

Ice hockey to receive £2.7 million in latest round of Sport Winter Survival Package funding

The support will be formed of £2.3 million in loans and grants provided to four English clubs within the Elite Ice Hockey League: the Sheffield Steelers, Nottingham Panthers, Manchester Storm and Coventry Blaze.

£400,000 in grants will also be provided to the English Ice Hockey Association and English clubs in the National Ice Hockey League.

For the past 20 years ice hockey has been the biggest attended indoor sport in the UK, and is the third most regularly attended sport in terms of spectators. However as a result of the public health measures necessary to contain the coronavirus pandemic and the financial uncertainty these have caused, the Elite Ice Hockey League opted not to run the 2020/21 season.

The funding will cover essential costs necessary for the sport's survival and to get back playing, including the launch of the [2021 Elite Series](#).

Formed of the four aforementioned clubs and taking place from 3 April – 3 May in Nottingham, the mini-series – which will be streamed online – will allow fans to support their team and help the Great Britain men's national ice hockey team in their preparations for the IIHF World Championship later this year.

The funding has already allowed some National Ice Hockey League clubs to also resume action, supporting local ice rinks in the process.

Sports Minister Nigel Huddleston said:

This unprecedented support for ice hockey will act as a lifeline for the sport and ice rinks across the country. The reality is that without stepping in, it would have meant 18 months of no live action.

Visibility is important to inspire the next generation, so I'm delighted that we've been able to work with the relevant bodies to develop a new proposal that supports the highest level of the sport through the Elite Series, and has also given clubs at regional level the confidence to return to the ice.

Tony Smith, Chairman of the Elite Ice Hockey League, said:

The UK's top professional ice hockey league – the Elite Ice Hockey League – is thrilled to be able to get back on the ice with the

backing from amongst others: the teams, the government and (when the action starts) the massive army of fans that follow us.

In an ever changing landscape caused by the pandemic it is testament to the collective power that everyone pulling together can bring that we are going to stage a four team top flight event which will give fans something to cheer. At the same time the best players in the country will get a chance to compete for a place on the 'plane to the World Championships. Without this series the GB players could have landed badly underprepared for games against the world's elite.

A tremendous amount of work and commitment is going on to make this event happen and we thank everyone for their support.

This is the fourth tranche of funding to be announced from the Government's [£300 million Sport Winter Survival Package](#) that is focused on helping those major spectator sports severely impacted by coronavirus restrictions survive the winter.

It follows the Government announcing [more than £40 million provided to support grassroots rugby union clubs, up to £5.5 million to support the launch of the men's Championship competition and £1.1 million for professional women's rugby](#), including the Premier 15s and covid-19 related costs for the Red Roses' Women's Six Nations campaign.

In February the Government announced [a major boost for women's sport](#), with an initial £2.25 million for women's football, £4.2 million to netball, a combined £4 million for badminton and basketball, and that women's sport would be prioritised for 250,000 free Covid-19 testing kits being made available to elite sports, worth £1.5 million. It was also announced that an initial 19 National League Step 1-2 clubs would be offered loans worth up to £5.4 million.

[The first announcement in January confirmed that Steps 3-6 of the National League system will receive up to £10 million to protect the immediate future of approximately 850 clubs over the winter period.](#)

Submissions for support have been made from individual sports to an [independent decision-making Board](#), supported by Sport England.

The Sport Winter Survival Package is the most generous of any Government for its domestic sport sector in the world. It comes on top of the sector benefiting from more than £1.5 billion worth of business support that has been made available by the Government, including the furlough scheme, business rates relief and business interruption loan scheme that has helped many sports clubs and leisure businesses to survive.

Earlier this month [the Chancellor announced a further £300 million of support](#) that is expected to benefit major summer spectator sports such as cricket, tennis and horse racing, as the path out of lockdown continues and sports stadia initially open at reduced capacities. Further details, including how

cash will be distributed, how organisations can apply and timeframes, will be announced by Sport England in the coming weeks.

Further confirmations of funding from the Sports Winter Survival Package will be made in due course.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

A detailed factsheet on how the Sport Winter Survival Package works and the criteria when assessing applicants has been published by Sport England. [Read it here](#).

Grassroots sports and the physical activity sector are also benefiting from £220 million in emergency funding delivered by Sport England, and the recipients of a £100 million National Leisure Recovery Fund to support publicly owned leisure facilities in England during the pandemic are due to be announced in the coming weeks.

