

Press release: The UK announces further support in the fight against malaria

As the second largest international donor, the UK has been at the forefront of efforts to reduce the number of cases for many years by investing in treatment, prevention and research, including the fight against the threat of drug resistance.

Today the International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt announced a £100 million fund to be matched pound for pound by the private sector, which will be used to support priority countries with mosquito nets, indoor sprays and the strengthening of health systems.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

We know malaria still causes one out of ten child deaths in Africa and costs economies billions every year. We also know progress on reducing malaria cases has stalled, which is why it is so important it is one of the focuses of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting.

The UK government is a leader in the fight against malaria and has been for many years. We are the second largest international funder in the world and invest in treatment, prevention and research, including fighting against the threat of drug resistance.

Our new commitment will save countless more lives and build a safer, healthier and more prosperous world for us all which is firmly in the UK's national interest.

Malaria is a major health issue for the Commonwealth, with 90% of Commonwealth citizens living in affected countries.

The UK's new commitment will distribute 26 million nets and ensure more than five million households in target areas are reached with indoor spraying. This money will save more lives and help build a safer, healthier and more prosperous world for us all, which is firmly in the UK's national interest.

Heads of government will be urged to make a commitment to halve malaria across the Commonwealth by 2023 at a Malaria Summit tomorrow in London co-hosted by the governments of Rwanda, Swaziland and the UK.

Today the Prime Minister supported the pledge to halve malaria in the next five years and re-affirmed the government's commitment in 2016 to spend £500 million a year on malaria for five years. UK aid has helped Nigeria cut the estimated number of people who die from

malaria in Nigeria every year by more than half – from 210,000 to 100,000 between 2000 and 2016. This year the Department for International Development will launch a new £50 million programme to push for further malaria control in the country.

The UK is also committing £9.2 million of research funding to develop two new safe and effective malaria treatments. The programme will be led by the Mahidol-Oxford Tropical Medicine Research Unit (MORU) which is a collaboration of the University of Oxford, Wellcome Trust and Mahidol University, Thailand.

This comes on top of the UK's leading work in the fight against malaria:

- Since 2011, DFID has distributed 49.7 million long-lasting, insecticide-treated bed nets – saving up to 808,000 lives.
- In September 2016 DFID announced the UK pledge of £1.1 billion to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria over the next three years. In 2016 UK support helped the Global Fund to save 2.2 million lives and avert 50 million new infections from malaria, TB and HIV.
- UK funded research that supported the development of child-friendly malaria drugs has now been used for more than 350 million treatments in malaria-endemic countries.
- The UK also remains committed to its five-year pledge, made in 2016, to spend £500m a year tackling malaria until March 2021.

Notes to editors:

As part of our £500m a year commitment on malaria, today we are announcing a £100 million investment in malaria. This is a match fund which leverages support from the private sector, giving an additional boost to the fight against the disease.

This money will support the Global Fund's work in priority countries. The Global Fund works in 38 of the 53 Commonwealth countries including Nigeria, Kenya, Malawi and Tanzania.

Tackling malaria not only has a positive impact on improving health services, it also increases economic growth and productivity of affected countries.

Malaria affects economic growth, with the growth rate of the gross domestic product per capita in malaria-endemic countries as much as 1.3 percentage points lower than in countries without malaria.

It can cost as little as £3.25 to avert a case of malaria – with an astonishing return on investment as malaria control brings £36 in social and economic benefits for every pound spent.

DFID supports research on infectious diseases, such as malaria, through the Ross Fund Portfolio. This follows a pledge in 2016 for the department to invest 3% of its budget in high quality, high impact research across all of its policy areas.

General media queries

Email

mediateam@dfid.gov.uk

Telephone

020 7023 0600

Follow the DFID Media office on Twitter – @DFID_Press

[Press release: G7 foreign ministers' statement on the Salisbury attack](#)

We, the G7 foreign ministers, of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America and the High Representative of the European Union, are united in condemning, in the strongest possible terms, the attack that took place against Sergei and Yulia Skripal, using a nerve agent in Salisbury, United Kingdom, on March 4, 2018. A British police officer and numerous civilians were exposed in the attack and required hospital treatment, and the lives of many more innocent British civilians have been threatened. We express our deepest sympathies to them all and our admiration and support for the UK emergency services for their courageous response.

