

# Press release: UK launches new research and innovation hub to tackle scourge of plastic in our seas and oceans

- UK's world-leading researchers to collaborate with peers from Canada, India and other Commonwealth countries to tackle this global challenge
- new global hub will bring together scientific and technical expertise to share the latest thinking on creating sustainable alternatives to plastic and stopping plastic entering oceans
- high-profile names Unilever and Waitrose are backing the hub financially
- British Plastics Federation and the Ellen MacArthur Foundation are among the top names that have given their support

The UK, working with other Commonwealth countries, will launch a research and innovation hub for experts to develop solutions to stop plastic waste from entering our oceans and find environmentally-friendly alternatives to plastic.

India, Canada and other Commonwealth nations have already signed up to be part of the new Marine Plastics Research and Innovation Framework – a hub where researchers will be able to connect and collaborate on the latest research and innovations to tackle marine plastics.

The UK will play a leading role in designing and running the Framework, encouraging the world to move towards clean growth through the government's modern [Industrial Strategy](#). An international steering board will oversee the work.

The Prime Minister announced that the [UK would contribute £25 million to the Framework](#) during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in London.

So far Unilever has committed £5 million in research and development, while Waitrose has pledged £0.5 million of research.

The British Plastics Federation, which represents more than 500 UK companies, the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP), RPC Group Plc and engineering giant Mott MacDonald are among those who have given their support, including access to their facilities, networks and expertise.

Energy and Clean Growth Minister Claire Perry said:

Plastics are not only polluting our waters, they are contributing to climate change and killing sea life.

This Framework will help develop options for alternative uses to

prevent plastics from ending up in our seas. It also ensures that the UK is at the forefront of encouraging the world to move towards clean growth, tackling the threat from marine plastic and protecting our oceans for future generations.

Minister of State for Universities, Science, Research and Innovation, Sam Gyimah said:

Plastics are clogging our oceans and threatening our sea life to devastating effect.

This hub will bring together the brightest minds in UK science and innovation to solve this problem.

Chief Executive Officer of Unilever Paul Polman said:

It is critical that governments, businesses and others from across the Commonwealth work in partnership to step away from our take-make-dispose model of consumption.

We are delighted to be contributing £5 million worth of research and development to the Framework.

Managing Director of Waitrose Rob Collins said:

With plastic waste one of the great challenges of our time, we strongly support the Commonwealth Summit's plans and targets to tackle this issue.

1. This Framework will bring together experts, governments and businesses from across the Commonwealth to support knowledge sharing and new research in a broad range of issues – from stopping plastic waste entering the oceans in the first place and fostering a more circular economy, to exploring sustainable ways to clean up our seas and developing environmentally friendly alternatives to plastic.
  2. [The Prime Minister speaks at the Commonwealth Joint Forum Plenary: 17 April 2018](#)
  3. Our [Clean Growth Strategy](#), published October 2017, commits government to work towards an ambition for zero avoidable waste by 2050.
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# Press release: Director of Labour Market Enforcement calls for measures to tackle exploitation of low paid workers

- [Director of Labour Market Enforcement](#) calls for holiday pay to be enforced and payslips for all workers
- new [independent report](#) includes recommendations for bigger financial penalties for employers who break the law and tougher enforcement of rights for agency workers
- Sir David Metcalf calls for big companies to share responsibility for wrongdoing in the supply chain, including naming firms whose suppliers break employment law
- HMRC stats out today show its enforcement team helped 200,000 workers get pay owed to them

Sir David Metcalf's independent strategy published today (Wednesday 9 May 2018) includes recommendations on:

- higher financial penalties for employers who exploit their workers and pursuing more prosecutions
- enforcing holiday pay and making it the law that employers must provide a statement of rights for employees and a payslip for all workers
- making leading brands jointly responsible for non-compliance in their supply chains. This would be done in private but with public naming of the brand and supplier for failure to correct non-compliance
- more resources to the Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate to enforce current regulations and expanding their remit to cover umbrella companies and intermediaries
- locally or regionally piloting licencing of hand car washes and nail bars, which have been identified as sectors at risk of labour exploitation
- tackling 'phoenixing' – the practice of directors dissolving their companies to avoid paying workers tribunal awards and other enforcement penalties

The report is launched as new HMRC stats show that its enforcement teams have doubled the number of underpaid workers they have recouped money for to 200,000 in 2017.

