

Delivering sustainable and resilient urban economic development through UK-Durban (eThekweni) Partnership

This year the UK's Global Future Cities Programme celebrates its one-year anniversary. Through its work the programme has promoted sustainable and inclusive economic growth with transformative projects in three municipalities, City of Cape Town, eThekweni Municipality (Durban), and City of Johannesburg, on transportation and mobility, urban planning, resilience and data innovation in South Africa.

In April 2020 the Programme expanded and adapted in response to the COVID-19 crisis in cities. Through this bolstered support, eThekweni Municipality was able to manage the shocks induced by COVID-19 on economy and informal settlements with assistance focused on ensuring effective delivery of basic services in informal settlements and policy development for sustainable economic recovery.

This year is an important year for climate change and the High Commission is proud to celebrate its partnership with the eThekweni Municipality and its innovative approach to greener urban regeneration, resilience and economic development. Our collaboration with eThekweni Municipality focuses on sustainable transport and urban planning (Transit-Oriented Development) and effective management and support for informal settlements. This is expected to result in access to safe, affordable and quality transport for nearly 85% of Durban's residents, increasing access to opportunities and improving lives and livelihoods. With further targeted support aimed at improving the lives of the city's nearly 290,000 households within informal settlements.

As a coastal city, Durban's increasing vulnerability to the impacts of climate change amplifies the urgency and gravity of such macro-scale projects. It also means that our partnership with eThekweni Municipality is driven by inclusion and empowerment of vulnerable communities while building broader resilience in the city's environmental, social and economic fabric.

As the host of COP26 in Glasgow this year, the UK is committed to working with South Africa and join forces with civil society, companies and peoples on the frontline of tackling climate change to inspire action together for our planet. The Global Future Cities Programme through its cutting-edge work in cities such as Durban has proven instrumental in actualising greater ambition on climate change and sustainable economic growth. The UK values its partnership with eThekweni Municipality and looks forward to continued cooperation for greener, resilient and inclusive development.

1. This technical support is delivered in partnership with PwC-led Consortium Future Cities South Africa (FCSA) and Strategic Advisor UN-Habitat.
2. Durban hosted COP17 in 2011, the first UN climate change conference in

- Africa and delivered successful outcomes of the negotiations.
3. eThekweni Municipality has positioned itself as a climate leader, evidenced when Mayor Mxolisi Kaunda was named C40 Vice-Chair of Africa. He remains a key contributor to the Africa's just urban transition in the face of climate emergency.
 4. The City has developed policy initiatives such as Durban Resilience Strategy and Durban Climate Action Plan, demonstrating its long-standing commitment to sustainable and equitable development.
 5. Link to key documents: [Durban Resilience Strategy](#); [Durban Climate Action Plan](#)

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[£79 million to boost mental health support for children and young people](#)

- Nearly 3 million children in England to be supported by mental health support teams in schools
- Around 22,500 more children and young people to access community mental health services
- 2,000 more children and young people to access eating disorder services

Young people have been uniquely impacted by the pandemic and lockdown, with NHS research suggesting 1 in 6 may now have a mental health problem, up from 1 in 9 in 2017.

The number of mental health support teams in schools and colleges will grow from 59 to 400 by April 2023, supporting nearly 3 million children. Mental health support teams work in a variety of ways, including enabling children to text their local mental health support team, with a health professional responding within an hour during the school day offering them advice, or providing families with tips on how to spot that the children and young people are struggling with their mental health.

The teams also help staff within schools and colleges to provide a 'whole school approach' to mental health and wellbeing through training sessions for parents or workshops for teachers.

Throughout the pandemic, these teams have continued to work virtually, providing vital support for young people during lockdown. Schools have hailed

their success in supporting both students and staff. In Kent, teams have provided 20-minute telephone counselling sessions for parents struggling with the competing demands of life under lockdown, alongside virtual drop-in sessions for school staff on how to support children with their mental health.

Access to community mental health services will also be expanded, giving 22,500 more children and young people access to help and support by 2021 to 2022 – including talking therapies and cognitive behavioural therapy.

