

Open consultation: Air quality: using cleaner fuels for domestic burning

We want to know what you think about our proposals for helping householders move to cleaner fuels for domestic burning. The changes we propose include only allowing the sale of cleaner solid fuels. These proposals apply to England only.

Domestic burning is the single largest source of harmful particulate pollution in the UK. Many people do not realise that there are cleaner alternatives, such as dry wood instead of wet, or low-sulphur smokeless fuel instead of coal.

Press release: Minister announces '10 Prisons Project' to develop new model of excellence

- A new approach to improve standards and security will be piloted in 10 of the most challenging prisons
- The focus will be on reducing violence through radically increasing security against drugs and challenging all abusive behaviour
- There will be additional investment in leadership and dedicated resources to tackle drugs, security and building issues
- Good practice will be spread across the prison estate – ultimately reducing reoffending and future of victims of crime

The project will focus on challenging violent and disruptive behaviour and includes £10 million funding to fight drugs, improve security and, crucially, boost leadership capabilities through new training. The 10 will serve as models of excellence for the rest of the estate to follow.

Specifically, these 10 prisons have struggled with acute problems, including high drug use, violence and building issues. While the governors and staff at the prisons – Hull, Humber, Leeds, Lindholme, Moorland, Wealstun, Nottingham, Ranby, Isis and Wormwood Scrubs – have dealt with these challenges, this project will provide them with the resources and support to make decisive, lasting progress. It will be up and running in all 10 prisons by the end of the year – and tangible results will be expected within the following 12 months.

Under the programme, governors at each prison will be provided with new

scanners capable of detecting packages inside bodies, and sniffer dogs trained to detect new psychoactive substances. Further investment will go into repairing basic infrastructure such as broken windows.

Management will train and support staff to set the highest expectations for prisoners and challenge disruptive and violent behaviour fairly, consistently and firmly to restore order and control. This investment is in addition to the £30 million package announced by the Justice Secretary, David Gauke, in July. That included £16 million to tackle acute maintenance needs in the estate, plus £7 million for safety and security measures and the same amount again for securely monitored in-cell telephones.

The new £10 million package of investment will:

- Curb the flow of drugs and phones into prisons – £6 million has been designated to tackle drug supply by enhancing physical security at the jails; with investment in drug-detection dogs, body scanners, and improved perimeter defences.
- Improve safety and decency – there will be a focus on standardising residential areas inside the prisons. £3 million will support this through targeted improvements to the fabric of each establishment, ensuring that living conditions meet new standards of decency and cleanliness that are to be drawn up as part of the plan.
- Develop new standards of leadership – £1 million will fund bespoke training programmes and interventions to give governors the support they need to drive improvement at their prisons. They will have the opportunity to call on former officers and governors who will share best practice from their years of experience. A staff college model, inspired by the military, will be developed for Governors. More junior uniformed staff will be given the support and confidence to challenge disruptive behaviour.

Geographical clusters of prisons in Yorkshire, the north Midlands and London have been selected for the project, to ensure a targeted approach to tackling the supply of drugs from organised crime in those areas.

These measures are part of a much wider strategy to tackle the most pressing threats to security in prisons. At the heart of this is a £100 million investment in the frontline which has seen more than 3,500 additional prison officers recruited so far, with the majority already on the landings.

Prisons Minister Rory Stewart said:

With more than 20,000 prison officers, 84,000 prisoners, and over 100 prisons, it is vital we set challenging standards so prisons are places where offenders can turn their lives around.

With the right leadership on the ground, and support from the centre, these 10 prisons will pave the way for a new approach, a new ethos and a new direction. We need to make these prisons calmer, more orderly places and in the end that comes down to

challenging and managing prisoners consistently, firmly and fairly. And we will put our support and training behind our prison officers to make that happen.

“No-one can hope to change an entire system overnight. But through these vital improvements to 10 prisons, we can set a course for the rest of the estate to follow – leading us to a system that truly rehabilitates, cuts reoffending and ultimately keeps the public safer.

