

News story: UK's approach to antimicrobial resistance gets UN recognition

The [United Nations \(UN\) Food and Agriculture Organization \(FAO\)](#) has awarded official designation to the UK International Reference Centre for AMR.

The Centre brings together expertise to provide capacity development in investigating AMR from three Defra agencies with a strong international focus; the [Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science \(Cefas\)](#), the [Veterinary Medicines Directorate \(VMD\)](#), and the [Animal and Plant Health Agency \(APHA\)](#).

Christine Middlemiss, UK Chief Veterinary Officer said:

I congratulate the UK International Reference Centre for AMR and warmly welcome the recognition of its expertise by the United Nations.

Enhancing global capability in reducing the use of antimicrobials and tackling the threat of AMR will be an important objective of the deep experience and expertise the collaborating agencies will provide.

The Centre supports low and middle income countries (LMICs) to improve laboratory and surveillance capacity that will monitor AMR and antimicrobial use, in addition to providing policy advice. The Centre also provides field and technical support to countries to tackle AMR, using a one health approach, which targets agriculture, aquaculture, livestock, environment and human health.

Formally launched at the [2nd Global AMR Call to Action summit](#) in Accra in November 2018, the Centre has quickly established strong working relationships with academic institutes and several countries, including Bangladesh and Ghana. The Centre also works in close partnership with Public Health England through the WHO Collaborating Centre for Reference & Research on AMR and Healthcare Associated Infections.

The Centre receives funding from Defra and has recently been successful in receiving funding and support from the Department for Health and Social Care through the Fleming Fund. [The Fleming Fund](#) is a UK aid programme developing partnerships with LMICs to generate, share and use data in order to tackle AMR.

Lord Gardiner, Defra Biosecurity Minister said:

This is fantastic news for the UK International Reference Centre and recognises the excellent work it delivers in tackling AMR, as well as extending the UK's international reach.

This work is vital to tackle the threat AMR poses to the global economy and society. The UK recognises AMR as a priority issue and we know that this challenge requires truly global collaboration.

A spokesperson for the Centre said:

The designation of the UK International Reference Centre by the FAO underscores the importance of tackling AMR using a 'One Health' approach given the interdependence of human, animals and the environment. We look forward to our continued partnerships with FAO and nations around the world to address the unique threat posed by AMR.

Press release: Justice Secretary announces new model for probation

- up to £280 million to be made available for voluntary and private sectors to deliver innovative rehabilitation services
- part of holistic reforms to cut reoffending and reduce crime

Justice Secretary David Gauke has today (16 May 2019) set out his blueprint for the future of probation – bringing all offender management under the National Probation Service (NPS) and building on existing work to bring down reoffending.

These reforms are designed to build on the successful elements of the existing system, Transforming Rehabilitation, which led to 40,000 additional offenders being supervised every year, along with the introduction of fresh ideas and innovative new rehabilitative services from private and voluntary providers.

The reforms will enhance the work of NPS, while maximising the skills of the private and voluntary sectors, and will provide up to £280 million a year for probation interventions from the private and voluntary sectors.

Under the new model, each NPS region will have a dedicated, private or voluntary sector 'Innovation Partner' – responsible for direct provision of unpaid work and accredited programmes. This will support NPS to identify, encourage and deliver greater innovation for vital services, including

substance misuse programmes, training courses, community payback and housing support.

The new model will also give local criminal justice partners a direct role in commissioning services together with NPS.

Justice Secretary David Gauke said:

Delivering a stronger probation system, which commands the confidence of the courts and better protects the public, is a pillar of our reforms to focus on rehabilitation and cut reoffending.

I want a smarter justice system that reduces repeat crime by providing robust community alternatives to ineffective short prison sentences – supporting offenders to turn away from crime for good.

The model we are announcing today will harness the skills of private and voluntary providers and draw on the expertise of the NPS to boost rehabilitation, improve standards and ultimately increase public safety.

This work builds on a package of reforms being driven forward to move away from short custodial sentences, which evidence shows are often ineffective. Recent figures show offenders serving sentences of less than 12 months had a reoffending rate of nearly 65% – laying bare the need for robust community alternatives.

By having one consistent service delivering end-to-end offender management, sentencers can feel confident that alternatives to ineffective short custodial sentences will be delivered robustly. The new model will simplify this system by introducing eleven new probation regions in England and Wales, to ensure effective coordination – right from pre-sentence reports in the courts through the criminal justice system and to release into the community.

The proposed reforms will also transform the use of technology in probation, investing in a digital and data strategy that will replace existing systems and better utilise technology, data and information to inform professional judgement.

Transforming Rehabilitation showed that real partnership working between public and private sectors can drive innovation. The new model will make it easier for a range of voluntary and community organisations to get in to the market by cutting bureaucracy. A fund of £20 million a year will be set aside for particularly innovative new approaches.

Plans to bring forward legislation to implement a statutory regulatory framework that will hold probation officers to the same professional standards as doctors and lawyers, will also ensure that probation staff feel respected and empowered to deliver this important service.

It is now vital to take time to finalise these proposals, in order to get the changes right, and the Department will work closely with providers, stakeholders and staff to finalise these proposals, ready for the new model to come in to effect in Spring 2021.

Notes to editors

- The Ministry of Justice will now run a period of market and stakeholder engagement to finalise these proposals, including on how services will be tendered to providers.
- A commercial competition will launch later this year for providers to bid for to source the necessary rehabilitative services.
- Offender management in Wales will be integrated on a quicker timescale, by the end of 2019.
- Three launch events to discuss the reforms in more depth will be held week commencing 27 May in London, Cardiff and Manchester and will be open to stakeholders.

