

Press release: PM statement: Mexico earthquake

My thoughts and sympathies are with all of those affected by the terrible earthquake in Mexico.

The UK government is in close contact with the relevant authorities and we are ready to provide support in any way that we can. We are working to identify and support any affected British nationals as the recovery effort continues.

Press release: London turns the tide on an 8 year surge of gonorrhoea

A new report released by Public Health England (PHE) shows new cases of gonorrhoea in Londoners dropped by 19% in 2016 compared with figures from the year before.

Gonorrhoea had been increasing year-on-year in the capital since 2009, and this reduction may be an encouraging sign that Londoners are getting tested for STIs more frequently and are practicing safe sex by using condoms.

Overall sexually transmitted infections (STIs) fell by 5% in London last year with decreases seen among most of the 5 major STIs. New cases of genital warts fell by 5% and cases of genital herpes dropped by 2%. But the data also comes with a note of caution as the number of syphilis diagnoses reported rose by 2% in 2016, double the number reported in 2012. Cases of chlamydia meanwhile, the most common STI, increased by 1%.

STIs remain an important public health problem in London, with the capital having the highest rate of new diagnoses in England, 79% higher than any other part of the country. Of the top 20 local authorities in England with the highest rates of new STI diagnoses, 17 were in London.

Overall in 2016, there were 117,600 new STIs diagnosed in London residents compared with more than 123,800 diagnosed in 2015.

Dr Yvonne Doyle, Regional Director for PHE London, said:

London has turned the tide on an 8 year surge of gonorrhoea with overall rates of STIs decreasing.

This encouraging news could show that work to promote frequent

testing together with safe sex practices is paying off. This means people are using condoms and are regularly being tested.

However, the data comes with a note of caution. Poor sexual health remains a public health problem in London and STIs are still too high compared to other parts of the country, with rates of syphilis and chlamydia actually increasing.

Tackling poor sexual health remains high on the agenda for PHE London and we will continue to work with our partners to deliver effective public health interventions to improve sexual health outcomes across the capital.

To reduce the number of STIs, it is important that Londoners are familiar with PHE's recommendations for safe sexual health. These include getting tested every year and when changing sexual partner, as well as getting re-tested after a positive chlamydia diagnosis (within 3 months of the diagnosis).

The [annual epidemiological spotlight on sexually transmitted infections in London \(2016 data\)](#) is available online.

You can view local data on sexual health via PHE's [Sexual Reproductive Health Profiles](#) online.

PHE published [annual data on STI diagnoses](#) in June 2017 and these are available online.

For safe sex, PHE recommends:

- prevention should focus on groups at highest risk, including young adults, men who have sex with men (MSM) and black ethnic minorities
- consistent and correct use of condoms can significantly reduce risk of infection
- regular testing for HIV and STIs is essential for good sexual health:
- anyone under 25 who is sexually active should be screened for chlamydia annually, and on change of sexual partner
- MSM should test annually for HIV and STIs and every 3 months if having condomless sex with new or casual partners

The London HIV Prevention Programme, a London-wide sexual health promotion initiative funded by London local authorities, delivers the 'Do It London' sexual health campaigns aimed at promoting safer sex to all residents in the capital including reducing risk of STIs.

The [London annual data spotlight report](#), presenting annual epidemiological data for HIV in London, is available online.

Rates of selected STIs per 100,000 population by London borough of residence: 2016 is available.

[Public Health England](#) exists to protect and improve the nation's health and

wellbeing, and reduce health inequalities. It does this through world-class science, knowledge and intelligence, advocacy, partnerships and the delivery of specialist public health services. PHE is an operationally autonomous executive agency of the Department of Health. Follow us on Twitter: [@PHE_uk](#) and Facebook: www.facebook.com/PublicHealthEngland.

News story: Government and unions welcome 'important step' for UK steel industry

The Business Secretary and the lead representative of the UK's three steel unions today (20 September) welcomed an 'important step' for the country's steel industry after Tata Steel Limited and ThyssenKrupp signed a formal agreement that could secure the future of Port Talbot.

Greg Clark and Roy Rickhuss, the chair of the National Trade Union Steel Coordinating Committee, said the deal between Tata and ThyssenKrupp had the potential to protect the long-term future of steelmaking at Tata's site in South Wales, its 4,000 jobs and the wider supply chain. The site is home to the Indian conglomerate's strip steel business.

The government and unions said they welcomed the move as long as commitments to safeguard jobs and extend blast furnace operations over the long-term at Port Talbot were maintained. This includes the relining of the site's second blast furnace.

The memorandum of understanding signed between Tata and ThyssenKrupp, the German engineering group, marks the latest stage in the development of a joint venture between the companies to build a pan-European steel enterprise. The company will become TK-Tata Steel.

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

The Government has been working hard with the unions to secure a sustainable future for Tata Steel in the UK, its 4,000 employees at the Port Talbot site and its supply chain.

Today's agreement between Tata Steel and ThyssenKrupp is an important next step in establishing their shared ambition for Port Talbot as a world-class steel manufacturer, with a focus on quality, technology and innovation.

Roy Rickhuss, General Secretary of Community and chair of the coordinating

committee representing the Unite, GMB and Community unions, said: > The steel trade unions cautiously welcome this news and recognise the industrial logic of such a partnership. This would create the second biggest steel business in Europe which could deliver significant benefits for the UK.□□

As always, the devil will be in the detail and we are seeking further assurances on jobs, investment and future production across the UK operations. As a priority, we will be pressing Tata to demonstrate their long term commitment to steelmaking in the UK by confirming they will invest in the reline of Port Talbot's Blast Furnace No.5.