Sir David Metcalf said:

This strategy sets out how we can toughen up enforcement activity to protect vulnerable workers and ensure that good, compliant firms are not undercut by unscrupulous competitors.

It's important the government has the necessary powers to crack down on bad bosses who exploit and steal from their workers – that includes bigger penalties to put employers off breaking the law.

I'd like to thank all the employers, workers and regulators I have met in the last year that have given me very valuable insights into the labour market.

Sir David Metcalf was appointed in January 2017 to oversee a government crackdown on exploitation in the workplace by setting the strategic priorities for the government's 3 enforcement agencies:

- HMRC's National Minimum Wage (NMW) enforcement team
- the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA)
- the Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate (EAS)

In February 2018 the government set out its 'Good Work plan' which introduced new reforms to ensure employment law and practice, giving millions of workers new day-one rights with sick and holiday pay to be enforced for vulnerable workers for the first time. The plan included proposals to increase transparency in the labour market, employment status, agency workers and enforce employment rights, with workers given new rights to get a payslip and a list of their rights when they start a job. In March the government also launched a consultation to improve the UK's corporate governance framework which included proposals to give the Insolvency Service new powers to investigate directors of dissolved companies.

Business Minister Andrew Griffiths said:

We will not accept illegal behaviour from bosses who exploit their workers and cheat the competition which is why we are already cracking down on irresponsible company directors and boosting protections for workers.

We will enforce holiday pay and give new rights for every worker to get a payslip and a list of their rights when they start a job as part of our modern Industrial Strategy plans to build a Britain fit for the future.

I'd like to thank Sir David for his important work looking at enforcement and exploitation in the labour market.

Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability Victoria Atkins said:

Forced labour and other forms of modern slavery are cruel, barbaric crimes no individual should suffer and we will continue to work with Sir David Metcalf and other partners to stop the abuse of vulnerable workers.

Through the Modern Slavery Act and reforms to the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority, our world leading approach means law enforcement have the powers to identify victims, protect vulnerable people and bring offenders to justice.

I am pleased that the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority is using its new powers to tackle worker exploitation across the economy with successful investigations into high risk sectors, such as hand car washes and nail bars.

The government will respond formally to Sir David's report in full later this year.

1. The government's [Good Work plan](#) was published in February 2018, launching consultations on increasing transparency in the labour market, employment status, agency workers and enforcing employment rights. This was in response to [Matthew Taylor's review into modern working practices](#) in July 2017.
2. The government is [consulting on measures](#) to crack down on company directors who unfairly shield themselves from the effects of insolvency and profit from business failures while workers and small suppliers lose out.
3. The Immigration Act 2016 created measures to improve the response to labour market enforcement including creating the role of the Director of Labour Market Enforcement and reforms including widening the remit of the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority (previously the Gangmasters Licensing Authority) and giving it new powers under the Police Criminal Evidence Act 1984 to investigate labour market offences across the entire economy. The Act also introduced new Labour Market Enforcement Undertakings and Orders to tackle serious or persistent offenders.

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## Notes to editors

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## [News story: Dstl scientists inspire more women to choose STEM careers](#)

Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) scientists are supporting the WISE (Women in Science and Engineering) conference today, Wednesday 9 May 2018, which aims to inspire more girls to choose to study or work in science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM).

In their roles as WISE Co-chair and Executive Sponsor respectively, Phillippa Spencer and Penny Endersby will be panel members at the annual conference – Penny on a panel about creative career paths and Phillippa looking at

“patently biased” – about why so few patents are raised by women.

Dstl is a corporate member of WISE as part of our commitment to a diverse STEM workforce. 30%, and rising, of Dstl’s 3,000 scientists, engineers and mathematicians are women, and we seek best practice elsewhere to improve gender equality in Dstl. We are also committed to sharing our own good practice and experiences in this area, which is why Penny and Phillippa are delighted to be attending this conference.

WISE enables and energises people in business, industry and education to increase the participation, contribution and success of women in STEM.

The UK government’s new Industrial Strategy makes a commitment to invest in science, research and innovation and to do more to commercialise the UK’s world leading science base to drive growth.

Penny Endersby, Division Head at Dstl, said:

I have a very soft spot for WISE having had my first experience of what a life in science and technology might be like as a WISE scholar in my sixth form. The inspiration I took from that experience set me off on a career path which has been fulfilling and exciting beyond what the 17-year-old me could ever have imagined.

