

News story: Green light for lorry 'platooning'

The UK's first HGV 'platooning' trial, jointly funded by Highways England and the Department for Transport, has been given the green light.

Overseen by Highways England, TRL (the UK's Transport Research Laboratory) will carry out the trials, which will see how lorries can accelerate, brake and steer in sync through wireless technology.

Jim O'Sullivan, Highways England's Chief Executive, welcomed the announcement, and stressed that safety will be an integral part of the trials:

We are pleased to be supporting the government's ambition for the UK to be a global leader for innovation.

The trial has the potential to demonstrate how greater automation of vehicles – in this instance, HGVs – can deliver improvements in safety, better journeys for road users and reduction in vehicle emissions.

Investing in this research shows we care about those using our roads, the economy and the environment, and safety will be integral as we take forward this work with TRL.

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

News story: PM welcomes Women's World Cup stars to Downing Street

England's women's cricket and rugby teams today enjoyed a Downing Street reception to celebrate their recent achievements in what is fast becoming a year to remember for British women's sport.

The England women's cricket team secured their fourth World Cup title in July in front of a sold out Lord's Cricket Ground, beating India by nine runs, while the England women's rugby reached the World Cup final, falling to New Zealand in Belfast on Saturday night, in a thrilling finale to a fantastic tournament.

The success of both teams comes at a time when women's sport is enjoying a marked increase in grassroots participation, elite-level success, record investment and global coverage.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

It has been a watershed summer for women's sport in our country and it was a great honour to welcome two teams, whose achievements have been such an important part of this breakthrough moment, to Downing Street today.

Interest in women's sports is at an all-time high and with record attendances and huge global interest I hope we can seize this opportunity to grow women and girls' sport in communities across the length and breadth of the land.

Thousands of women and girls across the country will be inspired by the achievements of the current generation of stars and they are fantastic ambassadors for the nation.

England women's cricket team captain, Heather Knight said:

It's been an incredible summer for women's cricket and we've enjoyed every second of it. I would never have imagined that we could sell out Lord's so to lift the World Cup in front of a packed house was beyond special.

The support from our fans helped us on our way to the trophy and it's also evidence of how much our sport has grown. It just feels like there's never been a better time for women and girls to get involved in cricket – some of my favourite memories from the tournament are signing autographs for the young girls who came to watch and cheer us on. Hopefully they'll now be desperate to follow in our footsteps.

It was an honour to meet the Prime Minister and share some stories with her from inside the camp. We saw her mention us after we'd beaten Australia in the group stages so it's great that we've had a chance to come and say thanks!

England bowler and player of the match, Anya Shrubsole said:

Growing up you see successful sportspeople visiting the Prime Minister and it feels a million miles away. To be here today is an indication of how far women's cricket has come.

This summer was the product of a lot of hard work – on and off the pitch. We've got more to do but we want to keep winning trophies and we want to inspire as many young girls as possible to pick up a bat or a ball and start playing.

When I was a young fan watching cricket, I didn't think I'd take six wickets in a World Cup final at Lord's in front of 25,000 fans and win Player of the Match – hopefully that goes to show young girls that there are no limits to what you can achieve.

England women's rugby team captain, Sarah Hunter said:

It's been an honour to be invited to attend the reception in Downing Street today to celebrate what has been an exciting summer of women's sport. While as a team we are disappointed not to have brought the World Cup home, we are proud of everything that we have achieved this year in showcasing women's rugby.

Hopefully we have played a part in inspiring the next generation to get involved and give rugby a go.

Through the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport England's Sporting Future strategy the Government is determined to build on these successes at the grassroots and elite levels to encourage more women and girls playing sport.

Tackling the gender gap is a priority for this Government and we are determined to continue to make progress in the broader women's sporting landscape. The Sporting Future strategy has a strong emphasis on attracting under-represented groups such as women, disabled people, those in lower socio-economic groups and older people into sport.

Better participation and elite-level success is a great step forward but to build on this we also want to help improve the representation of women on the boards of sports governing bodies. Through the Code for Sports Governance, we are ensuring that all sports governing bodies that receive public money will have at least 30 per cent gender diversity on their boards. Better female representation on the boards of sports governing bodies can help grow women's sport.

Sport England's recent Active Lives survey found that in terms of 'being active' men are 63% more likely to be active while women are still just 59% more likely. Encouragingly the sports gender participation gap has dropped from over two million to around 1.55 million but more still needs to be done – that is why Sport England is committed to tripling its investment to tackling inactivity to £250 million.

