

Prevention and prosecution of war crimes: UK remarks at OSCE Parliamentary Assembly event

Thank you Mr Whittingdale and Madam President. I am honoured to be part of this panel with Professor Ibrahim and Dr Elliott.

What I want to do today is focus on two key elements – the first is the UK Government's position on accountability for war crimes and sexual violence – with a focus particularly on Ukraine. Secondly I will talk about actions which we and others within the OSCE have taken in terms of transparency and political accountability.

Firstly, the pursuit of justice and accountability is an integral part of UK's support to Ukraine.

As we are all aware, the appalling war by the Russian government has caused untold suffering and shattered the foundations of security in the region. Mariupol, Bucha, Irpin, Kramatorsk and now Kremenchuk and incidents in Odesa will be forever seared in our memories. We're horrified by instances and allegations of rape and sexual violence being committed by Russian forces in the invasion of Ukraine. We are being very clear, and we all should be clear, that the use of sexual violence in conflict zones constitutes a war crime.

We are determined as the UK Government to hold to account the individuals who have undertaken these atrocities – members of the Russian Government and individual members of the Russian military – to hold them responsible for these atrocities so we can make sure this doesn't ever happen again. And that is why we are heavily supporting justice and accountability efforts, alongside our military, economic and humanitarian assistance. And we are working through the OSCE, with Ukraine's Prosecution General and with international bodies like the International Criminal Court to bring this issue to light.

Secondly, we believe it is critical to support Ukraine's own accountability mechanisms.

National jurisdictions will always bear the greatest burden of cases. And so we are supporting investigation efforts by Ukrainian authorities, working in particular the Office of the Prosecutor of Ukraine, who has been doing some outstanding work in investigating war crimes on Ukraine's territory.

We have [appointed Sir Howard Morrison as an Independent Adviser to the Ukrainian Prosecutor General](#). And our Attorney General also led a scoping mission to Ukraine in May, to assess how the UK can further support Ukraine itself to identify and collect evidence.

In conjunction with this we have procured over 30,000 forensic medical kits

to support accurate, reliable and consistent evidence collection. We've [deployed specialist UK war crimes and conflict-related sexual violence experts to Poland](#) to identify options for further UK support.

And we are supporting grassroots efforts, having launched a £10m Civil Society Fund to support Ukrainian organisations, including those gathering evidence and supporting survivors. We are also funding trusted humanitarian partners to provide protection services and reporting mechanisms.

Putting survivor's voices up front and centre is paramount. This month we are co-sponsoring a Human Rights Council side event with Global Survivors Fund on reparations for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence in Ukraine. This will provide a platform for survivor voices to highlight challenges, needs and prospects.

Thirdly, we are supporting international mechanisms.

In March, [the UK led a group of 37 other states to refer the atrocities in Ukraine to the Court](#) – the largest group referral in the ICC's history – now supported by 42 states.

The ICC investigation is now underway, led by the ICC Prosecutor, Karim Khan. We are working with allies in terms of providing financial and technical support as appropriate, including war crime experts to support the investigation.

In addition, in March the Metropolitan Police War Crimes Team set up an online reporting tool for witnesses, including refugees, to submit evidence in support of the ICC investigation. They are submitting evidence both to the ICC and for Ukraine's own domestic investigation.

Fourthly, we are making use of the OSCE

We see this organization as being key and complementary to the work, particularly in terms of political accountability and increasing transparency. And we've been using the OSCE as a bridging mechanism for other structures, such as the ICC and elsewhere until they are fully established and reporting.

In March, a group of 45 participating States in the OSCE, together with Ukraine's support [invoked the Moscow Mechanism](#). This is an independent fact finding mission to investigate allegations of abuses and violations of International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law in Ukraine. And that large number of participating States invoking the mechanism – 46 out of 57 – was in and of itself a strong signal of the support by the international community.

In April, this produced [the first independent fact-finding report](#) by an international institution and that covered the period from the invasion on 24 February through to 1 April.

What it found was credible evidence of war crimes, from the torture, rape and killing of innocent civilians to the forced deportation of over 500,000

people. There are allegations of rape, including gang rape documented across numerous regions in Ukraine. One particularly grave incident recorded in Bovary village where a drunken soldier allegedly broke into a private house, killed the owner and then raped his wife in the presence of her small child.

The report also outlined evidence of humanitarian convoys and healthcare facilities being attacked and of arbitrary arrests and extra-judicial killings.