I have since learned the importance of providing mentors and role models at every career stage and the power of being encouraged to try new things. I hope that the conference will cause women at all stages in their careers to back their talent and reach for the next challenge.

[Read more about the WISE conference.](#)

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## **Speech: Standing in solidarity alongside those who want a more prosperous and stable future for Bosnia and Herzegovina**

Thank you Madam President, and congratulations on taking up the Presidency. We wish you every success. Thank you also to High Representative Inzko, and your team, for your objective and detailed reports and for your continued efforts to support the implementation of the General Framework for Peace in

Bosnia and Herzegovina. You have the United Kingdom's full and continuous support.

Madam President, I would agree with my French colleague that today, Bosnia and Herzegovina remains at a crossroads. In the six months since we last met, there has been some small, incremental reform progress, and the reaching of at least two significant milestones. And yet, the vestiges of division continue to mar that progress and to prevent Bosnia and Herzegovina reaching the potential its citizens deserve. I will briefly touch on those two milestones.

First, the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia issued its final judgments in November and, at the end of the year, transferred responsibility to the Mechanism for International Criminal Tribunals. We recognise the tribunal's achievements, including the first instance conviction of former wartime commander Ratko Mladić of genocide and crimes against humanity. Although Mladić's conviction will not bring back the thousands who lost their lives, it demonstrates that the architects of suffering will be held to account, giving others around the world hope that there can be justice for appalling human rights abuses. The court has accumulated a wealth of practical knowledge and experience over the 24 years it has been operating. And it is important that the lessons learnt are shared with other international criminal courts and tribunals.

The Tribunal has done ground-breaking work to investigate, prosecute and convict perpetrators of wartime sexual violence. I would like to echo the report of the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee in welcoming Bosnia and Herzegovina's initiatives to integrate women, peace and security in counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) issues through the development of national and local action plans, and the UK would encourage Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue and intensify its efforts on this trajectory.

Madam President, it is a matter of regret that some political leaders have disputed the rulings of the Tribunal and the decisions of domestic war crimes chambers in the region, and have even made inflammatory remarks about a return to conflict. I agree with my American colleague that we should condemn such rhetoric, which privileges the pursuit of political advantage ahead of the pursuit of justice for victims and a peaceful future for all.

Second, Bosnia and Herzegovina submitted its EU questionnaire earlier this year. We commend Bosnia and Herzegovina for this achievement, which was not insignificant given the complexities of the system being assessed.

But we have been disappointed to see only limited commitment to the difficult but essential reforms that underlie the political commitment to becoming an EU member state.

Now the questionnaire has been submitted, Bosnia and Herzegovina must demonstrate the commitment to uphold the rule of law and to implement agreed reforms.

Among these, as my Dutch colleague has already highlighted today, there is an urgent need to amend the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code on special investigative measures in order to comply with the Constitutional Court decision of June 2017 and align with international standards. Failure to do so would seriously undermine the fight against corruption and organised crime, put in jeopardy international cooperation, and the security of partner countries.

Madam President, as the High Representative noted, 2018 will also be a significant year for Bosnia and Herzegovina with elections expected in October. However, amendments to the electoral law are necessary so the results of those elections can be implemented. If political leaders fail to agree to amendments, the entire country will be exposed to an unnecessary and serious risk. Political leaders must demonstrate their ability to compromise on a solution without further delay, and move towards European standards.

As elections approach, we see an opportunity for Bosnia and Herzegovina to focus on the future, not the past. Divisive nationalist rhetoric demeans those who use it and does a disservice to the people and the country as a whole. The United Kingdom encourages the political leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina to demonstrate to their people and the European Union that they are committed to building a better and more secure future for them and their children.

The consequences of Bosnia and Herzegovina's divisive politics are easy to see. Huge numbers of young people leave every year in search of the political stability and employment opportunities that they are denied at home. The people of Bosnia and Herzegovina deserve better.

As a longstanding friend of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the UK will continue to stand in solidarity alongside those who want a better, more prosperous and stable future for the country, including as Bosnia and Herzegovina pursues Euro-Atlantic integration. The UK's hosting of the Western Balkans Berlin Process summit in London this summer is a signal of that solidarity and commitment. We remain committed, too, to Operation Althea and the High Representative, including the use of Bonn Powers if the situation requires, until stability and security are firmly entrenched.

Thank you.