This accelerates the commitment to expand services as part of the [NHS Long Term Plan](#), which will see an additional 345,000 more children and young people access mental health services by 2024.

As we near step one of the [roadmap](#), with schools returning from Monday, the government has expanded the support available to children and young people who may be suffering from poor mental health as a result of, or exacerbated by, the pandemic.

Health and Social Care Secretary Matt Hancock said:

Over the last year great focus has rightly been placed on our physical health, but I am incredibly conscious of the impact the pandemic has had on people's mental health and wellbeing.

Children and young people have been particularly impacted by disruption to their routine, education and social lives and I am committed to doing all I can to ensure mental health support is there for those who need it.

Our response to this global pandemic will not only treat the public health threat of coronavirus but ensure our clinicians have the resources to respond to the long-term impact on people's mental health, to provide support to everyone in their hour of need.

Children and young people facing a mental health crisis will continue to get support through 24/7 crisis lines and will benefit from additional funding to support follow-up crisis treatment at home where necessary.

Eating disorder services for conditions like anorexia and bulimia will also be accessible to an additional 2,000 children and young people in the community. This follows NHS England's plans to expand rapid access to specialist NHS treatment for young people with eating disorders across England, aiming to contact patients within 48 hours and beginning treatment as soon as 2 weeks later.

Minister for Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Nadine Dorries said:

This has been an exceptionally difficult year, especially for our children and young people, and we know it is having a real impact

on mental health.

This additional funding will mean children who need to can access services in the community, as well as providing early intervention in schools.

I am committed to supporting everyone's mental health and wellbeing, and doing everything we can to ensure young people who need help, get help.

Children and young people's mental health services have remained open throughout the pandemic, adapting to deliver services remotely where appropriate.

NHS Mental Health Director Claire Murdoch said:

The pandemic has turned our lives upside down and hit children and young people particularly hard.

NHS mental health services have worked around the clock, proactively reaching out to and caring for children and young people despite challenging circumstances – and we stand steadfast in our commitment to continue to improve mental health care for each and every one of them.

This funding announced as part of the Spending Review last November will now support NHS England's work to increase the number of mental health support teams in schools and colleges to 400 by 2023, and growing community services to treat more children and young people than ever before.

Paul Farmer, Chief Executive of Mind said:

It's positive that the UK government have confirmed that £79 million of the previously announced £500 million investment in mental health has been allocated to support children and young people's mental health. With schools re-opening in England next week, the commitment to having better mental health support for pupils cannot come soon enough.

We know that high levels of poor mental health and problems accessing mental health services were a problem for many children and young people even before the pandemic, and that coronavirus has disproportionately affected younger people. Over the past year, our young people have faced a whole load of additional challenges, including school closures, loneliness and isolation, and the knock-on effect of the recession causing problems for families such as debt, unemployment, housing and access to benefits.

There is still lots more work to be done to ensure that every young person gets the support they need for their mental health. But this is a positive step forward in cementing mental health at the heart of recovery from the pandemic and beyond.

Children's Minister Vicky Ford said:

For many young people this pandemic has amplified the feeling of lack of control, which can have such a huge impact on their mental health and wellbeing.

This additional funding will be absolutely vital and the new mental health support teams will enable even more children and young people to get the support they need quickly. It builds on the expert training programme we've introduced for school and college staff and our Mental Health in Education Action Group to address the mental health issues young people are experiencing and improving the help available.

This challenging time may be turbulent, but our commitment to improve mental health support remains firm and we are prioritising this as more pupils and students return to face-to-face education next week.

To help children and young people, their parents and carers manage their mental wellbeing, deal with stress and tackle issues like anxiety and uncertainty, Public Health England has a series of dedicated resources on the [Every Mind Matters website](#).

This includes tips on self care and dealing with change.

Dr Alex George, government's Youth Mental Health Ambassador, said:

This funding will make a huge difference to young people's lives, and I am so pleased to see this level of commitment from the government and the Prime Minister.