What we have done in terms of a follow up, is the same group of 45 States with Ukraine's support was to invoke the Moscow Mechanism for the second time. That report will come out in 2 weeks' time and will cover the period of Russian atrocities in Bucha, and Kramatorsk and further atrocities in that period in Mariupol. We will be calling on as many as we can to help disseminate these findings far and wide. We see it as a key part of political accountability, but also helping to frame the issue of the horrific incidents and use these as a bridging mechanism.

Fifth, it is important to join up the dots and minimise risks of duplication of initiatives.

What we have done with US and EU is announce the [creation of the Atrocity Crimes Advisory Group \(ACA\)](#), which is a mechanism aimed at ensuring efficient coordination of all of our respective support to accountability efforts on the ground. This will include putting survivors' voices up front and centre.

Sixth, the preservation and collection of evidence is vital. The UK is funding independent organisations to gather robust evidence of war crimes.

We believe that ensuring survivors can have their experiences recorded safely and in a way that strengthens the pursuit of justice is a vital, first step towards accountability. But despite numerous sets of guidance for those collecting evidence and information from survivors and witnesses, mistakes continue to be made in this area.

In many settings around the world, many survivors still face re-traumatisation and unnecessary re-interviewing due to poor practices and lack of coordination between actors involved in this work.

As Lord Ahmad and Prof Elliott have already said, we [launched the 'Murad Code' at the United Nations Security Council](#) back in April. We see this Code as being a vital step to ensure justice for survivors of sexual violence by setting global standards for the safe and effective gathering of evidence from survivors and witnesses.

And we are urging governments, UN agencies, NGOs and human rights institutions to champion the goal of survivor-centred documentation and ensure adherence to the standards set out in the Murad Code.

In concluding, we continue to be shocked and horrified by the barbaric acts we are seeing from the Russian Government and the Russian military in Ukraine. President Putin clearly underestimated the resolve and bravery of the Ukrainian people, but also the resolve of the international community.

Ensuring accountability for war crimes is a vital tool and it requires international governance, NGOs in Ukraine and international organisations to work together effectively. All hold different bits of the puzzle on building evidence through to ensuring individual accountability and justice.

It's vital we do this precisely because we need to ensure what has happened with Russia's invasion of Ukraine never happens again.

Thank you.

Foreign Secretary announces major UK package of support to help rebuild Ukraine

Press release

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss will set out the wide-ranging package of support at the Ukraine Recovery Conference in Lugano, Switzerland.



- Wide ranging package of UK support will use UK expertise and British businesses to accelerate Ukraine's economic recovery.
- The UK will also work with the Ukrainians as the key international partner in co-ordinating the recovery effort in Kyiv city and region.
- The UK will work with the Government of Ukraine and allies to host the Ukraine Recovery Conference in 2023.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss will today (4 July 2022) set out the wide-ranging package of support to help Ukraine defeat Putin and rebuild the country.

Addressing the Ukraine Recovery Conference in Lugano, Switzerland, the Foreign Secretary will set out the UK's vision for immediate assistance and long-term commitments to work alongside the Ukrainians, with the total value of UK support to date now at \$1.5 billion offered through multilateral loan

guarantees and over £100 million bilateral support.

Humanitarian assistance and demining programmes will help rebuild villages, towns and cities, and in the longer term the UK will share economic and financial expertise to transform Ukraine into a global hub for investment, enterprise and cutting-edge technology. The UK will champion the recovery of the city of Kyiv and the Kyiv region, on the request of President Zelenskyy.

The Foreign Secretary will also announce plans to work with the Government of Ukraine and allies to host the Ukraine Recovery Conference in 2023. The UK will join a Supervisory Board to coordinate the recovery process between Kyiv and Ukraine's allies, which will include the establishment of an office in London.

At the conference Foreign Secretary Liz Truss will say:

Ukraine's recovery from Russia's war of aggression will be a symbol of the power of democracy over autocracy. It will show Putin that his attempts to destroy Ukraine have only produced a stronger, more prosperous and more united nation.

The UK is resolute in its support of Ukraine's territorial integrity and will remain at Ukraine's side as it emerges as a strong, thriving and cutting-edge democracy. We have led on support for Ukraine during the war and will continue to lead in supporting the Ukrainian Government's Reconstruction and Development Plan.