At the Budget on 3 March, the Chancellor also announced that the Government will provide:

- An initial £25 million to support the growth of grassroots football, which will be enough to build around 700 new pitches across the UK;
- £2.8 million to continue undertaking feasibility work to assess the viability of a UK and Ireland bid for the 2030 FIFA Men's World Cup before Fifa formally opens the process in 2022;
- £1.2 million to mitigate the financial effects of COVID-19 on the UEFA Women's Euro football competition and deliver a successful tournament in England in 2022, supporting the sport to grow and thrive. This money will go towards extending contracts of the delivery teams, host city resource costs and the opening ceremony.

PM call with President Sisi: 18 March 2021

News story

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to President Sisi of Egypt.



The Prime Minister spoke with the President of Egypt Abdel Fattah el-Sisi this evening.

The leaders welcomed the strength of the UK and Egypt's relationship and the breadth of areas on which there was good cooperation, including trade and investment, education and defence and security.

The leaders spoke about regional issues, covering the situations in Libya and Sudan. They agreed on the importance of upholding the ceasefire in Libya and welcomed the establishment of the new interim executive.

The leaders discussed human rights in Egypt, and agreed on the importance of upholding freedom of religion and belief.

On climate change, the Prime Minister looked ahead to the UK's hosting of COP26, and encouraged Egypt to set an ambitious 2030 emissions reduction target, and hoped Egypt would also consider committing to net zero.

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[Delivering for countries most vulnerable to climate change](#)

Thank you for that Lord Ahmad, my dear friend, as you said we have known each other as family friends for a very long time. So, I am very pleased we are doing this event together.

Your excellencies, friends,

Greetings from Costa Rica. I arrived here yesterday as part of my international engagement programme on COP26 and of course it was very important that I continued with this commitment, so it is a real pleasure to join you today.

And I very much look forward to visiting the Caribbean in person as soon as

possible.

But friends, what we do know is that in less than eight months from now, we will welcome world leaders to Glasgow for COP26.

And we are absolutely determined, I am determined, that this will be a summit, and a presidency, that delivers for those countries most vulnerable to climate change.

Countries like the Caribbean states.

And we know that the stakes could not be higher.

As The Hon Gaston Alfonso Browne has said, at the time of the CAS in December which we co-hosted, he talked about the fact that this was an issue that I quote, he said; "points a dagger at the heart" of the existence of many in the region.

And his stark message is just one example amongst many of Caribbean leaders communicating the real urgency, the moral urgency of our predicament, with devastating clarity.

And what I want us to do is to elevate that message.

To amplify your climate leadership.

And to work with you, in partnership, to drive a real action of change on the issues that you tell us matter the most.

Now, I have heard, you know, that you have talked about the: "1.5 to stay alive".

And it is about pushing all governments for ambitious emissions reductions, that keep that goal within reach, and it is an absolute priority for the UK's COP Presidency.

The message that I am taking around the world.

We have all seen in the last couple of weeks, the UN's NDC synthesis report that just shows how much further we need to go in terms of this target on NDCs.

So, this must be a call to action. To which we must respond with urgency.

With ambitious 2030 Nationally Determined Contributions.

Net zero commitments, supported of course, really importantly by long-term strategies as well.

And policies, like phasing out coal, to turn targets into reality.

Here, I am very pleased to say that the Caribbean is leading the way.

And the UK is proud to partner with you as you do so:

We co-chair the NDC Partnership with our friends in Jamaica, and co-hosted the CARICOM Moment of Ambition Summit last year.

We know Suriname is already carbon neutral. Barbados aims to be within a decade.

And Cuba, Grenada, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, Suriname, and Dominican Republic have already come forward with new enhanced NDCs.

It is something that others need to do and I am urging others to follow your lead.

And I ask that all of you work with us to encourage those big global emitters to act.

Please continue to use your unique relationships and your moral leadership, to challenge us all to step up. And drive down emissions.

We all know this is a vital issue.

Yet, we also know that even if we were to reach net zero tomorrow, the effects of climate change would endure.

Climate impacts are now, unfortunately, an inevitability, for which we must prepare.

And of course, your region knows that all too well. As the hurricane seasons grow steadily in force and ferocity, year after year.

Shortly after I became the UK's International Development Secretary back in 2019, Hurricane Dorian struck.

And we all know, that first responders arriving at the scene, described it as apocalyptic.

And the reports and images that emerged were absolutely terrible to witness. The suffering and destruction that took place.