The mental health support teams in schools, together with the child and adolescent mental health services are vital sources of support, and I will continue to work with the government on supporting the wellbeing of children and young people.

Education staff will be supported to respond to the emotional and mental health pressures some children and young people may be feeling as a result of COVID-19 as they return to school by the Wellbeing for Education Return programme backed by £8 million, and free online psychological training modules on how to provide practical and emotional support to children and young people affected by emergencies or crisis situations.

This funding forms part of the £500 million for mental health announced at the 2021 to 2022 spending review.

[Space launch from British soil one step closer](#)

- government on course to legislate for UK spaceflight by the end of this year
- first-ever launch into space from British soil could have lift-off in the early 2020s
- UK spaceflight plans would create high-skilled jobs in an industry worth £14.8 billion, as we build back better from the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic

A giant leap in British spaceflight history is being made today (5 March 2021) as the government publishes its [commercial spaceflight consultation response](#), paving the way for space launches from UK soil.

Over the past few months, the government has been inviting industry, stakeholders and the public to have their say on the rules that will govern our spaceflight programme – and the consultation has captured the imagination of people across the UK, including schoolchildren.

The resulting legislation will help to propel the development of commercial spaceflight technologies, from traditional rockets launched vertically into space to high-altitude balloons and spaceplanes, with launches potentially taking place within the next few years.

[Video about the future of UK spaceflight](#)

Spaceports could also be built in south-west England, Scotland and Wales, inspiring and exciting a new generation of scientists and engineers, creating high-skilled jobs and cementing the government's aim for the UK to be the location of the first launches of this type in Europe.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

The sky is no longer the limit when it comes to the UK's ambitions in this sector, and today we're making a giant leap for growth and prosperity for the whole of Great Britain.

I'm committed to growing the UK's space industry and, with the most modern piece of space legislation in the world, we are cementing our leading role in this sector, unlocking a new era in commercial spaceflight for all 4 corners of our nation.

The regulations to implement the [Space Industry Act 2018](#) will drive research and innovation, feeding into our emerging [national space strategy](#) as we level up the UK and promote growth in this thriving sector.

They strike a balance between creating the conditions that will allow the space sector to flourish in the UK while ensuring that it's also safe.

Science Minister Amanda Solloway said:

The UK's space sector is thriving, and we have bold ambitions to be the first country in Europe to launch small satellites while building space capabilities in every corner of the UK.

Working with our space industry, regulators and across government, we will develop a modern, safe and flexible regulatory framework that will support a new era of sustainable commercial spaceflight across the UK.

Already a global leader in commercial small satellite research and development, government and industry have set a target to grow the UK's share of the global space market to 10% by 2030.

The government has already awarded grants totalling nearly £40 million to establish commercial vertical and horizontal small satellite launches from UK spaceports.

Last month, the Department for Transport also published [guidance on the environmental objectives around spaceflight](#). Access to space and the use of space-based tech will bring many benefits to the environment, allowing us to observe weather patterns, monitor climate change and harmful activities such as illegal deforestation, and manage natural resources.

[£3 million pilot to reduce reoffending by young adults](#)

- Specialist support for 18-25 year olds under probation supervision
- First hub to be based in Newham, London
- Range of specialist services, including drug and mental health support, will be based under one roof

The hub, the first of its kind, will be based at Newham Probation Office and has been developed by the Ministry of Justice and the Mayor for London's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC).

Young adults have a particularly high risk of reoffending and are more likely to carry out drug, robbery and possession of weapons offences, and be caught up in gang crime.

Mental health and substance misuse experts will work alongside National Probation Service staff, as part of an innovative new approach ensuring vulnerable young adults, many of whom had troubled upbringings and poor education, receive the enhanced support they need to avoid a life of crime.

Offenders released without a home or a job are significantly more likely to reoffend, so accommodation, training and employment services will also operate from the hub to help cut crime.

This support is already available but bringing this range of services under one roof and tackling these complex issues together at an early stage can prevent thousands of people becoming victims each year and save some of the £18 billion annual cost of repeat crimes.

