

News story: Building support for veterans' mental health

As the UK joins in marking World Mental Health Day, a unique fundraiser which aims raise tp awareness of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in veterans has been devised by a police officer at the Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl)

PC Paul Cocoran (known as Coco) is behind the project, called 'Not Just Another Brick In The Wall.' It will see volunteers carrying bricks dedicated to the veterans who have lost their lives on operations, or who have sadly taken their own life as a result of mental health issues.

Raising money for the Rifles Care for Casualties Charity, Coco has set a target of £100,000.

Coco said:

If you think if a veteran has problems, he forms an imaginary brick and throws it into his rucksack, if he falls out with his partner, that's another brick, until he's weighed down and can't cope.

We want to highlight the issue of PTSD. We're even taking a brick with a blank plate on, to show this is an ongoing issue and we need to do more.

The challenge will be to walk 45 miles of Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland, over three days, carrying the bricks to the finish. Each brick will have a brass plaque with the name of a loved one inscribed. Made and engraved by apprentices at Dstl, Coco hopes the collection will be housed at the Light Infantry museum after the event.

Bee Shute, Apprentice Manager from Dstl, said:

It is fantastic that some of our second year engineering apprentices will be supporting this project by inscribing the brass plaques.

Over 150 people have already signed up, including some currently suffering from PTSD.

Before becoming a PC, Coco had a full career in the Army and was involved in Army sport. As a veteran, he's done a number of unusual challenges, including walking the Coast to Coast way carrying an ironing board, and raising £10,000 by recreating a sitting room on the summit of Snowdon.

Coco added:

Not just another brick in the wall means that these aren't just names, they are soldiers who were sons, fathers, brothers. Seven Rifles veterans have taken their own lives in the last year alone. I don't want to inscribe another brick.

For more information, or to get involved, search for Not Just Another Brick In The Wall on Facebook, or email paulcocoran@hotmail.com

[News story: UK aid to crack down on criminal gangs driving the illegal wildlife trade](#)

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt has today (10 October) announced a new joint initiative with the Foreign Office, to target wildlife traffickers and criminal gangs, tackling the global scourge of the illegal wildlife trade.

The UK aid project will launch investigations, seize assets and train law enforcement in East and Southern African countries and will be the largest known project of its kind to crack down on financial crimes associated with the illegal wildlife trade in the world.

Ms Mordaunt will set out this support at an event with the Duke of Cambridge, where global financial organisations will jointly declare that they “will not knowingly facilitate or tolerate financial flows that are derived from IWT and associated corruption”.

This Wildlife Financial Taskforce will initially comprise of representatives from 30 global banks and financial organisations such as Standard Chartered, HSBC, RBS and City Group, and agencies and regulatory bodies including TRAFFIC and RUSI.

Today's announcement comes ahead of the landmark [Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference](#) being held in London on 11-12 October, the largest conference ever to be held on this issue.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

We can only stop the illegal wildlife trade by targeting the international gangs and criminal networks which essentially drive it.

UK aid is directly supporting efforts to recover illegal assets, disrupt organised crime networks and stop the flow of dirty money so that we can protect endangered and trafficked species and bring those responsible to justice.

By protecting these species, UK aid enables some of the world's poorest people to benefit from sustainable jobs which depend on the natural world and endangered, wild animals.

Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said:

The illegal wildlife trade is driving endangered species to the brink of extinction and robbing communities around the world of vital income. To truly end this crime we need to tackle the corruption which allows the trade to flourish, with cross-border investigations which lead to successful prosecutions.

The UK is funding programmes committed to do just that, helping law enforcement authorities in African countries to trace dirty money back to the criminal syndicates behind the dreadful illegal trade in animals and animal parts. This will help put the criminal kingpins behind the trade behind bars, where they belong.

Participating in the illegal wildlife trade is currently a low risk, high reward crime.

Choking the ability of poachers and traders to move money is an essential component of stopping the trade. The same gangs trafficking wildlife products are likely to move other illegal goods, like drugs and weapons.

