

UK's support to global vaccine facility Covax will help Pakistan's COVID-19 vaccination programme

So far, the UK has committed £548m to the global Covax initiative, making the UK the largest single donor. The Covax initiative is the key way that more than 180 countries will have fair, early access to COVID-19 vaccines. The UK has also encouraged other countries to contribute over \$1bn to Covax. Through the Covax facility, Pakistan will take delivery of 17m doses of the UK-developed Oxford University-Astra-Zeneca vaccine shortly, with the first 7m expected before April. The next 10m doses will come later, likely before June. This will help protect 8.5m people from the virus, which has already claimed over 12,000 lives in Pakistan.

Overall, Covax – which stands for Covid-19 Vaccines Global Access Facility – has committed to supply Pakistan with vaccines for 45m people this year alone. Covax is an international initiative to support the discovery, manufacture and fair distribution of COVID-19 vaccines for one billion people by the end of 2021.

British High Commissioner Dr Christian Turner CMG said:

The people of the UK and Pakistan have come together to fight COVID-19.

The Covax facility has been the main way the world has united to make sure all countries get the vaccines they need as quickly as possible, including Pakistan. The UK has been a world leader in supporting Covax, and Covax has committed to supplying Pakistan with COVID-19 vaccines for 45m people this year.

The UK has stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Pakistan in pandemic, pivoting around £20m of UK aid to help Pakistan fight the pandemic. This includes funding the World Health Organization (WHO) since April 2020 to build laboratory testing capacity through training and provision of equipment across Pakistan.

The UK has so far pledged up to £1.3 billion of UK aid overall to end the coronavirus pandemic as quickly as possible. This includes up to £829 million for the development and distribution of new vaccines, treatments and tests, and £5 million for other critical COVID-19 research and development.

The UK is also at the forefront of efforts to drive unprecedented global collaboration and resourcing for the development and delivery of new vaccines, treatments and tests at the speed and scale required. The UK-hosted Global Vaccines Summit on 4 June 2020 raised US\$8.8 billion from 32 donor governments and 12 foundations, corporations and organisations to replenish

Global Vaccine Alliance (GAVI) funding over the coming five years. This will help support the delivery of life-saving vaccinations in 68 countries and will be integral to the distribution of a coronavirus vaccine once it is developed.

Notes to editors:

- Covax works towards the development, purchase and delivery of vaccines to more than 180 countries. It was launched in April 2020 and is led by the World Health Organization (WHO), together with the Global Vaccine Alliance and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations.
- The UK announced at the United Nations General Assembly in September that it would match every \$4 pledged to Covax by other donors with £1 in UK funding, up to £250 million. Since then, other countries including Canada, Japan and Germany have committed funding to the scheme.
- On 4 January, the UK NHS became the first health service in the world to deploy the life-saving Oxford University-AstraZeneca after meeting strict standards of safety, quality and effectiveness. It is the only approved vaccine which can be stored at fridge temperatures.
- Scientists advising the World Health Organization (WHO) have recommended the use of the Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine in all adults – including those aged over 65. The WHO's strategic advisory group of experts on immunisation has issued interim recommendations on the vaccine, saying the jab could be given to people aged 18 and above “without an upper age limit”.
- Current evidence does not suggest any lack of protection against COVID-19 in people aged 65 or over who receive COVID-19 Oxford University-AstraZeneca. This decision is in line with that made by the European Medicines Agency today, which have authorised COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca in people from 18 years of age – including those aged 65 and above.

For further information

For updates on the British High Commission, please follow our social media channels:

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New blind cord safety campaign

News story

OPSS is reminding people of the potential dangers of blind cords and loops to children and the steps they can take to reduce the risks.



Working with The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, the Chartered Trading Standards Institute, the Child Accident Prevention Trust, and the British Blind and Shutter Association, OPSS is sharing safety messages on how to keep children safe.

Looped blind cords and chains can strangle children and young people. Although changes to standards for blinds in 2014 have led to improved product safety, products installed earlier may not have these safety features and millions of households could be affected.

New blinds with looped cords must have child safety devices installed at the point of manufacture or be sold with the blind.

OPSS and its partners have produced the safety tips below to help make homes safer.

