

# Press release: Foreign Secretary pledges to do everything possible to protect wild animals

In the last five decades, the world has lost nearly 60 percent of its vertebrate animals. In case you believe that is just another statistic, think about what it means.

The magnificent wildlife that humanity has inherited – the animals that enliven our imaginations, enhance the beauty of the world and provide livelihoods for millions of people – are disappearing with terrifying speed. We have lost two thirds of Africa's elephants since the 1970s. We are down to the last 80,000 giraffes and the final 20,000 lions. The world's tiger population has dropped by 95 per cent in the last century.

If we go on like this, our grandchildren may only know of these animals from David Attenborough documentaries.

So today, I will open a conference in London attended by 80 countries on how to combat the illegal wildlife trade. The criminal gangs who smuggle horns and tusks pose one of the greatest threats to the survival of wildlife. They target some of the poorest countries in the world, spreading corruption and depriving governments of desperately needed revenues that could be used for schools and hospitals.

The World Bank estimates that governments lose as much as \$15 billion (£11 billion) every year because of illegal logging. And the same criminal networks that traffic the body parts of wild animals may also deal in guns and drugs and people.

This week, I have joined Penny Mordaunt, the International Development Secretary, to announce a new British initiative to target the traffickers by helping countries in Africa and Asia to launch investigations and seize assets. We are sending more British diplomats to Africa, including experts on combating the illegal wildlife trade.

Last year, our Parliament passed the Criminal Finances Act, strengthening the British Government's powers to combat money laundering and freeze unexplained wealth. Since then, we have placed another law before Parliament that would ban domestic ivory sales.

We will also contribute £250 million to the United Nations Global Environment Facility by 2022. As part of this, the Global Wildlife Programme has worked with Kenya on a new law imposing tougher punishments for wildlife crimes, including life imprisonment for anyone caught smuggling the body parts of an endangered species.

We are using our aid budget to help the UN Office of Drugs and Crime to

strengthen the ability of developing countries to enforce their laws against the wildlife trade and improve their investigative skills.

When laws are enforced and smugglers prosecuted, wildlife populations can and do recover. The number of wild tigers in Nepal, for example, has doubled in the last nine years.

The London conference will be the biggest international gathering of its kind ever held. My aim is for Britain to do everything possible to protect wild animals for the sake of our grandchildren. If we failed to act, quite simply we would never be forgiven.

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## **News story: Dounreay awards £22m waste store contract**

The project will see an existing above ground intermediate level waste store extended to house intermediate level waste that is expected to be processed and packaged as part of the site's clean-up. Passively safe containers will be kept in long-term storage within the facility in accordance with Scottish Government policy.

Work is expected to begin this month and take around 3 years to complete.

Construction Director David Hubbard said:

This contract represents an important step in the long-term management of the site's waste. It is just one of several contracts being awarded to ensure we continue to reduce hazards and make progress towards the site's interim end state. The next few years will see us construct several new facilities to support the programme as well as starting to demolish a number of redundant structures.

Around 100 people are expected to work on the project. GRAHAM has also committed to a series of community development initiatives, such as work placements and the recruitment of trainee positions, as part of Dounreay's requirement for its supply chain partners to consider how they can support Caithness and North Sutherland's socio-economic agenda. It plans to work with local training suppliers to develop its workforce involved in the project, including supporting some to achieve NVQ level 2 and above qualifications.

Leo Martin, GRAHAM Managing Director – Civil Engineering, added:

This is an important project on behalf of Dounreay and will support

the continued transformation of the nuclear site into a safe, secure area. We have already established a strong partnership with Dounreay Site Restoration Limited (DSRL), stretching back to 2012, and will once again apply our collaborative approach and technical expertise to maximise the success of this project.

This will be the latest in a series of facilities built to safely manage legacy waste at the Caithness plant. Two disposal vaults for low level waste have already been successfully constructed adjacent to the site by the same contractor.

Dounreay is Scotland's largest nuclear decommissioning project and is widely recognised as one of Europe's most complex nuclear closure programmes. The work is being delivered by DSRL, a company owned by Cavendish Dounreay Partnership, on behalf of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority.

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## [Press release: Record high levels of severe obesity found in year 6 children](#)

New data published today show the rate of severe obesity among year 6 children (aged 10 to 11) has increased by more than a third since 2006 to 2007 to 4.2%, its highest rate ever.

