

# United Kingdom reiterates strong anti-whaling stance at International Whaling Commission

Press release

The United Kingdom helps secure agreement on a Resolution on Marine Plastic Pollution and is appointed Chair of the IWC's Conservation Committee



The Government upheld its long-standing opposition to commercial whaling at the 68th meeting of the International Whaling Commission (IWC) in Slovenia this week, advocating to uphold the moratorium that was agreed 40 years ago.

The United Kingdom also secured further support for the protection of whales, dolphins and porpoises (cetaceans) and has been appointed Chair of the IWC Conservation Committee which carries out vital work to address the wide-ranging challenges facing these species including bycatch, ship strikes, strandings and pollution.

Marine plastic pollution poses a significant issue for cetaceans and the United Kingdom is pleased to have co-sponsored a Resolution on Marine Plastic Pollution, adopted by consensus at the IWC meeting. This will allow the IWC to engage in the UN Environment Assembly process to develop an international legally binding instrument on plastic pollution to drive forward effective measures to prevent or mitigate marine plastic pollution impacts on cetaceans.

**International Oceans Minister Scott Mann said:**

"Whales, and other cetaceans, are awe-inspiring creatures. We must continue to protect these extraordinary animals and bring an end to the unnecessarily cruel practice of commercial whaling globally.

"I'm proud of the leading role we are taking in securing continued support for the IWC and the moratorium on commercial whaling, as well as encouraging countries to recognise the important threat of marine plastic pollution."

The United Kingdom is strongly opposed to commercial whaling and continues to call on whaling nations to cease their whaling activities in favour of well-managed, responsible tourism. A founding member of the IWC in 1946, the United Kingdom is proud to have supported the IWC over the last 75 years.

The United Kingdom was disappointed that the IWC did not agree to create a South Atlantic Whale Sanctuary but will continue to push for the conservation of these unique creatures that play a vital role in our wider ecosystem.

The IWC is the only global body with the competence and mandate for the conservation and management of cetaceans and we are pleased that a budget was agreed for the IWC to continue its critical work.

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## Government backs new law to help pregnant women and new parents stay in work

- new government-backed law to offer pregnant women and new parents greater protection against redundancy
- new legal powers will help to counter workplace discrimination, particularly when new parents return to work

Pregnant women and new parents will receive greater protections from redundancy under new legislation backed by the government today (Friday 21 October).

Under current rules, before offering redundancy to an employee on maternity leave, shared parental leave or adoption leave, employers have an obligation to offer them a suitable alternative vacancy where one exists.

The Pregnancy and Maternity Discrimination Bill, introduced by Dan Jarvis MP and backed by the government, will enable this redundancy protection to be extended so it applies to pregnant women as well as new parents returning to work from a relevant form of leave. This will help shield new parents and expectant mothers from workplace discrimination, offering them greater job security at an important time in their lives.

It follows a government [consultation](#) on these proposals which found evidence of new parents facing prejudice in the workplace, with an estimated 54,000 women a year feeling they have to leave their jobs due to pregnancy or maternity discrimination.

Business Minister Dean Russell said:

Being an expectant or new parent is already a hugely exciting yet anxious time without the added pressure of worrying whether your job is on the line.

By extending the UK's world class workplace protections, today's reforms will help to remove workplace discrimination and provide improved job security for employees at such an important and precious time in their lives.

The measures will be beneficial to businesses, helping to improve relations with employees and reducing a source of conflict that can be costly and time consuming.

Alongside these reforms the government is also working with the Pregnancy and Maternity Discrimination Advisory Board to update guidance so that this type of discrimination in the workplace continues to be stamped out.

Dan Jarvis MP for Barnsley Central said:

I am delighted that my Private Members' Bill, the Protection from Redundancy (Pregnancy and Family Leave) Bill has passed its second reading in Parliament and is now a step closer to becoming law.

At the heart of this Bill are tens of thousands of women pushed out of the workforce each year simply for being pregnant. I'm proud this new legislation will go some way to providing pregnant women and new mums greater protections in the workplace. I want to thank all those who've supported the Bill and I look forward to working with them to ensure it passes into law.

The measures form part of the government's efforts to ensure more people stay in work and keep more of their pay packet, particularly with global rising costs. It comes at a time when there are more employees on payrolls than ever before – and with unemployment at an all-time low.

This Bill gives the Business Secretary powers to make regulations regarding redundancy during pregnancy and after a period of relevant leave (currently Maternity Leave, Adoption Leave and Shared Parental Leave) has ended.

When a parent is on a relevant period of leave, before offering redundancy, employers already have an obligation to offer them a suitable alternative vacancy where one exists. This is set out in Regulation 10 of the Maternity and Parental Leave Etc Regulations 1999 (MAPLE).

The policy intention is that new Regulations will apply the MAPLE protections through an expanded period covering from when a woman tells her employer she is pregnant until 18 months after the birth. The 18-month window ensures that

a mother returning from a year of maternity leave can receive 6 months additional redundancy protection. The 18-month window will also apply to Maternity Leave and Shared Parental Leave.

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## **Boost for carers who will receive new unpaid leave entitlement under government-backed law**

- new laws introduced entitling unpaid carers to 1 week of unpaid leave a year to support those most in need
- eligible employees will be able to take Carer's Leave regardless of how long they have worked for their employer

Millions of people across the UK who are currently providing unpaid care to dependant family members or friends will be entitled to unpaid leave under new laws backed by the government today (Friday 21 October).