Notes to editors

- The £30 million package announced in July included an overall £7 million investment in safety and security. This will fund a range of new security measures, including airport-security style scanners, improved searching techniques and phone-blocking technology, along with a new digital tool will enable prisons to build a more detailed picture of the kind of risk an offender is likely to present – including the likelihood of involvement in organised crime.
- It included £16 million to improve the fabric of prisons, targeting establishments with the most pressing maintenance issues and ensuring that they are brought back up to acceptable standards. This is on top of the existing maintenance budget.
- Also £7 million on in-cell telephones for more prisons. Currently most prisoners queue for public phones on the landings, which can be the trigger for violence or fuel demand for illicit mobile phones. Some of our modern prisons have in-cell phones with strict security measures, meaning calls to family can take place in private. Prisoners will continue to pay to make these calls.

[Press release: New UK help to protect millions at risk from deadly airstrikes in North West Syria](#)

The UK government will help protect and assist civilians in North West Syria amid warnings that more than 2.9 million people in Idlib and surrounding areas are at risk of deadly attacks by the Asad regime and its backers.

The support announced today (Friday 17 August) by Minister for the Middle

East Alistair Burt will provide emergency assistance and vital medical support for people sheltering in Idlib. This includes support for four health centres and two mobile health teams, which will travel around the area treating the most vulnerable people.

The Minister also announced that UK aid is backing an innovative new technology which provides civilians with early warnings to save lives in communities bombarded by airstrikes. The technology, which has been developed by civilian technology company Hala Systems, works by detecting aircraft using remote sensors and machine-learning algorithms, before sending early warnings to civilians through air raid sirens and social media alerts. Thanks to UK support, it has already warned more than 2 million people and is estimated to have reduced casualties by up to 27% in areas under heavy bombardment.

The Minister added that the UK is supporting the UN and other partners on an emergency response plan ahead of an anticipated escalation in the conflict.

Speaking today, Minister for the Middle East Alistair Burt said:

The UK is extremely concerned about escalating military action by Asad and his backers on almost 3 million civilians who have sought shelter in Idlib and surrounding areas. These are people who have suffered through more than 7 years of fighting; many have already been displaced multiple times.

Today's UK aid package will make sure the most vulnerable can get the medical treatment, food, water and support they so desperately need. But this is not enough. That's why we're also funding an innovative early warning system that is proven to reduce civilian casualties from airstrikes.

A humanitarian catastrophe in Idlib is avoidable. The UK supports the urgent diplomatic efforts being made by Turkey and the UN. We call on the Syrian regime and its backers, Russia and Iran, to uphold the ceasefire they have agreed, and to respect international humanitarian law. They should also be clear: we will respond appropriately if the Asad regime repeats its appalling use of chemical weapons.

The North West of Syria has become a refuge for around 1.9 million displaced people that have fled fighting throughout the country, bringing the region's total population to around 4 million, 2.9 million of whom are living in Idlib and surrounding areas.

There have already been at least 37 attacks on health facilities in the Idlib region so far this year and civilians, aid workers and medical staff fear for their safety.

The influx of civilians has stretched scarce resources in the region and tens of thousands are living in tents in crowded camps, with demand for humanitarian assistance being greater than ever before.

Today's UK aid package will also:

- support four health centres and two mobile health clinics in Idlib by providing doctors, nurses, midwives, medicine and medical equipment to treat people fleeing fighting;
- provide psychological support to protect women and children suffering from trauma, distress and other mental health conditions;
- provide 3200 dignity kits for women and 5000 kits for children in Idlib;
- provide support staff to ensure the most vulnerable people can access essential services and are legally protected, including by helping them access civil documents such as birth and marriage certificates; and
- provide one-off cash transfers to the most vulnerable families fleeing into Idlib so that they can essentials such as food, water and fuel for heat.

The brutal Syrian civil war, now in its eighth year, has already cost an estimated 400,000 lives, with over 11 million people displaced by conflict and causing a severe shortage of food, clean water and healthcare.

Britain has been at the forefront of the response to the Syria crisis and already we have delivered 27 million monthly food rations, 10 million relief packages, 10 million vaccines against deadly diseases and 12 million medical consultations for those in need in Syria.