The latest data from the national child measurement programme (NCMP), overseen by Public Health England (PHE), also shows stubborn inequalities persist, with obesity in the poorest areas more than double that of the richest areas.

This highlights the importance of the government's steps to tackle childhood obesity. The most important aspects of these are overseen by PHE, including its challenge to the food industry to reduce 20% of sugar and calories in everyday foods consumed regularly by children.

The NCMP provides the most comprehensive picture of the state of childhood obesity for the 2017 to 2018 school year in England. It found:

- the proportion of overweight and obese children in reception year (aged 4 to 5) has remained stable at 22.4% (equal to 136,586 children)
- for year 6 children, it is 34.3% (equal to 197,888 children) compared to 31.6% in 2016 to 2017

- in the most deprived areas, 12.8% of children in reception year are obese, compared to 5.7% in the least deprived areas
- in year 6 it is 26.8% in the most deprived areas, compared to 11.7% in the least deprived areas
- in both age groups, severe obesity is 4 times higher in deprived areas

This week, PHE met with major trade bodies, retailers, manufacturers, out of home sector businesses – including takeaways, cafes and pubs – and public health NGOs, to discuss the next phase of the calorie reduction programme.

The second chapter of the government's [childhood obesity plan](#) was published in June 2018 and includes mandatory calorie labelling in the out of home sector, a restriction on price promotions on unhealthy foods and a ban on the sale of energy drinks to children.

Steve Brine, Public Health Minister said:

Obesity is a problem that has been decades in the making – one that will take significant effort across government, schools, families and wider society to address. We cannot expect to see a reversal in trends overnight – but we have been clear that we are willing to do whatever it takes to keep children healthy and well in this country.

We have already removed tonnes of sugar from children's diets through the sugar tax, which has funded vital school sports and breakfast programmes, and this summer we announced the second chapter of our childhood obesity strategy with a series of bold plans to halve childhood obesity by 2030.

Dr Alison Tedstone, Chief Nutritionist at PHE, said:

These continuing high rates of childhood obesity, combined with widening health inequalities, highlight why government is taking bold steps to tackle this crisis.

This threat to our children's health has been decades in the making – we're moving in the right direction but reversing it will not happen overnight.

Children with excess weight are more likely to suffer from poor self-esteem, bullying and stigma in childhood. They are also more likely to be overweight or obese as adults, increasing their risk of preventable illnesses including heart disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers.

PHE's [Change4Life campaigns](#) help millions of families to make healthier choices through meal swap suggestions and the Food Scanner app, which reveals the sugar, salt and fat in foods and drinks. Change4Life also supports schools to embed healthier habits into everyday school life.

Eustace De Sousa, national lead for children at PHE, said:

These figures are a stark reminder that addressing childhood obesity is everyone's problem.

We owe it to current and future generations to act now. Everyone – from the food industry to local councils – should play their part, but families can also make positive changes with help from Change4Life.

## Background

1. Latest NCMP data is published by [NHS Digital](#).
2. Severe obesity is BMI on or above the 99.6th percentile for a child's age and sex.
3. PHE published [Trends in children's body mass index](#) between 2006 to 2007 and 2016 to 2017 in July 2018.
4. PHE published [Childhood obesity: a plan for action, chapter 2](#) in June 2018.
5. PHE published [Sugar reduction: report on first year progress](#) in May 2018.
6. PHE published [Calorie reduction: the scope and ambition](#) for action in March 2018.

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## [Press release: IWT conference 2018: new funding for counter-poaching training in Africa](#)

On the first day of [the fourth international Illegal Wildlife Trade conference](#) in London (Thursday, 11 October 2018), £900,000 of new funding has been announced to develop a new British military counter-poaching taskforce.

The announcement builds on the significant success of, and lessons learned from, the UK's previous work to train rangers in Gabon and Malawi.

Operatives will be deployed to train African park rangers in more effective and safer counter-poaching techniques. The project aims to reduce the number of poaching incidents by catching poachers and bringing them to justice.

The UK will work in partnership with targeted countries to provide support for intelligence mapping, interception tracking tactics and operations management.

Training carried out by [the British Army](#) in Gabon and Malawi during 2018 has been well received with 84 Ecoguards being trained in Gabon, which will double by the end of the year, and 120 Rangers partnered in Malawi.

