

## Press release: Russian passport decree concerning eastern Ukraine: UK statement

The Foreign & Commonwealth Office has issued a statement on the decree signed by Russian President Putin.

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## News story: NHS hospitals and GP practices to get fibre optic internet

Health Secretary Matt Hancock has announced plans to upgrade every hospital, GP practice and community care service to full fibre connectivity.

Almost 40% of NHS organisations are using slow and unreliable internet supplied through copper lines, which restricts the ability to offer digital services to patients.

Today's announcement supports ambitions in the NHS Long Term Plan to expand and improve online access to NHS services. Under the plan:

- every patient will get the right to choose a 'digital first' approach to primary healthcare, meaning that more of the 307 million patient consultations with GPs each year would in future be offered online, through video consultation, as well as face to face
- hospital outpatient clinics will also be redesigned with more 'virtual clinics' involving video consultations with consultants and nurses, supplemented by face-to-face appointments where necessary
- cloud-based patient records will help clinicians access crucial information, including high-resolution images, anywhere in the country, improving patient safety and speeding up appointments

Upgrading broadband will provide the fast, more reliable connections necessary for video consultations and sharing high-definition images at speed.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock said:

"Every day, our NHS staff do amazing work – but too often they are let down by outdated and unreliable technology. It's simply unbelievable that a third of NHS organisations are using internet that can sometimes be little better than dial-up.

“To give people control over how they access NHS services, I want to unlock the full potential of technology – this is the future for our 21st century healthcare system and a central part of our NHS Long Term Plan.

“Faster broadband connections can help us deliver these dramatic improvements – we need clinicians and other healthcare professionals to feel confident they can access fast, reliable broadband so they can provide patients with the best possible care.”

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## **Press release: Counter Daesh: Middle East Minister hosts roundtable with ambassadors**

Mark Field hosted ambassadors from the Middle East and North Africa to share analysis on the continued threat that Daesh poses to international security.

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On 29 April, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office interim Minister for the Middle East and North Africa, Mark Field, met ambassadors from the region to discuss the continued threat posed by Daesh. The Minister said:

Daesh once controlled territory roughly the size of the UK, but thanks to the military campaign by the Global Coalition and its partners on the ground it no longer occupies land. 7.7 million people have been liberated from its rule.

But as the Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt, has said, ‘we cannot be complacent. Even without territory, Daesh and its poisonous ideology will continue to pose a threat to the people of Iraq and Syria, as well as to the wider world.’

As the fight moves into this next phase, we will remain steadfast in our commitment to tackling the poisonous ideology of Daesh. I'm proud of the United Kingdom's contribution to this fight, not least through the work of the Counter-Daesh Communications Cell, which has created a unique model for the successful delivery of multinational counter-terrorist strategic communications campaigns.

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## **Press release: Arms Trade Treaty – UK government response to US withdrawal**

Following the US withdrawal from the Arms Trade Treaty, the UK has released a statement.