

Press release: UK leads the fight against increasing drug resistant TB

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt announced at the UN General Assembly yesterday (Wednesday 26 September) that UK aid will be dedicated to developing shorter, safer and more effective treatments for TB.

These new treatments could also help tackle the rise of drug resistant TB. In 2017 an estimated 600,000 people developed drug resistant TB but the success rate with current treatments is 55 per cent – making it a major public health crisis.

Scientists and health workers in developing countries are constantly battling to combat this leading killer infectious disease, with mortality rates being higher in low income countries such as Mozambique and the Central African Republic.

This latest support for the TB Alliance will help develop new, safer drugs for the disease, which last year infected 10 million people.

Speaking after a high-level meeting on TB at UNGA yesterday Ms Mordaunt said:

TB is the biggest killer among infectious diseases globally. The UK is already leading the way to tackle TB through investment in research and development. UK aid will help develop three new TB drugs, which offer quicker-acting treatments for the millions of people affected by drug-resistant TB each year.

The work of our expert scientists is bolstering our efforts to ensure we can tackle these diseases that do not respect borders. It is a win for the UK and a win for the developing world.

The UK government has been clear this research alone is not enough to meet the Global Goal target to end TB by 2030. That is why Heads of State will meet at the high-level meeting at UNGA to sign a political declaration, signalling a step-change in the international leadership and commitments necessary to drive progress on fighting TB.

DFID has also supported Aeras, a non-profit organisation working with GSK and other partners, to develop and test a new TB vaccine. Early results show the number of HIV-negative people developing TB was reduced by about half.

The UK already provides substantial support to international organisations, including the Global Fund, Unitaids and world-class research to develop new health products. These investments support large-scale TB programmes and critical research into innovative new medicines and diagnostics to help tackle TB. The UK's work in strengthening country health systems also plays a vital role in tackling the disease.

Yesterday the University of Oxford also announced its team of scientists and global experts have led a major breakthrough in the understanding of TB's genetic code. Their research has the potential to shape how TB is diagnosed in the future to make sure the right drugs are prescribed.

Dr Timothy Walker, Academic Clinical Lecturer in Infectious Diseases and Microbiology at the University of Oxford, said:

This is a new exciting era for TB diagnostics. These advances will soon mean those suffering with TB can get individual treatment that is right for them to help them fight the disease, moving beyond treating patients on a "best guess" basis.

Public Health England announced this week TB rates in England have dropped to the lowest level since 1990. The data showed a 38 per cent drop in new diagnoses from the peak in 2011 to 2017 (from 8,280 to 5,102).

Notes to editors

- £7.5 million new UK aid support has been given to the TB Alliance to develop shorter, simpler treatments against TB that are affordable to the poorest countries in the world.
- The [latest figures on TB published by the World Health Organization](#) show that in 2017, 10 million people developed this preventable and treatable disease and 1.6 million people died.
- Through our support to the Global Fund in the fourth replenishment round (2014-2016) the UK ensured TB treatment was provided to 1.26m people worldwide.
- The UK supports the Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics, which is developing new diagnostic tests for TB. Funding to date has included support for the highly successful GeneXpert test, which is now used in 140 countries, including the UK, to help improve diagnosis for TB.

[News story: New appointments to Competition and Markets Authority confirmed](#)

Business Secretary Greg Clark has today (Thursday 27 September) confirmed appointments to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) panel.

The CMA has subsequently appointed Martin Coleman as an Inquiry Chair and Panel Chair. As 1 of 4 Inquiry Chairs, he will be responsible for chairing groups of CMA panel members making decisions on Phase 2 merger inquiries,

market investigations and regulatory appeals.

The Panel Chair supports the effective operation of the inquiry process, including appointing members to inquiry panels. Mr Coleman takes over the role from Anne Lambert, whose term of office ended on 31 August 2018.

Currently a non-executive director of the CMA board – a role in which he will continue – Mr Coleman is also Deputy Chair for the Office for Students, the regulator for higher education in England, and a member of the CMA Remuneration Committee. He was formerly Global Head of Competition at an international law firm. His experience and expertise will aid the CMA's work in promoting competition for the benefit of consumers, businesses and the economy.

Kirstin Baker, who was recently appointed as a non-executive director and panel member by the Business Secretary, has also been confirmed by the CMA as a further Inquiry Chair. Ms Baker had a long career in the civil service and was most recently HM Treasury's Finance and Commercial Director.

The CMA is a non-ministerial department and the UK's primary competition and consumer authority. It has responsibility for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries, and enforcing competition and consumer law.

News story: UK Asset Resolution sale of an £860 million mortgage portfolio

The sale of an £860 million equity release mortgage portfolio, owned by Bradford & Bingley (B&B) and NRAM Limited (formerly part of Northern Rock), has been authorised by the Chancellor.

These mortgages were acquired by the taxpayer during the financial crisis and their sale simplifies the books of both B&B and NRAM, bringing the government closer to the final wind-down of these companies. It also marks a milestone in the plan to recover taxpayers' money – ten years on.