- Today's package of UK aid support for North West Syria is part of a wider £10 million new allocation for the UK's response to the Syria crisis. For security reasons, we cannot name all of our partners delivering aid in Syria.
- Through the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund, alongside our international partners, the UK has supported Hala Systems, a social enterprise focused on developing innovative technical solutions aimed at helping protect civilian communities caught in conflict, including in Syria.
- The UK is a leading donor in the humanitarian response. To date we have committed over £2.71 billion in humanitarian funding to the region.
- For more information on the UK's humanitarian response to the Syria crisis, visit:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/factsheet-the-uks-humanitarian-aid-response-to-the-syria-crisis>
- Alistair Burt is a Minister of State at both the Department for

[Press release: Positive response from EU needed to secure our continent's shared prosperity](#)

- the government's substantial EU Exit white paper stresses the importance of reaching an agreement that benefits the UK and the EU
- latest discussions by Business Secretary with ministers and businesses across Europe underlines need for positive response from the EU

The EU Commission must respond positively to the [Chequers white paper](#) to ensure our continued strong economic ties and avoid sustained economic damage.

This was the message from Business Secretary Greg Clark when he met his ministerial counterparts, businesses and investors in Austria and Finland to discuss how the Chequers white paper sets the foundations for a positive future trade relationship with the EU compared to the negative impact of 'No Deal' on both member states and the UK.

Speaking after his latest discussions in Austria and Finland Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

Since the publication of the white paper I have travelled to 5 EU capitals to discuss our proposals with ministers and businesses. I am confident the UK and the EU now have the foundations and opportunity to come to a pragmatic and mutually beneficial deal.

My discussions across Europe have demonstrated how clearly it is in everyone's interest that an agreement is reached quickly and 'No Deal' is avoided. The Commission has a responsibility to all the people of Europe to respond positively and constructively, if not, the disruption and impact on our continent's businesses, economies, and millions of hard working families across the UK and EU will be significant and lasting.

In Austria (14 August), Greg Clark met Ministers from both of Austria's coalition partners, the People's Party (ÖVP) and the Freedom Party (FPÖ), including the Minister for Economy and Digitalisation Margarete Schramböck (ÖVP) and Vice Chancellor Heinz-Christian Strache (FPÖ), as well as leading Austrian businesses with investments in the U.K. and U.K. companies with

interests in Austria.

Visiting Finland on Wednesday (15 August), Greg Clark met Mika Lintilä, the Economy Minister and also with Finance Minister Petteri Orpo, as well as Finnish companies with interests in the UK.

The Business Secretary also discussed the challenge and opportunities all countries are facing in preparing our economies for the industrial revolution that is taking place across almost every sector. Ensuring the UK through its Industrial Strategy builds on its strengths to take advantage of the opportunities that lay ahead and provide the high skilled, well paying jobs in the industries of tomorrow.

Business Secretary has met to discuss the white paper with ministers and businesses in:

- France – Minister for Economy and Finance Delphine Geny, 24 July
- Portugal – Cabinet Minister Pedro Siza Vieira and Economy Minister Dr. Manuel Caldeira, 25 July
- Italy – Foreign Minister Enzo Moavero Milanesi and Europe Minister Paolo Savona, 26 July
- Austria – Minister for Economy Margarete Schramboch and Vice Chancellor Heinz-Christian Strache, 14 August
- Finland – Minister of Economic Affairs Mika Lintila and Minister of Finance Petteri Orpo, 15 August

Press release: Smart meter enabled technology could see electric car owners cut bills and make money

- growing number of electric car owners could save and even make money from innovative technology by selling energy back to the grid
- smart energy innovations, including smart tariffs, could save the UK as much as £40 billion between now and 2050

Energy Minister Claire Perry today (16 August 2018) hailed OVO Energy for its “innovative” electric vehicle (EV) products – enabled by smart meters – which could see millions save and even make money from their electric cars.