This new support is the largest UK aid project to specifically crack down on dirty money enabling the illegal wildlife trade. The support will:

- Drive up the number of investigations and successful prosecutions for corruption, money laundering and wildlife trafficking, by identifying individuals and groups committing the crime; and training law enforcement to conduct investigations.
- Increase the use of sanctions like freezing and seizing assets and visa bans, and encouraging new tactics like investigating money laundering and tax evasion to disrupt criminal networks and target individual bosses – just like Al Capone.
- Improve cooperation of domestic and international law enforcement so that entire criminal networks can be targeted – including police, investigative units, shipping companies and the private sector.
- Support 'parallel financial investigations', tracking dirty money to allow an arrest of low level poachers or traffickers to lead to the identification and arrest of high-ranking criminals.

This work will include countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Botswana and Côte d'Ivoire, where recent arrests of wildlife crime offenders provide

the opportunity to go after senior crime bosses. Others may be chosen for further action in due course.

What the UK's support will look like:

- Funding will go to the UN Office of Drugs and Crime to work with law enforcement, mentoring and training authorities in intelligence detection and investigative techniques
- The Egmont Centre will train, share best practice and improve international cooperation by Financial Investigation Units. Its members include the UK's National Crime Agency and US Department of the Treasury.
- The FCO's will focus on detecting, investigating and prosecuting corruption relating to IWT – which will have knock on benefits in preventing the negative influence of corruption on international trade (including UK investors and exporters) and critical public services. This will also finance protection for whistle-blowing to encourage the reporting of illegal activity.

The UK funded Global Wildlife Programme has already worked with Kenya's Parliament to enact the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act 2013, which increased both prison sentences and financial penalties for wildlife-related crimes, and this new initiative will help us secure more results like that.

NOTES TO EDITORS:

- This funding consists of £3million from DFID (this will come from a mix of new money and allocations from pre-existing budgets), and £0.5million from the FCO.
- This money will be allocated equally between The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Egmont Group, through the Egmont Centre of FIU Excellence and Leadership

This new project is the largest sum of money UK aid has committed to specifically tackle money laundering in the IWT and is the largest project of its kind globally. Previous examples of tackling criminal gangs include:

- In Mozambique, four individuals were jailed after being caught selling ivory tusks, their derivatives in handicrafts, and other prohibited animal products in the Central Market of Maputo in early 2018. These offenses were only recently criminalized after a gap in the Law on Protection, Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biological Diversity (Law 16/2014 of 16 June) was closed by Parliament through an amendment passed in 2017.
- In Malawi, the National Parks and Wildlife (Amendment) Bill 2016 sets tougher penalties for poachers and traffickers of "listed species," removing judicial discretion to impose monetary penalties for such offenses. Furthermore, for poaching and trafficking offenses related to both "endangered" and "listed" species, the Bill raises the maximum jail term for offenders to 30 years. Making use of the legislation in the Fall of 2017, a Malawian Chief Magistrate handed down an unprecedented total of an effective 36 years of prison time to three people convicted

for poaching a black rhinoceros in Liwonde National Park.

- In Namibia, The Nature Conservation Amendment Act No. 3 of 2017 increased fines for rhino and elephant poachers to N\$25 million and for illegal hunting of protected species to N\$10 million and imprisonment of five to ten years.
- Under the Zambia Wildlife Act of 2015, illegal possession of trophies such as elephant ivory and rhino horn is punishable with sentences of between five and ten years imprisonment with no option of a fine. In July of 2018, The Lusaka High Court upheld the conviction of three foreigners and two nationals who were sentenced to five years of imprisonment with hard labour in December 2017, after finding them guilty of being in illegal possession of 25 pieces of rhino horn. Several other poachers and traffickers have been arrested and convicted under the Wildlife Act of 2015.

Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference 11-12 October

With over 1000 delegates, the IWT Conference will be the largest of its kind ever to be held. 84 countries have confirmed that they will be sending delegations, spanning Africa (26); Americas (14); Asia and Oceania (17); Europe (23) and the Middle East (4).

The conference will focus on three themes:

- Tackling IWT as a serious organised crime: strengthening end to end law enforcement.
- Building coalitions: engaging the private sector, NGOs and academia; harnessing technology and innovation.
- Closing markets for illegally traded wildlife products: building on the Chinese ivory trade ban.