Around 2 million of those providing unpaid care are thought to be doing so while balancing work alongside their caring responsibilities. With no dedicated statutory leave entitlement for these informal carers currently in place, many have to resort to taking other forms of leave to ensure they can care for those dependent on them.

The Carer's Leave Bill, introduced by Wendy Chamberlain MP and backed by the government, will introduce a new and highly flexible entitlement of one week's unpaid leave per year for employees who are providing or arranging care.

Carer's Leave will be available to eligible employees from the first day of their employment, meaning unpaid carers will be supported regardless of how long they've worked with their employer. Staff will be able to take the leave flexibly to suit their caring responsibilities and will not need to provide evidence of how the leave is used or who it will be used for, ensuring a smoother process for both businesses and their employees.

Business Minister Dean Russell said:

Carers play a vital role in our society, and it is only right that we support them so they can balance their caring responsibilities with their working life.

These reforms will not only better the lives of millions of unpaid carers across the UK, but also the friends and family that are dependent on their compassion every day.

Employees taking their carer's leave entitlement will be subject to the same employment protections that are associated with other forms of family related leave, meaning they will be protected from dismissal or any detriment as a result of having taken time off.

By making it easier for people to support their loved ones, employers are likely to benefit from less staff turnover and a reduction in recruitment and training costs by retaining employees who previously would have been unable to balance their caring responsibilities and working life.

Wendy Chamberlain MP for North East Fife said:

I am delighted that my Carers Leave Bill has passed its second reading today. When passed this will give millions of carers employments rights for the first time ever. It is a landmark change in how businesses support their employees.

I want to thank the carers and businesses who have spoken to me in support of Carers Leave. It is clear that this policy is a win-win. Carers, without whom our society wouldn't function, are supported to better balance work and home without burning out; and businesses have happier, more motivated workers with higher retention rates.

Helen Walker, Carers UK Chief Executive said:

We are thrilled that the government has supported the Carer's Leave Bill at its successful second reading. Having worked to support carers in employment for years, Carers UK's evidence shows Carer's Leave would make a significant difference to unpaid carers' lives, helping them stay in work and improving wellbeing by giving time off to attend appointments, arrange or provide care. As well as supporting families, it also makes business sense, helping retain skilled employees.

Today's reforms form part of the government's wider efforts to ensure more people stay in work with more employees on payrolls than ever before – and with unemployment at an all-time low.

The [government consulted on proposals for a Carer's Leave Bill in 2020](#), with a response to the consultation being published in September 2021.

[See full details of the Carer's Leave Bill.](#)

This bill amends or inserts new provisions into the Employment Rights Act 1996.

[More information about Carer's allowance.](#)

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# UK supports new UN sanctions in Haiti

Press release

The UK announces support for a new UN sanctions regime in Haiti.



On 21 November 2022, the UN established a new sanctions regime in Haiti in UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution 2653 (2022), adopted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. The new UN sanctions regime has been set up to tackle the issues threatening the peace, stability and security of Haiti. We strongly support this UN action that moves Haiti closer to security and stability with a return to democratic processes as soon as possible.

The UNSC has added Jimmy Cherizier, one of Haiti's most notorious gang leaders and leader of an alliance of Haitian gangs known as the "G9 Family and Allies" to the list of individuals and entities subject to the assets freeze, travel ban, and arms embargo set out in Security Council resolution 2653 (2022).

The UK strongly supports the introduction of a new UN Sanctions regime that will help to tackle the violence and insecurity in Haiti, which worsens wider challenges faced by the Haitian population. The listing of Cherizier is a positive development for the security and stability of Haiti and the Caribbean region. He will be denied access to external funding and assets, significantly reducing his ability to operate.

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# FCD0 Head of Latin America Department

## James Dauris' travel to Guatemala

Deputy Director Dauris will meet with Guatemalan Government Officials, private sector leaders, and broader civil society groups. The Deputy Director's trip underscores the UK's strong commitment to the UK-Guatemala solid relationship.

At meetings with Guatemalan government officials, he will discuss shared priorities on a host of issues, including Ukraine, climate change, human rights, transparency and economic prosperity.

On Ukraine, Deputy Director Dauris will discuss the devastating impact of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on food and energy prices, while commending Guatemala's own leadership in deploring Russia's actions, and commitment to engaging multilaterally to end this war.

He will urge Guatemala to continue showing ambition in the fight against climate change. These plans will complement the UK's investment of US\$20 million in Mesoamerica, including Guatemala, through the Biodiverse Landscapes Fund, to reduce poverty and create climate resilience from 2023.

Deputy Director Dauris will also encourage Guatemala to seize the opportunities of the UK-Central America Association Agreement, while stressing the need for continued Guatemalan efforts to tackle corruption and improve the business environment.

With the private sector, the Deputy Director will discuss the challenges and opportunities of the global economic environment and strategies to support the long-term development objectives of the Guatemalan economy, including those that have been negatively hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

At meetings with civil society groups, Deputy Director Dauris will stress the unequivocal UK commitment to protect human rights, ranging from the situation of media freedom in the country, to listening to human rights defenders and continue advocating for the rights of LGBTQI persons.