

# Government publishes interim report on Storm Arwen review

The UK government has today (17 February) published an interim report as part of its [review into the industry response to Storm Arwen](#).

The review was launched last year by the Business and Energy Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng in the wake of one of the worst storms in decades, with Storm Arwen bringing significant and widespread severe weather to the UK and leaving just under 1 million households experiencing power cuts, 59,101 of whom were without power for over 48 hours and 3,032 for a week or more.

Today's Interim Report has identified early key findings and initial recommendations based on preliminary evidence including that call wait times for customers to speak to network operators were too high, and that some households, especially in rural areas, experienced unacceptably long power cuts.

Nearly 90% of those affected received compensation payments by 24 January, following the Business and Energy Secretary writing to network providers to ensure this was paid as soon as possible – with the timeliness of payments a key focus of the review.

As the government made clear at the time, it was completely unacceptable that thousands of homes were left without power for so long, which is why a specific review into how network operators responded to Storm Arwen was launched to identify lessons and recommendations for the management of future power disruption events.

Some of the key initial findings in the Interim Report include:

- recognising that wait times for some customers to contact their network operator were unacceptably high, and recommending that more needs to be done to manage both the method and content of customer communications effectively during severe events to allow customers to make informed decisions about their welfare
- identifying the unusual northerly wind as putting the network at more risk, recommending Network Operators and partners should better account for wind direction as well as speed and duration in their escalation thresholds
- acknowledging there were unacceptably long power cuts to some households, especially those in rural areas, and recommending enhancing strategies to reduce the length of time customers remain off supply following severe and widespread power disruption
- recommending that new processes should be established to ensure payment of compensation to affected customers occurs without delay

The review is in addition to the [industry regulator Ofgem's](#) which is looking at how each individual network operator performed against the legal standards

they are required to, such as whether network operators made sufficient investments in infrastructure in areas that experienced faults. Where operators did not meet these standards, Ofgem will consider if appropriate enforcement action needs to be taken against them.

Ofgem can impose financial penalties of up to 10% of a licensee's turnover, make consumer redress orders and issue provisional/final orders, where appropriate, for breaches of relevant conditions and requirements under the Gas Act 1986 and the Electricity Act 1989.

A final report, detailing specific actions and delivery plans for their implementation, is due around the end of March 2022, when Ofgem will also publish findings from their review into the handling of the storm. In the meantime, the review will continue to work on the issues that have been identified, in order to learn lessons and develop recommendations for the prevention and management of storms.

---

## [Non-executive Director reappointment on the Board of NS&I](#)

News story

HM Treasury has announced the reappointment of Jill Lucas as a Non-executive Director on the Board of NS&I.



HM Treasury announce that Jill Lucas has been reappointed as a Non-executive Director on the Board of NS&I (National Savings & Investments), as of 1 February 2022. Jill Lucas' reappointment will be for a term of 3-years.

Non-Executive members of NS&I's Board ensure a sound strategy is in place to meet the organisation's remit of raising cost-effective debt financing for the government. They also act as an external source of advice, have oversight of risk control and ensure NS&I's links with its outsourcing partner, Atos, remain open and transparent.

NS&I is one of the largest savings organisations in the UK, offering a range of savings and investments. All products offer 100% capital security because NS&I is backed by HM Treasury.

Jill was appointed a Non-Executive Director for a three year term from February 2019. Jill has spent all her career in technology, currently as a consultant at US Healthcare firm, Mass General Brigham and prior to that at Unilever. She has served as Chief Information Officer at both Towergate Insurance and Belron International. In her early career, she undertook many technology leadership roles at Reuters (now Thomson Reuters), Barclays and Sainsburys. Jill is also a Non-executive Director of Curtis Banks plc and Chairman of Dunstan Thomas Ltd.