Ukraine's reconstruction and recovery will be led by Ukraine itself. A range of UK measures will provide both immediate financial support and help accelerate the ambitious vision outlined in the Government of Ukraine's Reconstruction & Development Plan, including:

- Immediate assistance to keep Ukraine's economy afloat and win the war, providing economic support, alongside providing life-saving humanitarian assistance, and helping to rebuild as fast as possible the villages, towns and cities ravaged by Russia's barbarism, including leading the recovery plan of Kyiv city and region.
- Encouraging UK businesses to contribute their expertise and investment to help accelerate Ukraine's economic trajectory and harness its incredible potential. All of this will be supported by UK technical expertise within government and across the private sector, including in the critical areas of science and technology.
- Using our influence in international financial institutions, including the London headquartered European Bank of Reconstruction and Development, to deliver financial assistance and loan guarantees, and persuade others to do the same.
- Supporting Ukraine's efforts to deepen democracy and drive modernisation and reforms, including in the rule of law, anti-corruption mechanisms, transparent procurement processes and e-government so Ukraine rebuilds as a 21st Century tech power.

UK offer:

- \$950m for World Bank lending and \$121m (£99m) in fiscal support grants through the World Bank Multi-Donor Trust Fund and the National Bank of Ukraine.
- Readiness to provide a third guarantee of up \$525 million (or £429 million) of new World Bank lending to Ukraine.
- £10m to the Energy Support Fund to support the Government of Ukraine with essential repairs to energy infrastructure and reconnect households and key facilities to power supply.
- Guarantee £41m of European Bank for Reconstruction and Development lending to Ukraine's energy transmission operator, Ukrenergo.
- Immediate life-saving assistance and de-mining operations, with support from the £37m Partnership Fund for a Resilient Ukraine, of which the UK is part.
- We will mobilise private finance to support investment in Ukraine through British Investment Partnerships. The UK will consider a range of tools and instruments to invest in Ukraine's recovery and longer-term reconstruction, including investment, the provision of expertise, guarantees and new innovative finance mechanisms.
- This is alongside £3.5 billion of exposure from UKEF for companies to access.
- Partner with Ukraine's Ministry of Digital Transformation and business support agencies to provide practical help to small Ukrainian businesses to adapt, survive and grow through the war.
- Harness the capital and creativity of UK-based investors by establishing a Ukraine-UK Private Finance Partnership. This will bring together the UK financial services sector to provide advice and explore how best to unlock the flow of private finance needed for Ukraine's economic recovery.
- We will use UK tech credibility and government convening power to support the proposal to hold a 'Re.Build' conference. The conference, organised by the Founders Forum, would help ensure the most innovative technology companies in the UK and around the world contribute to the Ukrainian recovery effort in the most effective way.
- The UK will provide funding to support and expand the Universities UK twinning programme between UK and Ukrainian academics.

Background

- UK multilateral development guarantees are subject to parliamentary approval

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Drive to reduce the cost of childcare for parents

The government has today announced ambitious new plans to improve the cost, choice and availability of childcare that will benefit hundreds of thousands of parents across the country.

The UK has some of the highest-quality childcare provision in the world with 96% of early years settings rated by Ofsted as good or outstanding, but it is also one of the biggest costs facing working families today. This means some families, in particular women, feel they are not able to return to the workplace after giving birth due to the high cost of putting their child into paid care.

With the cost of living continuing to rise, the government is committed to doing everything it can to support families with their finances while keeping people in high-wage, secure jobs that help grow the economy. New plans are being set out today to ensure high-quality and affordable childcare is accessible to all.

To drive down costs for providers and parents, a new consultation will look at increasing the number of children that can be looked after by each staff member in early years settings.

It will propose changing staff-to-child ratios from 1:4 to 1:5 for two-year-olds, giving providers more flexibility in how they run their businesses while maintaining safety and quality of care. Childcare for children aged 0-2 is the most expensive for providers to deliver, largely given the need for higher supervision levels.

This could potentially eventually reduce the cost of this form of childcare by up to 15%, or up to £40 per week for a family paying £265 per week for care for their 2-year-old, if providers adopt the changes and pass all the savings on to parents.

Education Secretary, Nadhim Zahawi said:

Every child deserves a great start in life and that means giving families the support they need.

Childcare is an integral part of our economy, and these reforms prove again that this government is on the side of working families. I'm hugely grateful to the thousands of dedicated early years professionals who provide daily care and education to our youngest children, which is why I am determined to support them by giving them greater flexibility in how they run their services.

This in turn will support thousands of families across the country, helping to develop children's skills while also supporting parents

into work.

The government will also increase choice and affordability for parents by taking action to open up the childminder market.