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[News story: UK aid to crack down on](#)

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Speech: Global Ministerial Mental Health Summit

A video recording of the speech is at the bottom of the page

Whenever I think about the scale of the mental health challenge before us, I take inspiration from a man who battled with his own mental health his entire life – and I use the word ‘battle’ quite deliberately.

For while he was a sufferer, he was never a victim. While he knew what defeat was, he was never prone to defeatism. He knew that each day required work just to achieve equilibrium. Or as he would have put it: “Keep the black dog on a leash.”

That man was Winston Churchill.

Were he alive today, he would quite possibly have been diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

There’s certainly no doctor alive who would have approved Sir Winston’s self-medication regime of champagne with lunch, brandy after dinner, and port, scotch and claret at all hours in between.

And I have no hesitation, and make no apology, for calling Churchill one of this nation’s – indeed one of the world’s – greatest ever leaders.

For while he may have had his flaws – which of us doesn’t? – he was ahead of his time in so many ways.

He spoke openly about his struggle with depression in the age of the stiff

upper lip and buttoned-up emotion, when any discussion of mental health was seen as a weakness – he showed humility, compassion and leadership.

Thankfully, attitudes have changed.

But have they changed enough?

Have we done enough to tackle the stigma, prejudice and discrimination that people with mental health conditions endure?

Have we ensured that mental health and physical health are treated equally? Not just in terms of resources, but in terms of priorities?

And have we stopped to think about the mental health impact and the mental health needs of the people we rely on most? Our doctors. Our nurses. Our paramedics. Our carers.

This summit, today's declaration and our commitment to achieving equality between mental and physical health is a bold, ambitious statement of intent.

For us to deliver on that pledge, on a global scale, we're going to have to change not only the way the public thinks, but the way politicians think about mental health. Because this is the defining challenge of our age. And it is a challenge which is sadly growing among young people.

In the UK, one in 10 children now has a mental health problem. Many of them will go on to develop serious mental health problems as adults unless they get the support they need.

For the sake of future generations, we must rise to this challenge. And I believe that together, we can.

And let us think about the vitality of this agenda this way:

The world has changed over a generation, where our lives, and especially the world of work, are defined less by our physical capability and more by our mental ability.

And in the coming generation, as we live through the march of the machines, and they increasingly take on cognitive tasks, so our lives will be defined by our emotional capabilities more than ever.

And as our shift in our lives moves from the physical to the cognitive to the emotional, so it's natural that we must shift in our healthcare to care equally about the physical, and the mental, and the emotional.

And I say this very clearly: some people still find this uncomfortable. Some still dismiss this agenda as being soft. But I defy you to talk to anyone on the brink, or look at the rising numbers of people in need of help, or live with the consequences of mental illness, and not to be moved by the scale of the task ahead.

So let us say: yes, some people find it hard to talk about mental illness.

And our task is to make that easier, to break the taboo, to help everyone get the support they need.

Because it's good to talk.

Change is happening. At the UN General Assembly last month we saw the first ever standalone event on mental health, hosted by Bahrain, Belgium, Canada, Ecuador and the Netherlands.

The UK, together with Australia and Canada, has launched the Alliance of Champions of Mental Health and Wellbeing.

This coming together of like-minded people, all committed to progress on mental health, must lead to substantive and sustainable action around the world.

The UK has made tackling mental health a priority. We are now spending record amounts of taxpayers' money on mental health services, nearly 12 billion (pounds) this year.

We have set out ambitious plans to increase the NHS' mental health workforce by 21,000, and expand mental health provision to a million more people by 2021.

We are making progress towards no division between mental health and physical health. It simply doesn't make sense. Not least, because both are inextricably linked.

People with serious mental illnesses, like major depression or schizophrenia, have a 40 to 60% greater chance of dying prematurely, often due to physical conditions which go untreated like cancer, heart disease and diabetes.

We can't improve physical health without improving mental health.

So, I can announce today, we're putting a further £30 million pounds into global mental health research through the UK's National Institute of Health Research.

And Public Health England has launched its new Every Mind Matters campaign, which aims to increase the number of people taking steps to improve and manage their own mental health, as they already do, in increasing numbers, their physical health.