The current NS&I Board members are:

- Ed Anderson – Non-executive Director and Chairman of the Board
- Ian Ackerley – Chief Executive
- Paul Henry – Director, Risk
- Dax Harkins – Director, Business-to-Business
- Jill Waters – Director, Retail
- Ruth Curry– Director, Finance
- Matthew Smith – Chief Operating Officer and Senior Responsible Officer for Rainbow Programme
- Gareth Headon – Acting Director, People and Strategy
- Nina Hingorani-Crain – Non-Executive Director
- Sharmila Nebhrajani OBE – Non-Executive Director
- Jill Lucas – Non-Executive Director
- Azin Roussos – HM Treasury Representative

#### **Further information:**

The reappointment of Jill Lucas was regulated by the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

All appointments are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process. However, in accordance with the original Nolan recommendations, there is a requirement for appointees' political activity (if any declared) to be made public. Jill Lucas confirmed that she has not engaged in any political activity in the last five years.

Published 17 February 2022

---

**[UK contribution to NATO uplift](#)**

# bolsters defences in eastern Europe

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace is in Brussels today and tomorrow to discuss the UK offer and the situation in Ukraine with NATO Allies.

The UK is doubling the number of personnel in Estonia and sending additional equipment, including tanks and armoured fighting vehicles. The troops and equipment will begin to move to Estonia today.

The Royal Welsh battlegroup, which includes armoured vehicles and personnel, will leave Sennelager in Germany and bases in the UK and begin to arrive in Estonia during the coming week. Apache helicopters will soon be making their way to conduct exercises with our Allies and partners in Eastern Europe.

Four additional UK Typhoon jets have also landed in Cyprus and will shortly begin to patrol the skies with NATO Allies in Eastern Europe.

HMS Trent – a UK Warship – has already begun conducting patrols in the Eastern Mediterranean Sea alongside NATO Allies from Canada, Italy, Spain and Turkey.

HMS Diamond is preparing to set sail in the coming days for the Eastern Mediterranean and will join up with NATO allies.

The majority of the 350 Royal Marines of 45 Commando committed to Poland have already arrived. We have also put 1,000 more British personnel at readiness in the UK to support a humanitarian response, if needed.

## **Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:**

Alongside our NATO Allies, we are deploying troops and assets on land, sea and air to bolster European defences in response to the build-up of Russian military forces on the border of Ukraine.

NATO and our allies have been clear that an invasion of Ukraine will be met with severe consequences.

De-escalation and diplomacy remain the only path out of this situation.

While in Brussels, the Defence Secretary held meetings with a number of NATO counterparts including the Quad, Turkey, Canada and Italy. Ministers discussed the ongoing Russian military build-up on the border with Ukraine and the international community's response.

The Defence Secretary impressed with his counterparts that Russia needed to

match its actions to its words, and truly deescalate.

The UK is playing a leading role within NATO and shaping the international community's response to Russia.

[The UK supplied Ukraine with light, anti-armour, defensive weapon systems](#) as well as an [additional defensive package](#) of body armour, helmets and combat boots.

The UK is Europe's largest contributor to NATO. We have deployed more troops to [NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence](#) than any other Ally, and [HMS Prince of Wales leads the Alliance's Maritime High Readiness Force](#).

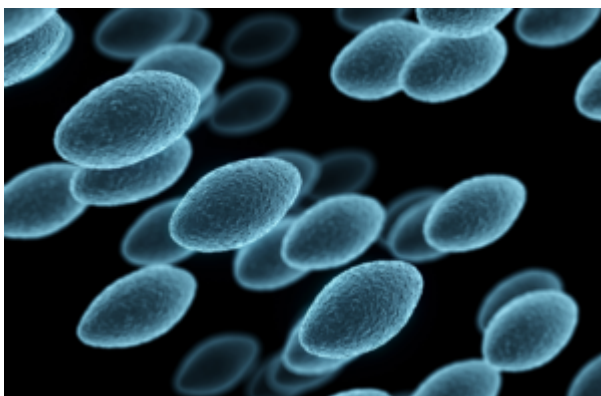
[The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office](#) has advised all British nationals to leave Ukraine immediately.