Following a highly competitive auction, these mortgages will be sold to Rothesay Life, a Financial Conduct Authority and Prudential Regulation Authority regulated firm.

There will be no changes to the terms and conditions of the mortgages sold. Borrowers do not need to take any action.

UK Asset Resolution (UKAR), the holding company for B&B and NRAM, will also at the same time terminate interest rate swaps, which hedge the risk of changes in interest rates, held against these mortgages. These swaps were

taken out by B&B and Northern Rock more than 10 years ago when the loans were issued, in line with good risk management practice. Due to the fall in long term interest rates, there is a substantial cost for terminating the swaps which is expected to exceed the profit on the sale of the loans, resulting in a net overall accounting loss on the two transactions.

The assets will be sold for a price above their book value. Proceeds from this sale will be used to pay down the national debt. However, given the unwinding of the swaps, national debt will be reduced by an amount which is less than the sale proceeds. These figures are subject to an adjustment mechanism and will be known when the transaction completes in the next few weeks, and subsequently disclosed to Parliament.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Philip Hammond said:

We're continuing to recover the money the taxpayer committed during the financial crash, and the sale of these loans moves us one step closer. The proceeds of this sale will go towards reducing our national debt.

B&B's and NRAM Limited's closed loan books are managed by UKAR on behalf of the taxpayer. Following this transaction, UKAR now owns c.£13 billion worth of assets, down from £21 billion in September 2017 and from £116 billion in 2010.

As a result of this transaction UKAR expects to repay approximately £1 billion of the government loan which is made up of a number of components in addition to the actual sales proceeds. Following repayment, UKAR will have repaid 94% of its loans from the government.

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[Press release: Cash boost for charitable prison and probation projects](#)

- charities and social enterprises given support for projects to promote wellbeing, improve rehabilitation and reduce reoffending

- part of commitment to support the third sector in delivering vital rehabilitative services

Offenders will be able to learn vital skills to help them back into work after release thanks to £2.4 million funding announced today (27 September 2018).

Grants have been awarded to 13 charitable organisations and social enterprises as part of new Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS) funding.

The grants have been awarded to a wide range of organisations providing everything from support into employment for female abuse victims to training for prisoners in computer programming.

Evidence shows having sustainable work on release significantly reduces reoffending; the support provided by these charities will help prisons promote employment opportunities for those who have been in custody.

Earlier this year the Secretary of State, David Gauke, announced the Education and Employment strategy, which will provide a new focus on work as having the potential to provide a foundation for a better life for people who have been in contact with the criminal justice system.

Prisons Minister Rory Stewart said:

I am delighted to be able to award this funding and have such a wide range of innovative organisations on board and ready to support offenders both in and out of prison.

This investment shows that we are committed to supporting the role of the third sector in delivering vital rehabilitative services.

Charities and social enterprises are crucial in helping us to provide better rehabilitation, promote wellbeing and ultimately reduce reoffending and I look forward to seeing the positive impact of these grants over the coming years.

Digby Griffith, Executive Director for Rehabilitation and Assurance, and Chair of the HMPPS Grants Board said:

We received a high calibre of applications and it is fantastic to be able to give these voluntary sector and social enterprise organisations the opportunity to test their innovative ideas within a HMPPS setting.

I am delighted to award this funding and I look forward to seeing the projects progress over the next 2 years.

The organisations were asked to submit innovative bids that met with seven key themes aimed at improving rehabilitation, promoting wellbeing and reducing reoffending.

As part of a comprehensive bidding process which saw over 200 applications for funding, the 13 successful applicants can be announced today, they are:

- St Giles Trust
- Barnardo's
- NEPACS
- National Autistic Society
- Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling Centre (Darlington & County Durham)
- Shared Enterprise CIC
- No Place Productions
- Birth Companions
- Samaritans
- Design Against Crime Research Centre
- Code4000
- Institute of Criminology, University of Cambridge
- Safer Living Foundation

The new money will be invested over 2 years, allowing a wide variety of voluntary sector and social enterprise organisations to develop their projects in a range of different environments across England and Wales – from Camden to Kirkham.

Code4000 will teach prisoners computer programming skills, Design Against Crime Research Centre will work with offenders to design and pilot new anti-vandal and safe cell furniture, while the Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling Centre (Darlington & County Durham) will support women who have experienced sexual violence to help them find employment on release.

The aim of the HMPPS grant programme is to improve the lives of offenders by applying the expertise, skills and ideas of voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations.

Community based organisations are often best placed to identify local needs and respond flexibly to engage with hard to reach groups, such as offenders and those at risk of offending.

This has been proven through the Grants Programme which has been the starting place for several activities, projects, products and ways of working which now form part of HMPPS core business.

Thanks to grant-funding, many projects are now embedded into HMPPS approaches. These include the Prison Listener Scheme, work undertaken by Unlock to help prisoners open bank accounts, family engagement workers, mentoring schemes and National Prison Radio.