

Press release: UK welcomes Syrian Negotiation Commission

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson and Minister for the Middle East, Alistair Burt, met with the head of the Syrian Negotiation Commission, Dr Nasr al-Hariri, today to discuss Syria's future, and the UK's role in helping to secure a stable, peaceful future for its people.

The Foreign Secretary said:

This visit was a significant opportunity for the UK to discuss with the Syrian opposition our shared efforts to bring this appalling human catastrophe to an end, and stop the suffering that the Syrian people have endured for over seven years.

The regime's continuation of its brutal offensives, including its use of chemical weapons, and its refusal to engage in negotiations have underlined the challenge of reaching a political settlement. But we remain clear that only a political solution will create a stable, brighter future for the Syrian people. Nasr al-Hariri and the Syrian opposition have again expressed their willingness to engage in direct negotiations with the Syrian regime and Russia without preconditions.

The UK remains at the forefront of the humanitarian response: at the recent Brussels Conference we pledged to provide at least £450 million this year, and £300 million next year, taking the total UK humanitarian funding to £2.71 billion since 2011. This assistance will help to alleviate the extreme suffering in Syria and provide vital support in neighbouring countries.

News story: Police forces save £273 million in three years on equipment cost

With Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) spending almost a quarter of their overall budgets on goods and services with third party suppliers, the exercise highlights the most recent prices paid for goods such as police helmets, shirts, and vehicles; as well as services like gas and face-to-face language interpretation, enabling more money to be spent on local priorities.

Most of the savings from this year's figures result from the Collaborative Law Enforcement Programme (CLEP), led by police forces, identifying opportunities for collaboration.

For example, forces across Bedfordshire, Hertfordshire and Cambridgeshire bought uniforms together to halve the cost of their fleeces from £32.95 to £15.95.

Four forces in Yorkshire – South Yorkshire Police, North Yorkshire Police, West Yorkshire Police and Humberside Police – also worked together to reduce prices of vehicles by up to £10,000 per vehicle since 2016 to 2017.

Other highlights from this [year's statistics](#) include:

- Metropolitan police reducing the cost of jackets by over 63 percent
- Leicestershire police cutting the cost of fleeces by over 61 percent
- 60 percent reductions in the cost of utility belts (Norfolk and Suffolk) and shirts (Lincolnshire)
- Nottinghamshire police reducing the cost of their telephone interpretation service by almost a half while delivering the same quality

Nick Hurd, Minister for Police and Fire, said:

This year, taxpayers will be investing an additional £460 million in our police system. They do not expect the police to waste their money through inefficient procurement. I congratulate the police on impressive progress in recent years to squeeze out inefficiency. However these numbers show that the work is not complete. We will continue to work with the police to make sure that the taxpayer is getting value for money.

National Police Chiefs' Council Lead for Finance, Chief Constable Dave Thompson said:

We have already delivered substantial procurement savings and have identified another £100 million of savings over the next three years. While there are considerable challenges to overcome in more complex areas of procurement, we continue to work hard to find further efficiencies and provide the best possible service to the public.

APCC Lead for Business Enablers and Chair of the National Commercial Board, Jason Ablewhite PCC, added:

I very much welcome the work of Police and Crime Commissioners, forces and others to deliver significant savings from more effective procurement. The Collaborative Law Enforcement

Procurement (CLEP) Programme has been very active in supporting forces, including through standardisation and aggregation in areas such as uniform and vehicles. We will continue to identify further opportunities to make substantial savings for policing – including through more complex areas, such as construction and, where appropriate, trying to support national sourcing approaches.

The public rightly expect policing to be as efficient as possible and through the National Commercial Board, which oversees the work of the CLEP programme, we will be looking at the options for a future commercial operating model to ensure greater coordination of commercial activity at a regional and national level.

Featuring previously unrecorded items, this year's 'basket of goods' identifies new areas of discrepancies in the spending on goods and services, including:

- police push bikes, with costs ranging from £279, to as high as £539 per bike
- police motor cycle helmets, with some forces paying £291 and others paying £656

The data collected on the new items will be used to highlight areas where police forces could work together to procure equipment in a more collaborative, cost-effective way, and the government will work with the sector to ensure that this is the case going forward.

