

News story: Women to have dedicated midwives throughout pregnancy and birth

Health and Social Care Secretary Jeremy Hunt has announced that the majority of women will receive care from the same midwives throughout their pregnancy, labour and birth by 2021.

The first step towards achieving this will see 20% of women benefiting from a 'continuity of carer' model by March 2019. Research suggests that women who use this model are:

- 19% less likely to miscarry
- 16% less likely to lose their baby
- 24% less likely to have a premature baby

To help achieve this, the NHS plans to train more than 3,000 extra midwives over 4 years. There will be 650 more midwives in training next year, and planned increases of 1,000 in the subsequent years.

Mr Hunt said:

There are few moments in life that matter more than the birth of a child, so the next step in my mission to transform safety standards is a drive to give mums dedicated midwives, who can get to know them personally and oversee their whole journey from pregnancy to labour to new parent. The statistics are clear that having a dedicated team of midwives who know you and understand your story can transform results for mothers and babies – reducing stillbirths, miscarriages and neonatal deaths, and the agony that comes with these tragedies.

This profound change will be backed up by the largest ever investment in midwifery training, with a 25% expansion in the number of training places, as well as an incredibly well deserved pay rise for current midwives.

There will also be further investment in maternity support staff, including:

- professionalising the Maternity Support Worker (MSW) role – a defined role and national competency framework will be developed and a voluntary accredited register will be established to provide assurance to the public that they are appropriately trained to high standards
- working with the Royal College of Midwives and other partners to develop new training routes into midwifery – this will help talented support workers to develop and move quickly to become registered midwives and help the midwifery profession attract and retain talented staff

These measures support Mr Hunt's ambition to halve the rates of stillbirths, neonatal and maternal deaths, and brain injuries that occur during or soon after birth by 2025.

Sarah-Jane Marsh, Chair of the NHS England Maternity Transformation Programme, said:

Taken together, this set of announcements has the potential to be the turning point in the health of a generation, and we look forward to welcoming thousands more midwives to the NHS frontline.

Midwives are the lifeblood of maternity care and these additional numbers will make a huge impact, enabling the majority of mothers in this country to have the same midwives throughout their entire maternity journey, including during childbirth.

Greens welcome National Grid support for bringing forward petrol and diesel ban



27 March 2018

The Green Party of England and Wales today expressed their support for the announcement by the National Grid's Director of Electric Vehicles that they would support the government bringing forward its 2040 ban on new petrol and diesel car sales by a decade. [1]

Speaking today, Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley noted that this was a further sign that the Green message was resonating:

"Phasing out petrol and diesel sooner will be better for everyone. Not only will it make the air we breathe cleaner and healthier, but it will make a significant dent in the UK's carbon emissions. We support the National Grid in this announcement. The government should show some ambition and deliver what is clearly possible."

ENDS

[1] <https://www.theguardian.com/business/2018/mar/27/national-grid-backs-plan-for-earlier-petrol-and-diesel-ban>

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Press release: New funding announced today will keep the city of Salisbury and its businesses thriving

The government will make available £2.5m to support businesses, boost tourism and meet unexpected costs in recognition of the exceptional response and recovery effort in Salisbury.

The money has been agreed by the government's Ministerial Recovery Group – set up to ensure a range of national government resources and support is offered to help Salisbury respond to the attack in the city. This includes looking at economic measures and what can be done to keep it a thriving and popular city centre and tourist destination.

A £1m package of government funding to support businesses and to boost tourism and visitors, includes:

- £220,000 towards the immediate response to the incident for Wiltshire County Council;
- £367,500 to provide immediate support to businesses impacted by the incident;
- Up to £100,000 to the local Emergency Fund to support businesses impacted by the incident, as well as broader efforts to promote recovery and growth in Salisbury;
- £200,000 package of tourism promotion, including using the GREAT campaign to promote the city and encourage visitor numbers;
- Up to £100,000 to the local authority to help with public health costs associated with the incident.

David Lidington, the Chancellor for the Duchy of Lancaster and Minister for the Cabinet Office, said:

The people of Salisbury have shown great strength and resilience in the face of a cowardly and indiscriminate act.

The Government is committed to supporting this historic British city as it recovers and we will continue to do everything possible to help Salisbury moving forward.

The message is clear: the city is safe and its shops, restaurants and beautiful sites remain open for business.

Baroness Jane Scott, the Leader of Wiltshire Council, said:

This funding is crucial to help support Salisbury to recover and get back to business as usual. The focus now is supporting the city's businesses; particularly those directly affected by the incident and to do all we can to encourage visitors and shoppers to visit the city.

We need to market and promote the city to ensure that national and international tour operators and visitors continue to choose Salisbury as a destination of choice.