The United Kingdom has thoroughly briefed G7 partners. We share, and agree with, the [UK's assessment that it is highly likely that the Russian Federation was responsible](#) for the attack and that there is no plausible alternative explanation. We condemn Russia's continued failure to address legitimate requests from the UK government, which further underlines its responsibility. We call on Russia to urgently address all questions related to the incident in Salisbury. The [Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons \(OPCW\) has now independently confirmed](#) the findings of the United Kingdom relating to the identity of the toxic chemical that was used in Salisbury. Russia should provide full and complete disclosure of its previously undeclared Novichok program to the OPCW in line with its international obligations.

This use of a military-grade nerve agent, of a type developed by Russia, constitutes the first offensive use of a nerve agent in Europe since the Second World War and is a grave challenge not only to the security of the United Kingdom but to our shared security. It is an assault on UK sovereignty. Any use of chemical weapons by a state party, under any circumstances, is a clear breach of international law and a violation of the [Chemical Weapons Convention](#). It is a threat to us all. Their use is

abhorrent, completely unacceptable and must be systematically and rigorously condemned. We, participating states of the International Partnership Against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons, stand together against impunity for those who develop or use these weapons, anywhere, any time, under any circumstances.

The G7 is committed to protecting and promoting the rules-based international system. We stand in unqualified solidarity with the United Kingdom. Our concerns are also heightened against the background of a pattern of earlier irresponsible and destabilizing Russian behaviour, including interference in countries' democratic systems. We call on Russia to live up to its Chemical Weapons Convention obligations, as well as its responsibilities as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, to uphold international peace and security. In order to bring Russia back into the rules-based international system, we will continue to engage with Russia, as appropriate, on addressing regional crises and global challenges.

The G7 will continue to bolster its capabilities to address hybrid threats, including in the areas of cybersecurity, strategic communication and counter-intelligence. We welcome national action taken to constrain Russian hostile-intelligence activity and to enhance our collective security. The G7 will remain closely focused on this issue and its implications.

Press release: Bridging payments delivered to 3,200 farmers

More than 96% of farmers in England signed up to the 2017 Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) have now received their full payments and the RPA is working to make the remaining 4% of payments which require more complex processing and therefore take longer to complete.

Over 18,000 2018 Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) applications have already been submitted since the application window opened in March. A record 90% of the applications made so far have been online, as farmers continue to make the switch from paper forms, with over 16,500 online entitlements so far.

RPA Chief Executive Paul Caldwell said:

We have made solid progress in delivering payments to farmers this year, with more than 96% now paid, and I am pleased so many of this final 4% have now received their bridging payments.

As always, there is more to do, and the RPA will continue working to make the final remaining payments. But now is also the time to get online to make sure your application for 2018 is in before the

deadline closes in May.

Farming Minister George Eustice announced in January the commitment to provide a bridging payment to any farmer not paid by the end of March and highlighted how the burden of EU rules continues to be a barrier to processing some of the remaining claims. These bridging payments are worth 75% of their full allocated amounts.

The RPA is encouraging farmers to apply online now, to ensure that their application is submitted before the deadline of 15 May 2018. Applying online means farmers and agents can quickly check and update existing personal and business details, as well as view and transfer land and entitlements.

Throughout the application process, help and support is available through our online guidance, 'How to' videos and by telephone.

Online and paper applications

Anyone who applied online for the Basic Payment Scheme in 2017 has been emailed all they need to apply online for BPS in 2017. Those who did not apply online in 2017 and did not use an agent have been sent a paper form and guidance on how to apply online.

Support available from the RPA

Farmers and anyone helping them with their claim can find step-by-step guides on transferring land, transferring entitlements and a general overview of how to apply online in useful 'How to' videos. Further guidance and scheme rules can be found on GOV.UK.

On-screen help is also available, going through the application process screen by screen. A copy of this on-screen guide is also available for download or print.

The application deadline for BPS 2017 is midnight on 15 May 2018. Late applications will be accepted until 9 June but will incur a penalty. More information on how to claim or amend applications in the penalty claim period can be found in the Key Dates section of the 2018 guidance.