These figures also reveal areas which have worsened year-on-year. These include:

- credit reports, with a 262 percent rise in median spend across forces
- median spend has also raised for goods such as belts (21 percent), baton (11 percent), handcuffs (6 percent)

Although the cost of an item is not the only consideration and maintaining quality is also an important factor, forces themselves have recognised there is more to do and have committed to delivering a further £100 million of procurement savings over the next three years.

[Press release: Man who attempted to murder four children has sentence increased](#)

A man who attempted to kill 4 young children by beating them with a hammer

before deliberately driving into a stone wall has had his sentence increased after the Solicitor General, Robert Buckland QC MP, referred it for being too low.

On 22 August 2017 Owen Scott, 29, was driving with the children, aged between 9 months and 8 years. Possibly due to a cocaine and cannabis-induced psychotic episode, Scott attacked the children with a hammer, striking their heads multiple times. He then deliberately drove his car, containing the children, at over 90 mph into the stone wall of a pub outside Huddersfield.

All 4 children were left with devastating injuries, and medical reports have suggested there may be lasting psychological damage and cognitive impairment. Two of the children require ongoing medical attention, and one will be wheelchair dependent for life.

Scott was originally sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum term of 13 years 188 days at Sheffield Crown Court. Today, after the Solicitor General's reference, the Court of Appeal increased his minimum term to 24 years. Commenting on the sentence increase, the Solicitor General said:

"Four children's lives have been devastated by Scott's actions, and the physical and mental scars will stay with them for the rest of their lives. I am pleased that the Court of Appeal has agreed to increase Scott's sentence to properly reflect the seriousness of his crime."

[Press release: Housing Secretary James Brokenshire awards funding to reduce rough sleeping](#)

Three areas in England are set to launch new pilot projects to support rough sleepers with complex needs get off the streets into stable and affordable accommodation, Housing Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP has announced today (9 May 2018).

The projects in Greater Manchester, Liverpool City Region and the West Midlands Combined Authority will offer individuals intensive support to recover from complex health issues, for example substance abuse and mental health difficulties and sustain their tenancies.

The pilot projects will be based on Housing First, an internationally proven approach to supporting rough sleepers into long-term accommodation.

Funding for the government's Housing First Pilots was announced at Autumn Budget.

Housing Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

The evidence shows Housing First has an incredible rate of success in providing rough sleepers with the support they need to get off the streets and to rebuild their lives.

We are investing over £1.2 billion to break the homelessness cycle, but we know there's more to do to help people off the streets for good. This is why the government is leading the way in implementing Housing First in England.

I believe these pilots will have a positive impact in their areas and I look forward to hearing about their successes over the coming months.

Housing First is a tried and tested approach to tackling long-term rough sleeping that puts the emphasis on finding individuals a secure and affordable home to live in, while providing them with expert support to rebuild their lives.

In Europe, Housing First projects have been successful at ending homelessness for at least 8 out of 10 people in the scheme. This is compared to hostel-based accommodation which has resulted in between 40% and 60% of users with complex needs leaving, or ejected, before their homelessness is resolved.

Today's announcement builds on measures the government is bringing forward to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and end it altogether by 2027, including:

- a new Rough Sleeping Team made up of rough sleeping and homelessness experts with specialist knowledge across a wide-range of areas from housing, mental health and addiction
- a £30 million fund for 2018 to 2019 with further funding agreed for 2019 to 2020 targeted at local authorities with high numbers of people sleeping rough – these areas will be supported by the new Rough Sleeping Team to develop local interventions to reduce the numbers of those sleeping rough
- £100,000 funding to support frontline Rough Sleeping workers to make sure they have the right skills and knowledge to work with vulnerable rough sleepers

The government is additionally working with the National Housing Federation to look at providing additional, coordinated move-on accommodation for rough sleepers.

A full breakdown of allocations for Housing First is as follows:

Distribution	£ million
Liverpool City Region	7.7
Greater Manchester	8.0
West Midlands	9.6
Total	25.30

[News story: Call to Action – Step Change Programme](#)

This message is a call-to-action for policing, the private sector and government to support the integrated delivery of 25 projects intended to enhance the protective security of the United Kingdom. These projects have been defined through tri-partite working groups, established through the Step-Change conferences, and are a combination of new activity and works-in-progress that the working groups wish to develop and contribute to.

PDF, 533KB, 6 pages

If you use assistive technology (such as a screen reader) and need a version of this document in a more accessible format, please email nactso@met.police.uk. Please tell us what format you need. It will help us if you say what assistive technology you use.