The agreement follows close working between unions, Tata and the Government to ensure sustainable steelmaking maintains a central role in a strong and successful UK economy. It is hoped that the joint venture would also enable TK-Tata, working with UK vehicle manufacturers and their supply chains, to contribute to the focus on innovation in the government's Industrial Strategy.

The joint venture comes after the recent conclusion of Tata's discussions with the British Steel Pension Fund, the Pensions Regulator and the Pensions Protection Fund about a plan to manage its pension liabilities. This enabled a Regulatory Apportionment Arrangement to be reached, giving pension scheme members the opportunity to transfer to a new scheme.

[News story: 'Give Pudsey your round pounds', new partnership urges](#)

Today (20 September) it was announced that BBC Children in Need will be partnering with The Royal Mint and HM Treasury on their £1 coin campaign, joining forces for Pudsey's Round Pound Countdown.

Kicking off a nationwide campaign, BBC Children in Need, The Royal Mint and HM Treasury will challenge the country to join Pudsey to hunt down the millions of remaining round £1 coins, and put them to good use by donating to BBC Children in Need.

With less than four weeks to go before the round £1 stops being accepted in shops and restaurants, BBC Children in Need is encouraging everyone to check their piggy banks, empty coat pockets and dive down the back of sofas to dig out any lurking round pound coins.

A new poll* suggests that six in ten of us would like to donate our remaining round pounds to charities, like BBC Children in Need. With one in three

people still having these coins stashed away in savings jars and piggy banks, the message is clear – dig them out, head over to your local drop-off point and donate them to BBC Children in Need's 2017 Appeal!

Commercial Director of BBC Children in Need, Jonathan Rigby, said:

We are really excited to work with The Royal Mint and HM Treasury for Pudsey's Round Pound Countdown and hope that as many people as possible will get involved in this nationwide treasure hunt and put their old round pounds to good use. Every round pound donated will go on to make a real difference to the lives of disadvantaged children and young people across the UK.

CEO and Deputy Master of The Royal Mint, Adam Lawrence, said:

Any round £1 coins donated to BBC Children in Need through Pudsey's Round Pound Countdown will not only go to a fantastic cause but they will make their way back to The Royal Mint where some will be melted to make new £1 coins.

Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, Andrew Jones MP, said:

Over the last few months, we have urged the public to spend, bank or donate their round pounds ahead of the October 15 deadline. We are delighted to partner with BBC Children in Need, and are encouraging everyone who can, to promise their round pounds to Pudsey.

BBC Children in Need's vision is that every child in the UK has a childhood that is safe, happy and allows them the chance to reach their potential. The charity is currently supporting over 2,400 projects in communities across the UK that are helping children and young people facing a range of disadvantages such as living in poverty, being disabled or ill, or experiencing distress, neglect or trauma.

Notes to editors

There are thousands of BBC Children in Need drop-off points across the country where you can handover your donations. For more information on where to find them, visit www.bbc.co.uk/Pudsey.

*Figures are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 2,004 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken across September 2017. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of UK adults (aged 18+).

BBC Children in Need

BBC Children in Need's vision is that every child in the UK has a safe, happy and secure childhood and the chance to reach their potential. The charity will realise this vision by supporting, promoting and publicising work that addresses the challenges that children and young people face and work that builds their skills and resilience.

BBC Children in Need is currently supporting over 2,400 projects in communities across the UK that are helping children and young people facing a range of disadvantages such as living in poverty, being disabled or ill, or experiencing distress, neglect or trauma.

Further information on BBC Children in Need can be found at www.bbc.co.uk/Pudsey.

Press release: Growing businesses to benefit from expert tax support

There are around 170,000 mid-sized businesses registered in the UK. Businesses with either a turnover of more than £10 million or more than 20 employees, and undergoing significant growth, can now seek expert help from HMRC growth support specialists.

Known as the Growth Support Service, HMRC tax experts will offer dedicated support, tailored to the customer's needs. It has been created to help growing, mid-sized businesses access the information and services they need.

This could include:

- helping with tax queries about their growing business
- supplying accurate information and co-ordinating technical expertise from across HMRC
- supporting them to get their tax right first time and access relevant incentives or reliefs

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury [Mel Stride](#) said:

Mid-sized businesses make vital contribution to the UK economy and I want to see them grow, succeed and prosper.

The Growth Support Service will help these expanding businesses access tailored tax assistance so that tax administration doesn't stand in the way of their growth and ensures businesses can focus on finding new opportunities.

Businesses who meet the eligibility requirements can apply online; they will then be contacted by their dedicated growth support specialist at HMRC, to discuss their requirements. The bespoke service will generally last between three to six months.

The top five industries and sectors that could benefit from the Growth Support Service are:

1. Manufacturing (for example building, printing or maintenance firms)
2. Information and communication (for example IT or software companies, film makers or publishers)
3. Administrative and support services (for example vehicle hire companies, recruitment agencies or call centres)
4. Professional, scientific and technical services (for example law and accountancy firms or quantity surveyors)
5. Wholesale and retail (for example high street shops, food and drink outlets or car showrooms)

The introduction of the service demonstrates HMRC's continued commitment to support UK businesses get their tax right. In addition to the existing customer relations service for large businesses; last month, the department launched the Small Business Online Forum for small businesses and the self-employed.

1. Follow HMRC's Press Office on [Twitter](#)
2. HMRC's Flickr channel can be found [here](#).
3. Further [guidance](#) on the Growth Support Service eligibility criteria and online application.
4. The Growth Support Service is free to eligible mid-sized businesses.