While early years settings such as nurseries are the most popular option for families, childminders are generally the most affordable and flexible form of childcare. While the average cost of a two-year-old attending a nursery for 50 hours a week in England is £265 per week, this compares to £236 with a childminder. The government will support more people to become childminders by:

- Reducing the upfront costs of becoming a childminder via financial support;
- Allowing childminders to spend more of their time working from a greater range of locations – for example a local community centre or village hall rather than their own home;
- Giving childminders greater flexibilities within the ratios when looking after their own children or siblings of other children;
- Working with Ofsted to reduce inspection of childminders; and
- Slimming down the childminder specific Early Years Foundation Stage, reducing the framework by one-third to ensure content is targeted and simpler to navigate.

Government will streamline the Ofsted registration process for providers. More providers registering would mean that parents have a wider choice of providers on which to use these schemes, to pay for childcare that supports their working lives.

The government will also encourage the growth of Childminder Agencies (CMAs). CMAs could ultimately become major players in the childcare market – stimulating competition and driving down costs while providing parents with more options for care. CMAs are central bodies that remove the individual administrative and regulatory burden on childminders, as well as often providing parents with tools such as mobile apps through which to book their childcare.

Minister for Children and Families Will Quince said:

I'm proud of the excellent quality of childcare and early education in England, which is a huge asset to working parents. But too many are struggling to balance work with childcare costs.

We know there are thousands of parents who are eligible for government support but not taking it up. That's why we want to increase awareness of the existing childcare offers, allow providers to provide services more flexibly and make sure funding gets where it is needed most.

Also announced today is an additional £10 million investment for Maintained

Nursery Schools, into the supplementary funding they receive from 2023-24. These settings often care for some of the most disadvantaged children in the country and have additional costs that other early years settings do not – such as the requirement to have a headteacher – because they are constituted as schools.

Since the introduction of the Early Years National Funding Formula in 2017, the government has provided supplementary funding for these nurseries to protect their funding levels.

This additional funding forms part of a separate consultation on plans to reform how early years funding is distributed around England, to ensure the system is fair, effective and responsive to changing levels of need.

The government has spent more than £4 billion each year for the last five years helping families with the cost of childcare, but almost one million eligible families have not taken up their right to Tax-Free Childcare, which is worth £2,000 per year or £4,000 for children with disabilities. Universal Credit Childcare allows families to reclaim 85% of their childcare costs, worth up to £1,108 per month.

The government is also driving a renewed campaign via [the Childcare Choices website](#) so parents can access the support they are entitled to, through a ramped-up marketing campaign backed by £1.2 million, which launched last week. This will also encourage providers to take the necessary steps to offer the full range of childcare support to parents using their services.

Exchequer Secretary Helen Whately said:

Tax-Free Childcare provides a helping hand with childcare costs for working families but thousands of parents could be missing out.

With almost one million families eligible, I want to encourage parents to take advantage of this support of up to £2,000 per year for each child.

Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Thérèse Coffey said:

We want more people to take up Universal Credit childcare financial support that is available now to help working families. We also want more childcare providers to register with Ofsted and unlock more places that can be subsidised to help with the cost of living.

The government also offers 15 hours per week of free childcare or early education for all 3- and 4-year-olds, rising to 30 hours for working families, and 15 hours for disadvantaged 2-year-olds.

The Government recently announced that eight million of the most vulnerable households (around a third of all UK households) will receive £1,200 this

year and all families will receive £400 – this is on top of changes to Universal Credit, National Living Wage and National Insurance thresholds, so that people keep more of what they earn.

This takes total government cost of living support to over £37 billion – higher than other major economies around the world.

Gemma, from Portsmouth, a mum of one uses Tax-Free Childcare. She said:

As a working mum, it can be tough balancing childcare. But Tax-Free Childcare allows me to free up cash that can cover the costs of other things – when you're talking about saving 20% of your childcare costs it can make a big difference.

The Government has recently launched a new website which brings government support on offer together in one place so the public can see what support they could be eligible for: www.gov.uk/costoflivingsupport

Featuring on radio, social media and bus stop advertising, the [campaign](#) aims to increase parents' awareness and understanding of the childcare support available to them from the government, and maximise the number of people who take up our offer. This will coincide with the school summer holidays, maximising take up over the long break and beyond.

The campaign will signpost to parents, bringing together in one place the support available through Universal Credit, Tax-Free Childcare and 15-30 hours free childcare, clearly setting out eligibility requirements and providing a handy calculator so parents can estimate their entitlement. We will also look at simplifying the website further to make it as easy as possible for parents to understand the support available.