[News story: Call for views on new digital Functional Skills qualifications](#)

Employers, post-16 providers, awarding organisations and students are being encouraged to have their say on the content for the new digital Functional Skills qualifications through an [eight-week consultation](#) launched today, Thursday 16 May.

The consultation is the latest step in the Government's drive to help more adults get the essential digital skills they need, such as using a tablet, buying online, working with cloud storage or managing privacy settings, that many people take for granted.

Views are being sought to make sure the subject content for the new qualifications best meets the needs of employers and will prepare students for everyday life and work.

The digital Functional Skills qualifications, available from 2021, will support progression into employment or further education and develop skills for everyday life – based on the new, rigorous national standards for essential digital skills.

Apprenticeships and Skills Minister Anne Milton said:

We want everyone to have the digital skills they need. This

consultation builds on the new 'essential digital skills' qualifications which will give adults the chance to develop a whole host of new skills that they can use in their everyday lives and to get on in work.

I encourage everyone to have their say. We want to make sure the content of these important qualifications meets the needs of employers and gives people the knowledge and skills they need.

The proposed subject content for digital Functional Skills Qualifications is based on the new [national standards for essential digital skills](#) which, informed by the Essential Digital Skills framework, are defining the skills needed to participate in today's digital world, were developed in close consultation with a range of providers, awarding organisations, employers and digital inclusion organisations.

The Government recently announced new plans to boost digital skills for adults through free courses offered to thousands of people to help the [1 in 5 adults with no or low basic digital skills](#) thrive in an increasingly digital world.

In April, we announced the new offer will comprise of new Essential Digital Skills qualifications, available from 2020, and new digital Functional Skills qualifications, available from 2021.

The new national entitlement from 2020 will fully fund adults with no or low digital skills to undertake the new qualifications. They will be supported to use digital devices like tablets, smart phones and laptop computers and to perform everyday activities like how to navigate the internet, send an email and make online payments, while protecting their privacy online.

The announcement builds on steps already taken to drive up the government's digital offer including making computing a statutory national curriculum subject and introducing a new Computer Science GCSE and A Level.

Press release: First review of 25 Year Environment Plan published

The government has today published the first [progress report](#) of its landmark [25 Year Environment Plan](#) indicating that, in the first year alone, 90% of the plan's actions have been delivered or are being progressed.

Launched in January 2018, the 25 Year Environment Plan sets out how we will improve the environment over a generation by creating richer habitats for wildlife, improving air and water quality and curbing the scourge of plastic

in the world's oceans.

Over the last 12 months, the government has:

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

Through our landmark 25 Year Environment Plan and upcoming Environment Bill, we are committed to bold action on tackling plastic waste, reforming farming, protecting our landscapes and boosting wildlife. While progress is encouraging, we know there is still more to do.

As the future stewards of the environment, our children and young people have a crucial role to play in protecting our precious natural world. That is why, in this [Year of Green Action](#), we are involving young people in helping shape our shared future”.

The first progress report comes during the Year of Green Action, a year-long drive to get more people from all backgrounds involved in projects to improve the natural world.

A key part of the 25 year Environment Plan, the government has appointed [15 environmental ambassadors to inspire action across the UK](#), and is working in partnership with the #iwill campaign to champion the role of young people during the year.

The government has today also published a [new indicator framework for the 25 Year Environment Plan](#), becoming one of the first countries to establish such a comprehensive indicator list from which to monitor environmental progress.

It comes as the government explores introducing a new citizen science project to build a broader understanding of the state of the environment.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove has written to the [Natural Capital Committee](#) to ask for advice on how the public could volunteer to be involved in a new environmental citizen science project. Members of the public would go out and record their local environment, from logging individual plants and animals to noting changes across whole landscapes, so that the data can be used to help shape future policy.

In addition to involving citizens directly, plans are underway to examine how new technologies could be used to identify gaps in environmental protection. Techniques such as satellite monitoring could show what crops are being grown and where habitats need protecting. Social media data could also be used to understand how people are interacting with their environment.

As announced by the Prime Minister in 2018, the government is currently preparing the first Environment Bill for 20 years which will place the 25 Year Environment Plan on statutory footing and put environmental ambition and accountability at the heart of government.

[News story: AAIB report: Bombardier Dash 8, landing gear problem](#)

The aircraft was travelling from Belfast City to Inverness when cockpit indications showed that the nose landing gear doors had not closed after landing gear retraction. The crew diverted to Belfast International and carried out all relevant procedures but were unable to lower the landing gear. The aircraft landed with the nose landing gear up. There was an emergency evacuation and two of the 53 passengers sustained minor injuries.

The AAIB investigation found that a damaged electrical harness affected the readings of a sensor so that the nose landing gear doors started to close while the landing gear was still moving. This then caused the nose landing gear to become jammed in the 'up' position, so that it would not extend when commanded by the crew.

The investigation determined that the harness had been secured with a non-flexible cable tie which restricted it from flexing during normal landing gear operations, leading to a fatigue failure of the harness.

As a result of the AAIB investigation, the operator inspected the remainder of its fleet. The aircraft and landing gear manufacturers have clarified the harness routing and attachment instructions and are also working on a more flexible harness design.

[Read the report.](#)

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