---

## [Alternative use for novel antibiotic to treat plague and melioidosis](#)

News story

Leading scientists at Dstl have made an exciting new discovery in the fight against some of the world's deadliest diseases.



Plague Infection concept

Plague and melioidosis are diseases that currently affect people in several parts of the world, and pose a threat to members of the UK armed forces deployed overseas. It is vital that medical countermeasures to treat these diseases are continually being researched and developed.

Working in collaboration with industry, academia and the [Defence Threat Reduction Agency \(DTRA\)](#), an antibiotic developed to treat urinary tract infections has been shown to be successful at treating a broad spectrum of

diseases including plague and melioidosis.

Although plague is an old disease it can still be found in certain areas of the world. Madagascar is currently in the middle of an outbreak, with patients displaying symptoms including fever, headache, chills, weakness and one or more swollen lymph nodes.

Melioidosis, also called Whitmore's disease, is caused by the bacterium *Burkholderia pseudomallei* and is endemic in tropical climates, especially in Southeast Asia and northern Australia.

Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) Associate Professor Sarah Harding, said:

Finding an antibiotic that works against a range of pathogens is really exciting. It has been almost 10 years of research, which would not have been possible without the collaboration between Dstl, MerLion Pharmaceuticals and DTRA.

The antibiotic, finafloxacin, is being developed by MerLion Pharmaceuticals for the treatment of urinary tract infections but its unique method of action has led to an improvement in activity when compared to comparator antibiotics.

Human clinical trials are ongoing, but scientists are confident the new antibiotic will be an alternative countermeasure to help fight deadly diseases.

Published 17 February 2022

---

## [UK-Philippines Consular Dialogue Joint Press Statement](#)

World news story

The United Kingdom and the Philippines convened the 1st UK – Philippines Consular Dialogue yesterday.



## British Embassy Manila

The Philippines and the United Kingdom convened the first Philippines – United Kingdom Consular Dialogue on 16 February 2022.

Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Office of European Affairs Assistant Secretary Jaime Victor B. Ledda, British Ambassador to the Philippines, Laure Beaufils, and Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) Director for Consular Affairs, Jennifer Anderson, led their respective delegations at this virtual Dialogue. This inaugural Consular Dialogue between the Philippines and the United Kingdom is an important element of the 'Enhanced Partnership' which the UK and the Philippines agreed to work towards at the annual bilateral 'High Level Political Talks' held in London in November 2019.

This Consular Dialogue highlights the importance of the increasing people-to-people links between the two countries. The Philippines and the United Kingdom share deep ties and common values that have endured through 75 years of diplomatic relations. With the continuing challenges caused by the COVID pandemic, both the Philippines and the United Kingdom committed at this Dialogue to providing the best possible help and consular assistance to their respective nationals in close collaboration with the concerned authorities in their respective countries.

DFA Assistant Secretary Ledda remarked that these consultations allowed more focused discussions on consular cooperation, thus further building on the close bilateral collaborations and laying the foundation for an enhanced partnership in the years ahead. Assistant Secretary Ledda said:

The importance of regular consular exchanges between our two countries cannot be overemphasized, given that the protection of the rights and promotion of the welfare and interests of overseas Filipinos, such as Filipinos in the UK, including health professionals, is one of the three fundamental pillars of Philippine foreign policy.

Ambassador Beaufils and Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office Director for Consular Affairs Jennifer Anderson said:

The holding of the first consular dialogue is an indication of the strength of the people to people links between our two countries. We are grateful to the Philippines government for their continuing

cooperation, in particular as we strive to do more to support those British Nationals in the Philippines who are most in need. We welcome the initial exchanges between the Philippine and UK governments on the proposed Transfer of Sentenced Persons Agreement.

Published 17 February 2022