OVO Energy, based in Bristol city centre and London, is one of just a few companies already using smart meters to offer innovative products, such as rewarding customers for charging their electric vehicles at off-peak times. These offers, made possible thanks to a smart meter, help customers use energy at times when there is less demand on the grid, in turn saving money on their bills.

Smart charging and Vehicle to Grid charging could become a cornerstone of the way we use energy in the UK, with more than 8 million people in Britain considering buying or leasing an electric vehicle in the next 5 years. With this technology, customers will not only be able to choose to use energy at the cheapest times but also make money by selling energy from their vehicle's battery at times when it is most in demand. This will support the growth of renewable energy generation in the UK.

Smart energy innovations, such as smart tariffs and smart charging, could save the UK as much as £40 billion between now and 2050.

Smart meters also support OVO's intelligent platform VCharge, which is enabling residential appliances such as electric vehicles, electric heaters and in-home batteries to help balance the grid and reduce energy costs.

Energy and Clean Growth Minister Claire Perry said:

More than 11 million meters are already empowering consumers to reap the rewards of a smarter energy system, putting homes and small businesses on the road to a smarter future.

Smart meters will be the cornerstone of a cleaner, flexible and efficient energy system, saving the country tens of billions of pounds.

New innovative products and tariffs like these will put consumers in the fast lane when it comes to control of their energy use, saving and even making them money when using their electric vehicles.

These products are just one of the ways smart meters save money. They put people in control of their energy use by showing them how much energy they use in pounds and pence via an easy to understand In-Home Display. With this information at their fingertips, consumers can easily understand how they can make small changes to the way they use energy in order to use less and save money on their bills – up to £1.2 billion a year by 2030.

Stephen Fitzpatrick, CEO and Founder, OVO said:

Getting the smart meter rollout right should be the top priority for the government and the energy sector in the UK right now so it's encouraging to see the minister here today.

The smart meter rollout is a huge and complicated programme. However, there's no question it needs to be done as we can't build the energy system of the future unless we know accurately how much energy people are using and when.

OVO is using technology like electric vehicles, smart electric heat and batteries to help lower energy bills for consumers and enable

us to use more renewable energy. None of this technology will work without smart metering.

We welcome the government's recent efforts to improve the delivery of smart meters but there is still more work to do.

At OVO's offices, the minister also met with their smart meter installation engineers, who undergo thorough training ahead of installations. When having a smart meter installed all homes and small businesses benefit from a free visual safety check of their gas appliances and electricity supply; and the past 18 months alone, installers have raised 430,000 safety notices for issues not related to smart meters during installation visits as part of the free visual safety check provided.

More than 400,000 meters are being installed by energy suppliers across Great Britain each month. Consumers can call their supplier and book an appointment to have one installed.

More than 500,000 households in the South West have already had a smart meter installed and those still without one could save a collective £50 million if they had a smart meter installed. If every household in Great Britain got a smart meter, we could save enough energy to power every household in Exeter, Plymouth and Swindon for 2 years.

Apprentices powering Hinkley Point C

Separately, the minister also visited new nuclear site Hinkley Point C today, where a 250-strong apprentice force is powering this Somerset nuclear project – site owners, EDF expect 1,000 apprentices to work on the project during its lifespan.

Hinkley Point C is the UK's first new nuclear power station in a generation and is poised to make a major contribution to the UK's move to reduce carbon emissions through clean energy production.

Nuclear energy already provides around 20% of the UK's electricity from existing sites and Hinkley Point C's future output will significantly boost this figure. The clean electricity it will generate upon completion is all part of this government's modern Industrial Strategy, which actively encourages clean growth in business and energy production, helping to create better higher-paying jobs across the UK.

Hinkley Point C remains on track to meet its next major milestone, the 2019 nuclear concrete construction target of completing the foundations for the first reactor. Energy production is expected to start in 2025.

Notes to editors

82% of people with smart meters say they have a better idea of their energy costs and 8 out of 10 people with smart meters say they would recommend them to friends or family.

For more information about the benefits smart meters can bring and to dispel myths surrounding them view our explainer '[Smart meters – the smart choice](#)'.