

Press release: Climate Change Minister visits Poland for UN conference on climate change

Foreign Office Minister with responsibility for Climate Change Mark Field attended the UN's major climate change conference COP24 in Poland on 6-8 December.

COP24 brought together representatives from governments across the world along with experts from science, business and finance to advance work on tackling climate change.

During his visit, the Minister met with senior Ministers and officials from a range of partner countries, including China, Germany, Indonesia, and Poland. He also hosted a series of events at the UK Pavilion, showcasing British expertise and green innovation, including an event to celebrate the UK-Poland Partnership on electro mobility and zero emission vehicles. The Minister highlighted the need for all countries to demonstrate higher ambition in their international commitments, and pushed for a robust set of rules to underpin the Paris Agreement.

The UK is committed to sharing its expertise and help developing countries in the global challenge of tackling climate change. The government has committed at least £5.8 billion of funding between 2016 and 2020 to help developing countries reduce emissions, and mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change. The UK will use our role leading on Climate Resilience at the 2019 UN Climate Summit to advance this work.

FCO Minister Mark Field said:

This year marks 10 years since Britain enacted the world's first comprehensive climate change law. It has been instrumental in our progress on climate change. Since then, we have decarbonised our economy faster than any other country in the G20, and we are leading the way in the shift from coal to renewable energy. But the reality is that we all need to do more.

COP24 has brought us together across government, civil society and business boundaries, to build on the Paris Agreement 2015. It is vital parties make good on their commitment to finalise a set of rules that apply to all and will ensure continuous improvement in the fight against climate change.

The conference will continue for another week, with Ministers from BEIS and DEFRA in attendance, as well as the Foreign Secretary's Special Representative on Climate Change.

Press release: James Brokenshire unveils action plan to combat rough sleeping

- New road-map sets out next steps to support thousands of people off the street for good as government works to end rough sleeping by 2027
- £11 million fund opened for councils across the country to support local people into safe accommodation where they can turn their lives around
- This builds upon concrete government action to create a further 1,750 new beds and 500 additional outreach workers

Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP has today (8 December 2018) unveiled the government's next steps to help people off the streets and meet its target to end rough sleeping for good by 2027.

Following the publication of the [Rough Sleeping Strategy](#) this summer, the Rough Sleeping Delivery Plan, to be published on Monday 10 December, sets out how important measures contained in the strategy will be delivered – including targets and tough deadlines for all 61 commitments.

These include:

- New Work Coaches for every single Jobcentre Plus by summer 2019 – helping the homeless to navigate the support available to them.
- An expectation placed on all councils to publish detailed rough sleeping and homeless strategies by winter 2019 – setting out how councils plan to provide specialist support and accommodation for vulnerable people on the street. Government will take action where councils fail to do so.
- Carrying out a comprehensive government study into the links between homelessness and the LGBT community – making sure the right support services are in place to help LGBT homeless people off the streets and into stable accommodation. The study will be published in summer 2019.

Ministers have also launched an £11 million fund for councils across the country to get as many people as possible off the streets and into secure accommodation where they can get the help they need to rebuild their lives.

This builds on the first year of the [Rough Sleeping Initiative](#), launched in March, which is providing £64 million to over 80 councils over the next 2 years in England to support rough sleepers in their area.

This funding is creating 1,750 new bed spaces, as well as an additional 500 outreach workers many of whom who are already working tirelessly to support people off the streets and into recovery.

Communities Secretary, the Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

No-one is predestined to spend their lives sleeping on the streets. Yet, despite this, too many people still sleep rough on any given night.

That is why we are taking action to provide support to help get people off the street this winter and set the foundations to put an end to rough sleeping altogether by 2027. This new action plan sets out the next steps to making this goal a reality.

And while we are already seeing progress, I am clear we must go further than ever to achieve our ambition of a country in which no-one needs to sleep rough.

The delivery plan also sets out more detail on the new Rapid Rehousing Pathway, putting in place structures to prevent and quickly respond to rough sleeping in the long term.

Other commitments outlined in the Delivery Plan include:

- Ongoing discussions with key sector bodies such as the Local Government Association and the Safeguarding Adult Boards Chairs Network to ensure that Safeguarding Adult Reviews are undertaken when a person who sleeps rough dies or is seriously harmed as a result of abuse or neglect; and
- Reporting on the findings of a feasibility study on the causes of homelessness and rough sleeping

In recent weeks, the first people supported through the Housing First pilot scheme in the West Midlands have moved into their new homes.

The pilot is 1 of 3 currently being funded by £28 million in government funding – with Liverpool City Region and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority also piloting the approach.

Further information

Government previously established the Rough Sleeping Initiative in March this year with £30 million allocated to 83 areas with the highest number of rough sleepers in June this year. A further £45 million was pledged for these areas at the launch of the Rough Sleeping Strategy.

A total of £34 million of this funding was provisionally allocated to the 83

authorities this September with the remaining £11 million to now be allocated to authorities outside of the initiative.

Bidding for this fund is open from today and will close in February. Allocations of this fund will follow in due course.