Speech: Women in Sport reception – Prime Minister's speech

I am delighted to welcome you all to Downing Street today – and to have this opportunity to celebrate what I believe has been a watershed for women's sport in our country this summer.

In doing so, it is a great honour to welcome two of our teams whose achievements have been such an important part of this breakthrough moment.

Our England Women's cricket team whose dramatic nine-run victory over India at a packed out Lords secured the Cricket World Cup.

And our England women's rugby team who earlier this Summer beat New Zealand in New Zealand to become the world's No1 team – and whose breath-taking World Cup final in Belfast on Saturday night had the nation on the edge of its seat.

And while I know our rugby team will be disappointed with the result on the pitch, your result off the pitch, the legacy of everything you have achieved – together with our cricketers, our footballers, athletes, hockey players and of course Jo Konta's spectacular run at Wimbledon – will change the way that women's sport is seen in our country for years to come.

So I am delighted that you are all here today – and not just the players who have worked so incredibly hard – but also the coaches and backroom teams who have supported you, and some of your families and friends too, whose own sacrifices have been such an important part of everything you have done.

I am incredibly proud that, with you, our nation can call on such wonderful ambassadors for young women and girls today.

And I hope that with your support we can seize this opportunity to grow women and girls' sport in communities across the length and breadth of the land.

We have got lots to build on.

Our Sports Strategy is already targeting resources at those less likely to be physically active, with Sport England setting out seven new investment programmes that I hope can really help increase women's participation in sport.

While Sport England's award-winning campaign called This Girl Can has already seen 11,000 organisations register as supporters and 1.6 million women saying they have now started or restarted sporting activity.

And I am seeing some of this growth in women's grassroots sport in my own role as Patron of the women's team at Maidenhead and Bray Cricket Club and as

President of the Wargrave Girls Football Club.

But if we are really going to seize the opportunity of this moment I believe we need to go further in two key areas.

First, we need to improve the representation of women on the governing bodies of our sports.

This isn't just right in terms of creating better governance for any organisation – it is also right in terms of growing women's sport.

For too long, in too many sports, there hasn't been enough attention paid to the women's side of the sport – and more women on boards can help to change that.

So our sports governance code now includes a target of at least 30 per cent gender diversity on boards.

And it is now mandatory and applies to any organisation of any size or scale seeking funding from Sport England or UK Sport.

As of last year, just under half of NGBs did not yet meet this requirement.

But they are going to have to set out a plan to do so by October 31st this year.

Second, we need a radical change in the status and profile of our women's sports – especially team sports – so that women's sporting success is routinely held in the same high esteem as that of men's.

Developments like the Women's Premier League in football and the growing professionalisation of team sports are important steps forward.

And it is welcome too that the gender prize money gap in sport is closing with 83 per cent of sports now rewarding men and women equally.

But 83 per cent isn't good enough.

We need to go further – and broadcast and news coverage has a key role to play.

And again your achievements this summer can be a major catalyst for progress.

Channel 4's hugely successful coverage of the Euros helped to galvanise support for the Lionesses – just as the BBC's coverage of the World Cup had done in 2015.

The Cricket World Cup Final at Lords was sold out and had a global television audience of over 100 million.

While the Rugby World Cup Final saw another packed stadium in Belfast on Saturday night and the largest ever TV audience for women's rugby in the UK – with the game rightly shown in a prime time slot on ITV1.

This has generated huge momentum – and I hope we can capitalise on it, so that women's sport on TV and on the back pages of our newspapers becomes the norm and not the exception.

Today we celebrate two teams, and two fantastic sets of athletes, but you are much more than that.

You are trailblazers, ambassadors, pioneers and now a part of British sporting history.

So together, let's ensure that your legacy is not just in Britain's sporting history – but also a fundamental part of shaping Britain's sporting future – for millions of young women and girls, for generations to come.

Press release: Environment Agency trials use of body cameras

Environment Agency enforcement officers in the North East are wearing body worn cameras as part of a six-month trial.

It is the first of its kind within the organisation and is aimed at assessing if cameras can help reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour, assaults and threats against staff, particularly those working with regulated and illegal waste sites.

If successful, body worn cameras, which are now the norm among many enforcement agencies, could be rolled out to Environment Agency teams across the country. They could be used in a variety of ways, including at visits to poor performing sites, illegal waste sites, during fisheries and navigation patrols and even during incident response.