UK Environment Secretary, Michael Gove said:

The illegal wildlife trade is one of the most serious issues of organised crime facing the world. In the last year alone more than 100 rangers were killed on the front line of the fight against poachers – as an international community we must do everything we can to support their vital work. The ranger programme we are funding provides professional training and builds capability to tackle this crime across Africa.

This demonstrates the UK's global leadership and delivers our commitment in [the 25-Year Environment Plan](#).

UK Defence Secretary, Gavin Williamson said:

The training we already provide has made a significant difference to the protection of some of the planet's most magnificent wildlife.

As the British Army now takes its world-renowned training further across Africa, those responsible for this abhorrent practice should be looking over their shoulders.

Maj James Cowen, who led the deployment in Malawi, said:

Having seen the beauty of these animals up close, and how at risk their survival is due to poaching, we are more determined than ever to stop these criminals in their tracks.

Planning is currently ongoing to identify countries and parks across the region with which the British Army will partner and assist over the next year.

Assistance can be tailored to the needs of the specific parks and consists of both base located training, such as command and control and paramedic, and a partnering model that sees UK soldiers living and operating with Rangers – helping Rangers to improve techniques and procedures whilst the UK soldiers have been able to improve their own skills in tracking and bush craft; a true partnership.

Environmental Crime, which includes the illegal wildlife trade and illegal logging, is the fifth most lucrative serious organised crime and is estimated to be worth up to £17 billion a year.

The two-day conference in London (11 to 12 October 2018) is bringing more than 80 nations together including international political leaders, conservation organisations and individuals interested in closing down the vile trade in wildlife.

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## **Press release: Regulator publishes Sector risk profile 2018**

The Sector Risk Profile 2018, published today (11 October 2018) by the Regulator of Social Housing, highlights health and safety issues, failures to meet stakeholder expectations and reliance on sales as significant potential risks for social housing providers to manage.

The report, now in its sixth edition, sets out the range of strategic and financial challenges facing the social housing sector. It is designed to help registered providers, board members and others to understand the operating environment and to think strategically about how their organisation can manage its risks.

Whilst the sector continues to have to manage a range of issues to ensure that it remains viable and well governed, the regulator has highlighted 3 key areas for boards to consider. Boards should:

- be clear about their health and safety responsibilities, both for stock that they own and stock that they manage, to ensure that tenants are safe in their homes and staff are safe at work
- consider their stakeholders expectations in their decision making, including tenants and residents; lenders and investors; and central and local government
- ensure that sales activity is underpinned by an understanding of local housing demand and the mitigations available if sales and staircasing do not match expectations

This year's publication also emphasises risks to specialist providers, including the particular risks inherent in lease-based providers of supported housing, on which the regulator will be issuing a further report in due course.

Fiona MacGregor, Chief Executive of RSH said:

The risks facing each organisation will depend upon the scale and nature of that business. It is important that boards understand the specific issues that they face, carry out adequate stress testing and plan meaningful mitigations. We will look for assurance from providers that they have robust stress tests, internal control systems and appropriate risk management. We will also continue to monitor the exposure that sales risks have on the sector as part of our quarterly review of providers' overall financial strength.

The aftermath of the Grenfell Tower fire has seen unprecedented scrutiny of the social housing sector, landlords' relationship with their tenants, and public interest in the sector's wider social role. In this context providers must show how they are delivering on their social purpose and objectives, and meeting their promises and commitments. Where things go wrong providers should be open and transparent and look to put the issue right as quickly as possible. Failure to do so could not only undermine stakeholder confidence in individual providers but also affect the reputation of the sector as a whole.

The regulator's Sector Risk Profile 2018 is available on the [RSH website](#).

1. The regulator's annual Sector Risk Profiles are available on the [RSH website](#).
2. The Regulator of Social Housing promotes a viable, efficient and well-governed social housing sector able to deliver homes that meet a range of needs. It does this by undertaking robust economic regulation focusing on governance, financial viability and value for money that maintains lender confidence and protects the taxpayer. It also sets consumer standards and may take action if these standards are breached and there is a significant risk of serious detriment to tenants or potential tenants. For more information visit the [RSH website](#).
3. See our [Media enquiries page](#) for press office contact details. For general queries, please email [enquiries@rsh.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@rsh.gov.uk) or call 0300 124 5225.