Mapping queries

This is the first year that hedges are shown in online digital maps. For those that want to use hedges as part of their application it's important that they read our guidance on 'How to check and change your hedge information'. This guidance explains how to check the information we hold about hedges, whether applicants need to tell us about changes and what to do if changes do need to be made.

Where an RLE1 form is necessary as part of a BPS 2018 application, farmers should submit their main application first and on time (by 15 May 2018). They can then submit any queries and send the RLE1 form to the RPA with the sketch map before 6 July 2018. This is to reduce the burden on applicants and allow

them more time to complete the extra information required.

News story: UK announces £2.9m for human rights across the Commonwealth

UK Minister for Human Rights today announces 3 projects to support human rights across the Commonwealth, with particular focus on the South Pacific and small states. This £2.9 million work will support member states, regional organisations and human rights institutions in promoting human rights standards across the Commonwealth, with a focus on equality and adherence to international human rights obligations.

Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon announced a new £1.8 million project to help improve the capacity of Pacific Commonwealth countries to deliver human rights.

Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon said:

Human rights are the bedrock of successful societies and a fundamental Commonwealth value. The Commonwealth is at its strongest when we share our expertise and experiences through our network.

Smaller countries face significant challenges in establishing and maintaining their human rights institutions. This new funding will offer valuable support to our nine Pacific Commonwealth partners as they strive to strengthen their national institutions.

The funding will support human rights institutions to meet international standards and help improve governance. Women, young people, persons with disabilities, and other minority groups will all benefit. The Pacific Commonwealth Equality Project will run over the 2 years that the UK is Chair in Office of the Commonwealth (2018 to 2020). The South Pacific countries are Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

Lord Ahmad also announced £0.6 million to support the Commonwealth's 31 small states. The Commonwealth small states grouping includes lower income countries and small island developing states (SIDS).

Head of the Commonwealth's Human Rights Unit Karen McKenzie, said:

The UK contribution will give impetus to the Commonwealth's work with small states in Geneva, strengthening their voices in

international human rights discourse. Ultimately, it will translate into better understanding and implementation of human rights promotion and protection for all citizens.

Lord Ahmad also announced £0.5 million funding to support the UK's Equalities and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) as it takes over the role of the Chair of the Commonwealth Forum of National Human Rights Institutions (CFNHRI) for the next 2 years.

Further information

- Follow Foreign Office Minister Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon on Twitter [@tarigahmadbt](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

Media enquiries

For journalists

Email
newsdesk@fco.gov.uk

Newsdesk
020 7008 3100

[News story: Foreign Secretary announces £1.6 million for women in conflict mediation](#)

Championing girls' education to promote global stability will be at the heart of UK foreign policy to positively transform the lives of women and girls in conflict.

Women and girls are disproportionately affected by conflict but they are also key to its resolution.

The Network of Women Mediators, will train women from across the Commonwealth with the practical skills to play an active role in resolving conflict worldwide. Today the Foreign Secretary, Boris Johnson has committed £1.6 million UK support to fund this groundbreaking work.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

Conflict affects whole communities, but the fact is women and girls often bear the brunt. Girls are twice as likely to be out of school as boys, and more likely to experience gender-based violence.

This year one of my main focuses will be to ensure that girls in the poorest countries in the world receive at least 12 years of quality education because this is the single most powerful spur to development and progress.

To end wars, build sustainable and lasting peace and create stable societies, women around the world must be able to participate in peace processes. Today's £1.6 million will empower women across the Commonwealth to rightfully take their seat at the negotiating table.

Commonwealth women who take part in the programme will work across the globe to help resolve conflict. They will also support and train up women outside the Commonwealth to enter mediation and peace processes and work with grassroots organisations to empower women mediators amplifying the impact of UK funding.

Despite making up over half of the population, too few women's voices are heard when peace agreements are being drawn up. Between 1992 and 2017 only 2% of mediators, and 5% of witnesses and signatories to major peace processes were women. However, evidence shows that when women are a part of peace agreements they are 35% more likely to last at least 15 years.

Further information

- Follow the Foreign Secretary on Twitter [@BorisJohnson](#) and [Facebook](#)
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Media enquiries

For journalists

Email

newsdesk@fco.gov.uk

Newsdesk

020 7008 3100