In addition, the Home Office has agreed £1.6m in special grant payments for Wiltshire Police to meet the initial exceptional costs of the response – and further funding as the investigation continues.

The government remains committed to working alongside the local authority and emergency services to help the area meet any further exceptional costs arising from this incident – this will include meeting the cost of cleaning up contaminated sites.

We are continuing to work closely with the local NHS trust to make certain they have the expertise and funding needed to provide the care their community needs and we will continue to work through any requests for additional support for costs incurred.

The mental health needs of the local community may not be clear for some time but we are absolutely committed to ensure effective plans are in place and the community's needs are met now and in the future.

Press release: Minister for Europe meets Belarus counterpart

It is the first visit to the UK by a Belarus Foreign Minister since 1993.

The UK and Belarus have been developing our bilateral relationship since the lifting of EU restrictive measures in February 2016.

The ministers used the visit as an opportunity to discuss increasing trade between the UK and Belarus, share perspectives on regional political and security issues, and Sir Alan encouraged Belarus to undertake further

political and economic reform, with an emphasis on human rights and democracy.

Minister for Europe Sir Alan Duncan said:

I was the first British Foreign Office Minister to visit Belarus since Belarus became an independent, sovereign state when I travelled to Minsk in September. Now Foreign Minister Makei has come to London for another historic visit – the first of a Foreign Minister of Belarus for nearly 25 years.

His visit provides a valuable opportunity to make progress on a range of issues from trade to reform to regional security. I am pleased to have discussed a number of issues with FM Makei, and I encouraged Belarus to take further steps to improve political freedoms, including human rights, and economic reform. Some progress has been made in these areas but I believe it is in Belarus' long term interest to go further.

I also explained to FM Makei the UK's grave concerns over the Salisbury incident and reminded him that Russia's actions are of concern to all nations, including their friends and neighbours.

Further information

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Press release: Flood scheme boost with £36m of funding

From Hull to Bath and Wolverhampton to the Wirral, communities up and down England are set to benefit from a government cash boost that will protect

thousands of homes from flooding, enhance the environment and bolster economic growth and tourism.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey has today (Tuesday, 27 March) announced that 25 new schemes will receive a share of £36 million announced in the Autumn Statement to improve flood protection.

One of the biggest beneficiaries is Hull, where £12 million will improve the defences along the River Hull to protect homes, businesses, infrastructure and areas of cultural importance within the city. The funding will support the second phase of the project which started in 2016 and has so far seen 39 sections of defence improved over a 7.5km stretch of river.

The main pier at Seahouses, Berwick-upon-Tweed, protecting 140 properties and the town's picturesque harbour, will be regenerated thanks to an extra £2.9 million.

Rivers will be restored and habitat improved in Gloucester, where £1.2 million will go to projects to protect 370 properties along the Sud Brook and River Twyler.

In Derby, more than £300,000 will help create new wetlands and flood reservoirs to not only protect 110 homes from flooding but also enhance biodiversity in residential areas.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

This funding will benefit projects across the country from Hull to Gloucester, from Wolverhampton to the Wirral, that need an extra boost for flood defences to help our communities continue to prosper and grow in the future.

Not only will this investment make places more resilient against flooding, but it will help the local economy, enhance the natural environment and protect important areas of culture – whether it is the homes, businesses and cultural sites in Hull to the pier in Seahouses or the natural environment in Gloucester.

The government has worked with the Environment Agency to prioritise the areas that would get the most benefit – the schemes will not only protect an additional 3,000 properties from flooding but will contribute to wider benefits for the community.

Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, said:

In the face of challenges like a changing climate, rising sea levels and more severe weather, the Environment Agency is working hard to protect people, homes and businesses from flooding.

As with every project we undertake, we're also striving to improve our environment and this additional funding will not only help us build flood defences, but restore vital habitat and bring nature back to some of our urban communities.

The additional £36 million funding was initially set aside for new projects in the Autumn Budget. The £33.8 million funding allocated today will go towards 25 flood schemes over the next three years, in addition to the £2.2 million given to 13 projects in Cumbria and Devon at the end of last year.

In the Autumn Budget, the Chancellor announced £76 million to be spent on flood and coastal defences – £36 million for new schemes and £40 million to boost local regeneration in deprived communities at high flood risk.

This brings the total investment in flood defence to £2.6 billion by 2021, when more than 1,500 flood defences will have been built to protect 300,000 homes up and down the country.

Over the past two years, the Environment Agency has completed more than 350 new flood schemes to protect 100,000 homes. In addition to building hard defences, it has improved its response by investing in new technology and equipment like temporary flood barriers, pumps and 6,500 trained staff across the country.

The Environment Agency's free flood warning system also reaches more than 1.2 million people to give them vital warning when flooding is expected. You can check your risk and sign up to receive warnings on [GOV.UK here](#) or by calling 0345 988 1188.