Fit a tidy, tensioner or a cleat

Tidies and tensioner should be firmly fixed to an adjoining surface to ensure that the cord or chain is permanently held tight. Cleats should be positioned out of children's reach on an adjacent surface that is at least 1.5 metres from the floor. After blind use, cords should be fastened up in a figure of eight making sure all the spare cord is secured on the cleat.

Move furniture away from windows

Children love to climb so keep furniture away from blinds. This includes cots, beds, highchairs, and play pens.

The campaign materials can be downloaded from the [consumer safety awareness campaigns materials GOV.UK page](#). The safety information campaign can be supported through retweets or sending out these important messages using the hashtag #blindcordsafety.

For more information and advice, go to:

[The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents](#)

[Chartered Trading Standards Institute](#)

[Child Accident Prevention Trust](#)

[The British Blind and Shutter Association](#)

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COP26 president visits India to advance UK-India partnership on climate action

Mr Sharma will meet senior Indian Ministers, as well as leaders from business and civil society, to discuss strengthening the UK-India climate partnership and preparing for a successful COP26 summit later this year.

In his first visit to Asia as COP president, Mr Sharma is expected to welcome India's significant progress on climate action and clean energy transition. He will highlight PM Modi's global leadership in setting up the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), the latter of which the UK is proud to co-chair. India's expertise is expected to be of great value to global discussions on a clean energy transition as part of COP preparations.

In his meetings with business, Mr Sharma will highlight the huge opportunities in the low carbon economy, celebrate existing commitments to achieve net zero emissions and encourage influential businesses to promote the growing movement of corporate climate action throughout their sector and supply chain.

Mr Sharma will also meet with civil society including experts and young thinkers to discuss challenges and possible solutions to climate change, and to hear how they are trying to mobilise younger generations in support of climate action.

After a year of virtual meetings, the in-person visit signals a step-change

in momentum to COP26 preparations, and reinforces Mr Sharma's ambition to run an inclusive negotiating process that incorporates the views of all countries.

The Rt Hon. Alok Sharma MP, COP26 President-Designate said:

When it comes to climate action, India is a key partner and a global leader. Together we can make change happen – delivering real progress on reducing emissions and building global commitments. The UK and India are already a joint force for good against climate change, and we look forward to strengthening this partnership in the run up to COP26 and beyond.

High Commissioner to India, Alex Ellis CMG said:

Alok Sharma's visit is the latest step in protecting our planet by making COP26 a success and will further develop the UK-India climate partnership on clean and resilient development. Hearing from the Indian government first hand, as well as civil society and business will be essential in informing the approach of the UK Presidency as we work towards a comprehensive, ambitious and balanced outcome at COP26.

Mr Sharma's visit follows those of the UK Foreign Secretary and International Trade Secretary, and paves the way for Prime Minister Boris Johnson's visit later this year, during which climate cooperation will be a focus.

As host of COP26, the UK is setting a strong example on climate action, with a legally binding target to cut emissions to net zero by 2050. Between 1990 and 2018, the UK nearly halved emissions whilst growing the economy by 75%, and will cut coal use in the power sector entirely by 2025. The UK has committed to double its International Climate Finance to at least £11.6bn over the next five years, to help developing countries to take action.

Further information

The UK's Presidency of COP26 in 2021 and India's Presidency of the G20 in 2023 provide important platforms for driving global action and implementing the Paris Agreement.

India and the UK share many common priorities on climate action and are working closely together to ensure action in the run up to COP26 and beyond. Priority themes at COP26 with great potential for collaboration include: adaptation and resilience; corporate action; green finance; clean growth and technology; and nature-based solutions.

The UK and India have a strong history of partnership on climate. The UK is investing in India's renewable and clean transport sectors, including through the joint Green Growth Equity Fund, as well as multilateral funds. Joint

research and innovation partnerships will develop the next generation of solar buildings and energy efficiency solutions. The UK is supporting India to adapt to the impacts of climate change through co-chairing the Governing Council of CDRI, and encouraging private sector investment into green finance. Vibrant knowledge exchange in cutting edge areas like electric mobility and offshore wind illustrates our commitment to share lessons and work together on green solutions.