I have been moved by some of the stories I have heard during this summit. Particularly from the people whose conditions have actually become worse as a result of the poor or inadequate services they have received. That is clearly unacceptable.

We have to ensure that whoever needs mental health support gets the support they need. And that it's the best, most up-to-date support it possibly can be.

But we must also change our view of people who need mental health services.

They aren't just patients or medical problems. They're people.

We need to look after people as people, we need to foster a culture that's less popping pills and Prozac and more prevention and perspiration.

And we must not forget or neglect to care for our carers.

Because they aren't just doctors, or nurses, or paramedics, or health workers. They're often pretty extraordinary people doing very extraordinary things.

And we owe it to those extraordinary people to look out for them. And to look after them.

As this summit has clearly shown, what we learn in one field, one workplace or one country can be applied elsewhere. We can and must keep learning from each other.

For ultimately, this is about changing the way we think about mental health. It's about changing attitudes.

And as Churchill said himself: "Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference."

I want to work with any nation, any partner who has a new idea or an innovative solution to tackle this global and growing challenge.

I want us to keep an open mind because while we should treat mental health and physical health the same, we know that treatment of mental health isn't the same or as straightforward.

So let us work together and on a global scale.

Let us act decisively.

And let us act now.

[Matt Hancock speech at the Global Ministerial Mental Health Summit in London](#)

Press release: UK-Vietnam joint statement, London, 10 October 2018

As part of events to welcome the 45th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the UK and Vietnam, His Excellency Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh paid an official visit to the UK from 9 – 10 October 2018.

The Deputy Prime Minister had official talks with Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, David Lidington, Secretary of State for International Trade, Dr Liam Fox and paid courtesy calls on HRH the Duke of York, Prince Andrew, and Speaker of the House of Lords, Lord Fowler.

During the visit, he also attended the UK-Vietnam Economic Forum and met some major UK companies.

On the occasion of the Deputy Prime Minister's visit, the UK and Vietnam note the growing importance of collaboration in the UN, on peacekeeping, global security, international law and the illegal wildlife trade. They highly appreciate and welcome the transition of the provision of the UN Level 2 Hospital in South Sudan from UK to Vietnamese peacekeepers, and a commitment to exchange expertise in peacekeeping-related military engineering.

The UK and Vietnam are strong advocates of free trade in Europe and Asia and actively promote the early signing of the EU – Vietnam Free Trade agreement (EVFTA) in 2018. The UK and Vietnam look forward to maintaining smooth trade relations as the UK leaves the EU, including through ensuring continuity for business by transitioning the prospective EU Vietnam Free Trade agreement during the Brexit transition. Both sides also agree to consult further on the prospects of the UK joining the CPTPP.

Both sides acknowledge the key role of education in the relationship including our strengthened science partnership on research, innovation and antimicrobial resistance. In pursuit of these goals, the Decision establishing the educational and cultural status of the British Council in Vietnam has been renewed. They also emphasise the importance of enhancing cooperation on bilateral cultural diplomacy so as to help strengthen the Strategic Partnership between the two countries.

Both sides reiterate their commitment to the UN sanctions regime to encourage DPRK to take steps to denuclearise fully and verifiably. They reinforce the importance of maintaining the ban on the use of chemical weapons globally. They agree that adherence to international law is the foundation for peace and stability and renew their commitment to upholding existing Arbitrations and to freedom of navigation and overflight. They hold the view that countries should resolve all disputes by peaceful means, in accordance with international law and through existing legal mechanisms.

Both sides express their support for the 2018 London Conference on IWT and agree on the importance of efforts to combat the illegal wildlife trade.

Both sides look forward to a deeper and closer relationship between the UK and ASEAN after the UK leaves the EU. They welcome further UK funding for expertise exchanges with Vietnam on anti-corruption, culture, health, civil service capacity building and reform, infrastructure, smart cities and low carbon, maritime security, peaceful settlement of international disputes.

The UK and Vietnam have a mutual commitment to regular Ministerial visits to both countries. They agree that the next round of the Strategic Dialogue between the two countries should take place in early 2019.