Universal Credit's childcare offer can save families hundreds of pounds each month – for example, a single parent with a young child who works in social care three days a week could benefit by around £500 a month if they claimed support for their childcare costs.

Tax-Free Childcare helps working families, including the self-employed, to reduce their household costs and keep more of what they earn. Working parents with annual salaries of up to £100,000 can get up to £2,000 of childcare support each year, or £4,000 for children with disabilities.

Recent Tax-Free Childcare statistics from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) have revealed that 512,415 families received up to £2,000 towards the cost of their childcare during the 2021 to 2022 tax year, up from 374,135 in the previous year. More than 384,000 families used Tax-Free Childcare in March 2022 – the highest monthly number of families recorded using the scheme since it was launched in April 2017.

The announcements follow visits by Children's Minister Will Quince to the Netherlands, Sweden, France and Scotland – whose staff:child ratios for two-year-olds the consultation launched today seeks to mirror.

The Government will also explore how to improve recruitment and retention of staff in the sector, giving parents as much confidence in the care their child receives as possible.

UK's first Critical Minerals Intelligence Centre to help build a more resilient economy

- Critical Minerals Intelligence Centre to boost UK resilience and growth by providing up to date data and analysis on supply of critical minerals
- critical minerals like cobalt, lithium and graphite are essential to manufacturing products such as electric vehicle batteries, wind turbines and fighter jets
- Centre to be run by the British Geological Survey in Nottingham and will help keep UK ahead of an increasingly competitive global market for critical minerals

The UK's first-ever centre to collect and analyse information on the supply of critical minerals, which are vital to the UK's economic success and national security, has officially launched, Industry Minister Lee Rowley announced today (4 July 2022).

Based in Nottingham, the Critical Minerals Intelligence Centre (CMIC) will improve the resilience of the UK's critical mineral supply chain by providing policymakers with up-to-date data and analysis on supply, demand, and market dynamics. This data will then be used to develop evidence-based policies aimed at developing more robust critical mineral supply chains to the UK.

Critical minerals are essential for manufacturing products that are required for green technologies, national security, and daily life – such as electric vehicles, wind turbines, mobile phones and fighter jets. With the production of some critical minerals expected to increase by nearly 500% by 2050¹, it is essential the UK takes steps to secure a resilient and sustainable supply chain. This is vital for some of the industries that it's hoped will drive growth and create jobs across the UK for decades to come, from EV manufacturers in the West Midlands, to Yorkshire's Energy Coast.

Minister for Industry Lee Rowley said:

Critical minerals are so important to every aspect of our daily lives, whether it's the phones we use, the cars we drive, or the batteries in our laptops.

As the world shifts towards new green technologies, supply chains

will become more competitive. That's why we're harnessing the British Geological Survey's vast experience in geoscience, to ensure better access to these crucial resources, and support the delivery of our forthcoming Critical Minerals Strategy.

The British Geological Survey (BGS) in Nottingham – with its unparalleled expertise and access to data – will deliver the programme, providing government with insights on the supply, demand, and market dynamics of critical minerals. Some of the CMIC's data and insights may be provided to businesses, where it's appropriate and of benefit to them.

BGS Director Dr Karen Hanghøj said:

We are extremely pleased to host the new UK Critical Minerals Intelligence Centre. The British Geological Survey has a strong reputation for its work on mineral and metal supply, and is internationally-known for its expertise on critical raw materials.

Through the new Critical Minerals Intelligence Centre, we are looking forward to building on this track record to provide UK industry and policy makers with high quality information and advice.

The BGS will combine its own resources, expertise, and data with those of third parties to provide up-to-date analysis on the supply, demand, and flow of critical mineral supplies around the world. The CMIC will also provide policymakers with advice on emerging issues, including geopolitical, ethical or environmental risks associated with critical mineral sources.

Work is already underway and as its first major milestone, the CMIC has published a [study](#) into the future UK demand for, and supply security of, critical minerals required for electric vehicle batteries. As highlighted by major government investments in gigafactories with Britishvolt and Envision AESC, the UK is one of the best locations in the world for automotive manufacturing, and this study will help policymakers improve the durability of our battery metal supply chains.

The government will publish a UK Critical Minerals Strategy later in 2022, setting out its approach to bolstering the resilience of our critical mineral supply chains.

