May 2018, with all sides of this debate represented. The views raised during those discussions have informed the proposed consultation on further restrictions on the import and export of hunting trophies. The consultation will be published in due course.

Commenting on the announcement that we will consult on taking further restrictions on trophy hunting imports and exports, International Environment Minister Zac Goldsmith said:

The fight against trophy hunting of endangered animals matters. That is why I am delighted that the Government will consult on a ban on the import of these trophies.

By placing a higher value on animals alive rather than dead, we will begin to turn back the tide of extinction.

Northumberland forest

Trees and forests are not only an essential part of the British countryside, but also provide significant health and wellbeing benefits, and are a vital part of our response to climate change. To kick-start an ambitious new Great Northumberland Forest, the Government has announced its commitment to plant three new forests in Northumberland, with up to one million trees planted between 2020 and 2024. As part of the announcement, the Government will set up a new forestry partnership to help identify sites for afforestation and bring local stakeholders on board.

Northumberland offers opportunities for forestry, as a trail-blazer for the Government's wider net zero and rural economy ambitions. These new plans will pave the way for further Woodland Creation Partnerships elsewhere in the country.

Violent and sexual offenders to spend longer behind bars

- alcohol detecting 'sobriety tags' to be rolled out nationally
- part of extensive overhaul to criminal justice system

The most serious violent and sexual offenders will face longer behind bars under plans to better protect the public and restore confidence in the justice system, Lord Chancellor Robert Buckland QC MP has announced.

The move will abolish the current automatic half-way release for those serious offenders who currently receive standard fixed-term sentences, including those found guilty of rape, manslaughter and GBH. Instead they will be required to serve two-thirds of their sentence in prison and subject to strict licence conditions on release.

Since 2005 the majority of these criminals serve what is known as 'standard

determinate sentences' and are released automatically at the half-way point, serving the second half of their sentence in the community. The government will change the release point to two-thirds to ensure the most serious offenders serve longer in prison – providing greater assurance to victims and the public that sentences will reflect the severity of their crime. Offenders will then be subject to close supervision on their return to the community.

Tougher community sentences will also be introduced with a national roll-out beginning next year of alcohol monitoring sobriety tags. The tags perform around-the-clock monitoring of alcohol in an offender's perspiration. If they drink – breaching their alcohol abstinence order – they can be returned to court for further sanctions. A pilot in London showed over 90% compliance with the order.

Today's (1 October 2019) announcement follows an urgent review into sentencing ordered by the Prime Minister, to ensure the public are properly protected from the most serious violent and sexual criminals and build faith amongst victims that justice will be served.

It comes as an extra £2.5 billion investment has been announced to create 10,000 extra prison places, starting with the new Full Sutton prison. This is alongside government plans to recruit 20,000 new police officers over the next 3 years and invest a further £85 million to the Crown Prosecutions Service to cope with caseload demands.

Notes to editors

- There are range of sentences available to violent and sexual offenders which include:
 - A life sentence – offender spends minimum period or “tariff” in prison before being considered for release by the Parole Board. The offender may therefore never be released. If released, offenders spend the rest of their life on licence and can be recalled to custody.
 - Extended Determinate Sentence – offender becomes eligible to be considered for release by the Parole Board from the two-thirds point but can serve the full term in prison if not assessed to be safe to release earlier. The custodial term is followed by an extended period on licence for on-going public protection (of up to eight years for sex offenders and five years for violent offenders).
 - Standard Determinate Sentence – the offender will be automatically released at the half way point in this sentence and be on licence in the community for the second half of the sentence. Those serving short sentences will have additional supervision in the community for a minimum period of 12 months.
- The vast majority of offenders who are sentenced for serious sexual and violent offences which carry a maximum life sentence receive a Standard Determinate Sentence.
- In 2018, there were over 4,000 Standard Determinate Sentences imposed for sexual /violent offences which carry a maximum penalty of life. There were around 250 Extended Determinate Sentences, and 400 life

sentences for such offences.

- The changes will apply to the most serious violent or sexual offences which carry a maximum penalty of life. This could include crimes such as manslaughter, rape or GBH.

[News story: Asian hornet: UK sightings](#)

The latest updates on Asian hornet sightings in the UK in 2019.

[Home Secretary launches £25 million fund to prevent burglary and theft in crime hotspots](#)

A new £25 million fund to tackle burglary, theft and other offences in crime hotspots has been announced by the Home Office today.

Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) across England and Wales will be able to bid for Safer Streets Fund investment for measures aimed at preventing acquisitive crime in disproportionately affected areas.

Initiatives could target vehicle theft, robbery or burglary, among other crimes, and could include interventions to improve home security, such as installing better locks and gating alleyways, and make streets better lit at night.

Each crime prevention plan will have the potential to make communities safer while freeing up the time of police and other agencies to focus on more complex crimes.

The fund has been designed to ensure local communities can participate in the development of these plans and will also include money for community projects that complement them.

It will also target areas disproportionately affected by these crimes. Analysis shows that robberies, burglaries and theft disproportionately take place within certain communities – in 2017-18, the top 5% of local areas recorded 23% of all acquisitive crimes.

PCCs must work with local authorities and other partners to develop these plans, which need to be based on evidence, demonstrate value for money and

engage local communities.

As they are rolled out, each initiative will be assessed to help inform future government investments.

Funding will be available to areas from April 2020.

The Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and the Local Government Association were among those consulted on the design of the fund.