And this I can tell you has very much influenced my commitment to putting adaptation at the centre of the UK's COP26 Presidency.

So, we are urging all countries to come forward with adaptation communications. Including, of course, Caribbean nations.

And we are working with donors, development banks, and private investors, to increase the support available for adaptation.

And of course, we are focussed on practical ways to reduce climate risk.

On Tuesday this week, I co-chaired the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure with Dr Mishra, of the Government of India.

And colleagues will know that the CDRI helps members to adapt the planning and design of their infrastructure, to the demands of our changing climate.

And colleagues will also know that earlier this year, the UK proudly launched the Adaptation Action Coalition, with Saint Lucia, and others, which I have been urging all nations to join.

And this builds on the Call to Action that I and other friends launched back in 2019 at the UN General Assembly.

And brings countries together to work on adaptation solutions – from the local to of course the global.

Such work is absolutely vital. But it is not fool proof.

So we must respond to the call made at COP25 to avert, minimise and address loss and damage.

By, for example, working with Chile to agree the structure and form of the Santiago Network.

And by encouraging early action as well.

Working with the Risk Informed Early Action Partnership, of which Saint Lucia, Jamaica and Belize are partners.

To urge vulnerable countries to join, and donor countries to pledge funding.

We also know, because you have told us, clearly and repeatedly, that accessible, affordable finance is an urgent priority.

And we absolutely recognise the enormous economic blow that Covid-19 has inflicted on the region. And the debt pressures you are experiencing as a result.

And I have to tell you, I am being very clear with fellow donor countries that honouring our commitment to raise \$100 billion a year with increased international climate finance, is it is absolutely essential.

It is a moral duty. It is a moral imperative.

And of course we are now going to have to have a deliberation on a new, collective goals, post 2025, and these will begin at COP26.

We are also implementing the G20 Debt Service Suspension. And looking to find sustainable, long-term solutions to debt vulnerabilities.

And as part of this, we are working with the G7, G20, the Paris Club, the IMF, and the World Bank and other financial institutions to address issues a country-by-country basis.

And we are partnering with countries most vulnerable to climate change, and donors, to look for those longer term solutions to debt and other finance issues.

Later this year, the UK Government will hold the second of the SIDS Access to Finance Roundtables.

And at the end of this month, our COP26 Presidency is holding a Climate and Development Ministerial meeting.

Bringing together Ministers, multilateral and regional development banks, and the UN.

To look at four vital issues:

Access to finance; quality, quantity and composition of climate finance itself; the response to impacts; and fiscal space and debt.

And we very much look forward to having strong representation from across the Caribbean at this meeting.

And so of course, planning together how we can make progress in each of these areas, through events such as the G7, the UN, the Spring Meetings of the IFI's, and COP26 itself.

Friends I have to say that at the Climate Ambition Summit last year, the Hon Andrew Holness made a really important intervention and he quoted Usain Bolt, saying: "The difference between the impossible and the possible lies in determination."

And he invited us, I quote to "make COP26 the turning point to what we know is possible."

So, working in partnership, I do believe we can achieve this.

Securing that negotiated outcome at Glasgow that releases the full potential of the Paris Agreement.

Driving real action on mitigation, adaptation and finance.

And delivering for countries most vulnerable to climate change.

And at the end of the day, creating that brighter future for us all which is absolutely vital for us and for future generations.

Thank you.

PM statement at coronavirus press conference: 18 March 2021

Our roadmap to freedom depends on the continued success of our vaccination programme,

and so it is reasonable for people to want to be continually reassured

not only that our vaccines are safe and effective

but also that we have the supply that we need.

So I want to address both points today

especially in the light of concerns you may have heard in some other countries about the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine.

First, the independent Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency has reviewed the evidence, as it does every week.

They have confirmed that the benefits of the vaccine in preventing COVID far outweigh any risks

and people should continue to get their vaccine when asked to do so

and June will say a little bit more about that in a moment.

It's also very important for our European friends that today the European Medicines Agency has come to a clear scientific conclusion

and I quote –

“this is a safe and effective vaccine.”

We also saw yesterday the evidence from Public Health England

that a single dose of either vaccine provides 60 per cent protection against getting COVID.

and reduces the chances of hospitalisation by 80 per cent

and the risk of death by 85 per cent.

So the Oxford jab is safe; and the Pfizer jab is safe – the thing that isn't safe is catching Covid – which is why it's so important that we all get our jabs as soon as our turn comes.

And as it happens, I'm getting mine tomorrow.