Since the trial started in April, waste enforcement and fisheries officers have been wearing the devices during their routine activities and activate them if they encounter a hostile situation or site.

Footage from one of the cameras during a visit to an illegal waste site

Pilot scheme

The pilot scheme comes after Environment Agency employee, Paul Whitehill, an ex-police officer, was threatened with violence when he and a fellow colleague attended an illegal waste site on a routine visit. He said:

I worked with body cameras in the police and saw how effective they can be so suggested we run a trial.

Already officers have reported that wearing the cameras has prevented threatening situations from escalating.

Environment Agency waste enforcement officers regularly encounter aggressive behaviour across the country. Since 2001, the Environment Agency has successfully prosecuted 59 cases of obstruction, hostility or threatening behaviour towards staff, 22 of which were in the North East.

‘Safety is paramount’

Rachael Caldwell from the Environment Agency’s Waste and Enforcement Department, said:

The safety of our staff is paramount. They are well trained in dealing with hostile situations and we take any threat against them very seriously. But our preference is to prevent hostility in the first place.

Studies also show that people are less likely to contest the evidence when they know their offence is captured on camera. This could help speed up justice and reduce legal costs.

Officers taking part in the pilot must follow guidelines on use of these cameras. They will not be permanently switched on and people will be informed if they are being filmed. If they are used the footage is automatically deleted after a month unless it is required for evidential purposes.

Rachael added:

Officers will only switch the cameras on if and when they enter a hostile situation. That could be a site where they have experienced aggressive behaviour in the past, or an unknown quantity where hostility may be anticipated, such as on a remote river bank.

News story: Exciting opportunity to manage inshore fisheries and conservation

The MMO is looking to recruit members for the North Western, North Eastern, Sussex, Southern and Cornwall Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authorities (IFCAs).

Each IFCA needs members who will take a balanced approach to caring for our seas, assessing the priority and importance of all users and stakeholders. The vacancies are an opportunity for someone who wants to improve the quality of the inshore area and are available in the following regions, the:

- North Western IFCA is looking for three new members; interest is welcomed from those with experience and interest in commercial fishing; recreational fishing; the marine environment; or with other relevant interest and experience.
- North Eastern IFCA is looking for three new members; applicants are encouraged who have experience and interest in commercial fishing, particularly with mobile gear; commercial/recreational sea angling; and those with a strong academic and/or scientific background. In addition, applicants from areas including Hartlepool, Durham, Sunderland and South Tyneside would be particularly welcome.
- Sussex IFCA is looking for two new members; applicants are encouraged who have experience and knowledge of commercial fishing including both mobile and fixed gear operations. Applications from throughout the Sussex IFCA district from Chichester Harbour in the west to Rye in the east are welcomed.
- Southern IFCA is looking for a new member; applicants are encouraged who have experience and interest in shellfish aquaculture.
- Cornwall IFCA is looking for a new member; applicants are encouraged who have experience and interest in commercial fishing.

Andrew Wareing, Director of Business Development and Transformation for the Marine Management Organisation, which is responsible for appointing local people with relevant expertise to the IFCAs, said:

“These are rare, exciting opportunities for people with experience and a passion for their inshore marine area to play a major part in shaping how their local area is managed. If you want to make a positive difference and help balance economic, social and environmental needs, we would be pleased to hear from you.”

The deadline for applications is midnight Monday 18 September 2017.

The role is on a voluntary basis although relevant expenses may be reimbursed.

You can email ifcarecruitment@marinemanagement.org.uk or telephone 0208 225 6659 or 0208 026 5171 for more information.

Background

There are 10 IFCAs around the English coastline and they are responsible for sustainably managing sea fisheries and conservation within 6 nautical miles from shore. They have the power to make byelaws to protect resources and the environment in their area as well as also enforcing national and European fisheries legislation.

IFCAs are either committees or joint committees of the local authorities that

fall within an IFC district. They are tasked with sustainably managing inshore sea fisheries and conserving their local marine environment. They are made up of representatives from local councils along with people from across the different sectors that use or are knowledgeable about the inshore marine area, such as commercial and recreational fishermen, environmental groups and marine researchers, who offer their time voluntarily.

The Marine Management Organisation, Environment Agency and Natural England also each has a statutory seat on the IFCA. Through their local management and funding structures, IFCAs help put local councils, communities and businesses, and individual citizens in the driving seat, allowing them to play a bigger part in the protection and enhancement of their inshore marine environment.