Lord Chancellor and Justice Secretary, Robert Buckland, MP, said:

This ground-breaking new model will help offenders get their lives back on the straight-and-narrow before it's too late and they become career criminals.

It will mean less reoffending and fewer people becoming victims of crime while also giving these young adults all the tools they need to make the most of their lives.

London's Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, Sophie Linden, said:

It's vital we do everything we can to prevent reoffending and give young people who have been through the criminal justice system the support they need to turn their lives around.

We know the pandemic has meant fewer jobs and opportunities for our young people and that is why this new hub in Newham is so important. It will give us the platform to make vital interventions and deliver specialist support to vulnerable young people, helping them turn away from crime and rebuild their lives through access to housing, education and job opportunities.

The pilot will launch in July and run until March 2023 for 18-25 year olds who are assessed as having low levels of maturity and 17 year olds transitioning from the Youth Offending Service to adult probation. It will then be externally evaluated and, if a success at reducing reoffending and improving outcomes for this cohort, rolled out across the country.

All staff will receive specific training in the brain development of young people. Young adults have distinct needs, which are different to both older adults and children and treating them as a specific group will ensure the root causes of their offending are spotted and addressed earlier on in their development.

This £3 million of Government funding follows a £148 million investment to protect people from the scourge of illegal drugs and a £70 million package to support offenders into temporary accommodation upon release.

Taken together, this £220 million of funding highlights the Government's commitment to tackling crime.

[Pursuing the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme](#)

I thank High Representative Nakamitsu for her briefing today.

I also thank the Director-General of the OPCW for his latest monthly report and for the ongoing work of his team to pursue elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme, despite the limitations imposed by the pandemic.

Mr President, we are here to discuss yet again Syria's failure, over a seven-year period, to resolve the outstanding issues in its initial chemical weapons declaration. This is a failure to fulfil the requirements of the OPCW Executive Council Decision of 27 September 2013 – all aspects of which the Security Council decided Syria should comply with in resolution 2118.

As the Council is aware, the 19 unresolved issues are of a serious and substantive nature. The Director-General's report makes clear again this month that one of unresolved issues relates to the identified production and/or weaponsation of chemical nerve agents at a facility previously declared by the Syrian National Authority as never having been used for this purpose. The OPCW Technical Secretariat has asked Syria to declare the "exact types and quantities of chemical agents produced and/or weaponised at the site in question". There has been no response as yet.

The ongoing threats to international peace and security posed by the unresolved issues are not hypothetical or academic. In its report of 18 February, the UN Commission of Inquiry, whom we heard from in the General Assembly on Tuesday, stated that of 38 documented instances of chemical weapons use since the start of the conflict in Syria, 32 met the Commission's standard of proof for attribution to Syrian government forces. We already know that since the start of the conflict, the UN and the OPCW have found the Syrian regime to have used chemical weapons on at least seven occasions. It is clear that the Syrian regime has retained the capability and willingness

to use chemical weapons. This is not a matter of conjecture, but a matter of fact established by investigations of mandated multilateral authorities that apply internationally recognised standards of proof and are accountable to their membership.

At the other end of the spectrum, those seeking to call into question the objectivity and undermine the integrity of the OPCW, do not appear to observe any standards of proof and do not come to the matter with clean hands. Their interest is that they are undermining the international institutions and other competent authorities that can and have identified them as responsible for the use of chemical weapons.

In this regard, I would like to take the opportunity to remember the one person who sadly died and the several others that were injured following events three years ago today, when two operatives of the Russian military intelligence service, the GRU, used a Novichok nerve agent on British soil in Salisbury.

It is a reminder that we should not lose sight of our responsibility to prevent the proliferation and use of chemical weapons.

Finally, we note that both the UN-OPCW Joint Investigative Mechanism and the Commission of Inquiry each identified one occasion on which ISIL has also used chemical weapons. That is an equally abhorrent act and a breach of international peace and security. We agree with others that any credible and well-evidenced allegations of the use of chemical weapons by such groups should be investigated, and attribution and accountability pursued as for any user of chemical weapons.