Notes to editors

- UK Industry Minister Lee Rowley will visit the British Geological Survey's headquarters in Nottinghamshire today, Monday 4 June 2022, to see where the Critical Minerals Intelligence Centre will be based. Hosting the Centre in the East Midlands is in line with the government's ambitions to level up opportunities across the whole of the UK.
- The Centre builds on work by the [Critical Minerals Expert Group](#), set up by the government last year, to harness the UK's expert knowledge on

critical minerals.

- The Centre will be governed by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy, with guidance from an advisory panel of experts. Up to £3.6 million is available for the CMIC over 3 years.
- An important function of the CMIC will be to provide “criticality assessments”, which review the criticality of minerals for the UK. The British Geological Survey undertook the first UK criticality assessment in January 2022, which has recently been [published](#). Criticality is constantly evolving, and this assessment will be updated over time to reflect changes in supply and demand.
- The government is also supporting businesses that are working on access to new, innovative sources of raw materials found in the UK, which haven’t been utilised before.
- Cornish Lithium and Geothermal Engineering are collaborating to build a zero carbon, lithium extraction pilot plant at an existing site in Cornwall. This £4 million project will be part supported from the Government’s Getting Building Fund, via a £14.3 million allocation to the Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).
- Cornish Lithium, alongside the Natural History Museum and Wardell Armstrong, were awarded over £350,000 for the project “Securing a Domestic Lithium Supply Chain for the UK (Li4UK)”.
- In August last year, British Lithium Limited (BLL) was awarded an Innovate UK Smart Grant, with match funding of up to £500,000 from the government to progress its research and development of hard rock lithium extraction in the St Austell area of Cornwall.
- To stay up to date with the CMIC and for more information, please visit the [official website](#).

Aviation security checks accelerated as government helps industry minimise travel disruption

- government has accelerated the national security vetting checks that all new aviation recruits must undergo, with Accreditation Checks being completed in around 5 days on average and Counter Terrorist Checks in under 10 days
- helps industry to get new employees, such as x-ray screeners, into the industry as quickly as possible, so it can meet the surge in demand for flights
- follows the government’s 22-point plan for helping the industry tackle disruption, announced last week

Statistics show mandatory aviation sector national security checks are being processed in record time, as the industry works to rapidly fill vacancies in

the face of heightened demand for flights this summer.

The government has introduced a range of measures to help process security checks as quickly as possible, resulting in around 97% of Accreditation Checks being completed in around 5 days on average, with Counter Terrorist Checks (CTC) in the Aviation sector being processed in under 10 days on average. This is a reduction from the 20-day average turnaround for CTC checks in March, before the priority measures for aviation sector applications were introduced.

The government has also already provided flexibility for employers to begin training new staff on certain modules while their background checks are ongoing, further speeding up the onboarding process, and is allowing HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) employment history letters to be used as a suitable form of reference check.

Stringent checks are required on all new aviation employees before they can start work, with the UK being a world leader in aviation security. With passengers experiencing last-minute cancellations and delays as a result of the aviation industry struggling to recruit enough staff in time to meet the current surge in demand, the government has focused on delivering these checks as quickly as possible without compromising security to help ensure people don't experience a repeat of the disruption at Easter during the summer holidays.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

These statistics demonstrate how the government is doing its bit to help deliver for passengers; now the industry must fulfil its responsibilities.

People have made huge sacrifices during the pandemic and deserve their flights to run on time, without complications, and without being cancelled last minute. While this is a challenging time for the sector, it is not acceptable for the current disruption to continue as we head into the summer peak. The public deserves to know now whether or not their flight will run over the summer, and so I reiterate my call for the industry to commit to deliver the flights they have scheduled, or to cancel them well in advance so people can make other arrangements.

Building on our 22-point plan to help the industry minimise disruption, we will continue to do everything in our power to ensure this summer is a great success for the British public.

The government announced a [22-point plan](#) last week designed to ensure passengers don't face a summer of disruption. This includes measures to help the industry recruit and train staff and ensure the delivery of realistic summer schedules.

Ministers have rejected calls to issue temporary visas for aviation workers,

with staff shortages not being exclusive to the UK, but happening across Europe and the US too. Similar schemes in other sectors experiencing shortages, such as the HGV sector, have not been widely used and have not significantly contributed towards a solution.

Instead, the government is committed to building a resilient, well-paid British workforce, which will prove a far more effective, sustainable and long-term solution. To support this, government has already launched the [Aviation Skills Retention Platform](#) to help develop and hold onto UK workers.

Schools in Scotland and Northern Ireland are breaking up for summer, firing the starting gun on the busy summer holiday period – over 100 days after all remaining COVID-19 restrictions on international travel from the UK were lifted.