And the centre where I'm getting jabbed is currently using the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine for those receiving their first dose, and that is the one I'll be having.

And let me also assure you –

if you come forwards after receiving your letter, we have the jabs for you.

We've always said that in a vaccination programme of this pace and this scale, some interruptions in supply are inevitable

and it is true that in the short term we are receiving fewer vaccines than we had planned for a week ago.

That is because of a delay in a shipment from the Serum Institute who are doing a herculean job in producing vaccines in such large quantities –

and because of a batch that we currently have in the UK that needs to be retested – as part of our rigorous safety programmes.

So as a result we will receive slightly fewer vaccines in April than in March.

But that is still more than we received in February

and the supply we do have will still enable us to hit the targets we have set.

That means that by 15 April we will be able to offer a first dose to all of you who are over 50, as well as those under 50 who are clinically vulnerable.

We will have the second doses that people need within the 12 week window – which means around 12 million people in April.

And we will still offer a first dose to every adult by the end of July.

So there is no change to the next steps of the roadmap.

We've now vaccinated over 25 million across our entire United Kingdom – more than the entire population of many countries

and our progress along the road to freedom continues unchecked.

We remain on track to reclaim the things we love,

to see our families and friends again,

to return to our local pubs, our gyms and sports facilities, and of course our shops,

all as long as the data continue to go in the right direction and we meet our four tests.

And the way to ensure this happens is to get that jab when your turn comes.

So let's get the jab done!

Thank you very much.

Tackling gender inequality is crucial for climate adaptation

Coronavirus – and its many lockdowns – has led to women around the world doing more domestic chores and family care; employment and education opportunities for women are being lost.

Similarly, the impacts of climate change – such as floods, heatwaves or wildfires – disproportionately hit women's livelihoods.

But, as Dr Tamsin Edwards, a climate scientist at King's College London and co-presenter of the BBC's 39 ways to save the planet, has said:

The story to tell here is not just the suffering of women. We have an unprecedented chance to design a better future. We know that policies that reduce climate change or its impacts can reduce gender inequality, and vice versa, as long as they are truly designed in consultation with women.

In over 25 years working in financial services in the UK, I've seen individuals and business respond to changes in society at different speeds.

Gender diversity leads to better outcomes.

For instance, oil companies with higher female representation at board level are more likely to have set decarbonisation strategies.

This doesn't mean having more women leads to lower emissions, but it does point to a positive correlation between gender diversity and improving climate governance.

Over a decade ago I helped set up the 30% Club and its investor group to increase the number of women in the boardroom.

While we celebrate success in this, with a dramatic jump in the UK in the last five years, women's progress to top executive roles is still fragile and slow.

Melinda Gates and David Malpass recently wrote:

When the 2008 recession hit, few asked how stimulus measures would affect women compared with men. That approach won't work for the COVID-19 crisis. As leaders face the enormous challenge of rebuilding post-pandemic economies, women must be at the centre of their strategies.

At the Environment Agency I am keen that we walk the walk ourselves.

Through our flood work and regulation we help make the country more resilient to climate shocks.

In January, I was in Greater Manchester as part of the response to Storm Christoph where our defences stopped tens of thousands of people from being flooded out of their homes.

Ten of our fifteen area directors across the country are women and so are two of our five executive directors. They lead this response on the ground.

Our Board has five men and seven women.

Among other things, we review our pay gap for disability, race, religion and belief, sexual orientation (protected characteristics) as well as gender.

I'm not pretending we've got diversity sorted, we're a long way from it, but more inclusive decision making that is representative of communities we work in, leads to better outcomes for the environment and communities.

People with relevant experiences need to be included in decision-making, this makes for better policy.

So we must amplify the voices of women who work on the climate change and nature recovery agendas, not just on International Women's Day but every day.

WaterAid, a charity many colleagues at the Environment Agency support, say access to water, sanitation and hygiene is already gendered and being made worse by climate change.

It is women and girls who are most effected by water scarcity as a result of climate change; but it is women and girls who lead on the solutions, and when climate disaster hits it is women that lead the response, so this year, when the UK hosts COP26 in Glasgow and the Convention on Biological Diversity COP15 takes place in Kunming, China, governments should be discussing greater investment in locally led adaptation.

The climate crisis will bring a multitude of overlapping impacts.

Men and women will need to use all of our expertise and strength to be prosperous and resilient.

Female leadership in international, national and local climate policy-making is vital.

Thank you.