Case Study: Rough Sleeping Initiative

Cheshire East – Emerging Futures

- Funding from the Rough Sleeping Initiative this year has helped Cheshire East Council fund an organisation called Emerging Futures to deliver a number of beds for rough sleepers with complex needs – including substance abuse and mental health problems
- The majority of beds were filled within weeks and each individual has a dedicated support worker in place as well as additional 24/7 support from organisation staff
- Workers engage with the client to address their substance misuse and to help them rebuild their lives.

[Press release: James Brokenshire unveils action plan to combat rough sleeping](#)

Communities Secretary unveils the government's next steps to help people off the streets and meet its target to end rough sleeping for good by 2027.

[News story: Matt Hancock orders review into over-prescribing in the NHS](#)

The review will be led by Chief Pharmaceutical Officer Dr Keith Ridge. It will look at:

- addressing 'problematic polypharmacy' – where a patient is taking multiple medicines unnecessarily
- creating a more efficient handover between primary and secondary care, for example ensuring GPs have the data they need and feel able to challenge and change prescribing made in hospitals
- improving management of non-reviewed repeat prescriptions – including encouraging patients to ask questions about their treatment to ensure they don't remain stuck on repeat prescriptions which are no longer needed.
- the role of digital technologies in reducing overprescribing
- the increased role for other forms of care, including social prescribing

Estimated total NHS spending on medicines in England has grown from £13 billion in 2010 to 2011 to £18.2 billion in 2017 to 2018. This is an average growth of around 5% a year – with 1.1 billion prescription items dispensed in primary care by GPs and pharmacists.

Health Survey England 2016 found that nearly half of over 75-year-olds surveyed were taking 5 or more medicines, with this percentage rising the older people get.

While in the majority of cases patients will be receiving multiple drugs due to specific or complex needs, the review will look at how to ensure treatment remains up to date and appropriate so patients feel as well as possible.

The review will look at how doctors and pharmacists can be supported to review prescriptions and ensure patients are receiving the most appropriate treatment for their needs. It will also look at instances where:

- prescriptions are made for conditions which in individual circumstances may be better helped by other forms of care
- there is potential overlap in patients being prescribed multiple drugs to manage the same condition
- individuals are remaining on repeat prescriptions which roll over – often for many years – without being reviewed

The review will take into consideration individual circumstances where patients may be most at risk of adverse effects from overprescribing. Overprescribing can be particularly dangerous for older people, who are often taking several different medicines to manage complex conditions and may suffer side effects that lead to them falling and being admitted to hospital.

It will consider how new digital systems can assist primary care providers in creating a better picture of overprescribing in their area to allow more targeted action, ultimately creating better personalised care for patients.

Addressing overprescribing will be an important part of the Department of Health and Social Care's [prevention](#) strategy.

Action is already being taken across the health system to address over-prescribing, including:

- the Medicines Safety Programme, which is co-ordinating work on reducing

medication errors

- NHS England's Medicines Value Programme, which is working to reduce variation in prescribing using clinical evidence and the creation of metrics

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Recent advances in medicine have led to fantastic developments in managing and treating certain conditions, but poorly managed prescribing can lead to serious issues for patients such as increased admissions to hospital or antibiotic resistance.

As we invest an extra £20.5 billion a year into our NHS we want to empower doctors and pharmacists to use the data available to ensure patients get the medicines they need and stop taking those that no longer benefit them.

We also need to back our GPs to move towards alternatives such as social prescribing, so we can offer more tailored healthcare that focuses on prevention to stop people from becoming ill in the first place – improving care and reducing the burden on the NHS.

Keith Ridge, Chief Pharmaceutical Officer at NHS England, said:

Doctors, pharmacists and patients need to work together to ensure people are on the right medicines, for the right amount of time.

NHS England's recent successes in reducing unnecessary antibiotics and medicines with care homes and GP practices, on polypharmacy, and on beginning to end overmedication for people with learning disabilities, all show what can be – and indeed now is being – done on this important topic.

[Press release: UK Statement on Allegations of Chemical Weapons Use in Aleppo](#)



FCO Spokesperson:

The Syrian regime and its supporters have alleged that opposition forces carried out a chlorine attack on civilians in Aleppo on 24th November. We have seen nothing to support the claims made by Russia and Syria.

The UK assesses it highly unlikely that chlorine was used in this incident, as the regime and its Russian allies have claimed. It is highly unlikely that the opposition was responsible.

It is likely that this was either a staged incident intended to frame the opposition, or an operation which went wrong and from which Russia and the regime sought to take advantage.

We frequently see the Syrian regime and its partners making false claims and using disinformation to cover their tracks. Allegations that the UK or its allies are in any way involved in this, or any other incident involving chemical weapons in Syria, are complete fabrications.

We continue to work closely with international partners to establish more fully exactly what happened. We encourage those with relevant information to share it, and cooperate fully with the OPCW as it gathers information to further assess the incident. It is important for Syrians and the international community that the truth comes out.

The United States has today also issued a statement on this incident – <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2018/12/287941.htm>

Further information

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