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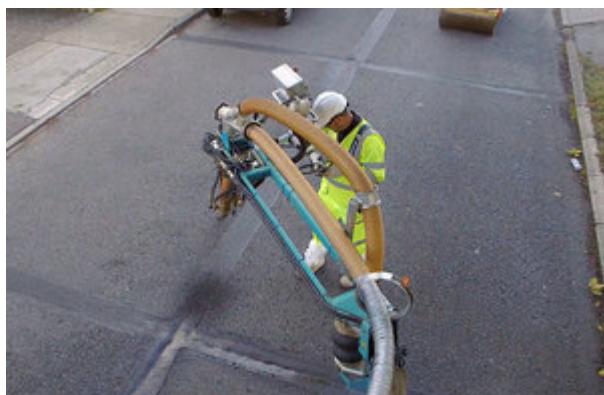
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Funding to fix equivalent of 10 million potholes allocated to local authorities

News story

Local authorities get £500 million to fix potholes across England.



- Department for Transport (DfT) allocates £500 million to local authorities in England for highways maintenance
- funding will go toward ensuring potholes and other road maintenance issues across the country are fixed
- the equivalent of 10 million potholes could be filled in as a result of today's allocations

Councils across England have today (15 February 2021) been [allocated their share of £500 million for highways maintenance](#), with the funding expected to fix the equivalent of 10 million potholes across the country.

It is the second of 5 equal instalments from the £2.5 billion Potholes Fund, providing £500 million a year between 2020/21 and 2024/25, announced by the Chancellor in the [2020 Budget](#) – and is part of wider funding the DfT provides for road maintenance, totalling over £1.1 billion across England in 2021/22.

With the average pothole costing around £50 to fill in, the funding will ensure that the equivalent of 10 million potholes can be rectified, making thousands of local roads both safer and easier to drive and cycle on.

Transport Minister Baroness Vere said:

We know potholes are more than just a nuisance – they can be dangerous to drivers and cyclists alike, and cause damage to thousands of vehicles every year.

The funding allocated today will help councils ensure roads in their area are kept up to standard, and that the potholes that blight road users can be dealt with promptly.

The DfT has already invested heavily in pothole filling since 2015, including the [£296 million Pothole Action Fund, which ran from 2015/16 to 2020/21](#). It also topped up highway maintenance investment in 2018 with a one-off £420 million boost to all highway authorities in England, including London.

The government is committed to supporting motorists. Through [Road Investment Strategy 2 \(RIS2\)](#), the government is investing £27 billion in the biggest ever roads programme – with £10 billion of the record-breaking sum specifically for road maintenance, operations and renewals.

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Leeds and London set to become global centres of green finance

- £10 million UK government investment for new world-class green finance research hubs based in Leeds and London
- banks, lenders and insurers encouraged to invest in clean innovations and green technologies from renewable power to sustainable agriculture
- encouraging private investment in green projects will drive growth across the economy and support new jobs as the UK builds back greener

from the pandemic

Leeds and London will be home to a new UK centre for driving global green finance and investment, Energy Minister Anne-Marie Trevelyan announced today (Monday 15 February), thanks to £10 million in government investment.

The new UK Centre for Greening Finance and Investment will begin in April 2021, with physical hubs in Leeds and London opening a matter of months later led by a partnership with a number of UK institutions including University of Oxford, the University of Leeds and Imperial College London.

The research hubs in the 2 cities will provide world-class data and analytics to financial institutions and services such as banks, lenders, investors and insurers around the world to better support their investment and business decisions by considering the impact on the environment and climate change.

For example, the new centre will equip banks with the latest environmental and scientific intelligence to help companies of all sizes, including start-ups, anticipate, adapt and gear up for the risks posed by climate change. This pioneering research will also help create new world-leading products and services that tackle climate change, such as cutting-edge technologies that measure severe storms and flood risks for property investors and tools that can improve data on industrial pollution linked to investment portfolios.

These new green finance hubs will also attract and develop new green finance talent from around the world to the UK's major cities.

This will unlock brand-new opportunities for Britain to lead internationally in greening global finance, positioning Leeds and London as global centres for green finance while also protecting the UK economy and society from climate and environmental risks such as extreme weather events, flooding, major biodiversity loss and water crises.

Following the ambitious commitments laid out in the Prime Minister's [Ten point plan](#) and the government's [Energy white paper](#), today's announcement is the latest development in the UK's drive to build back greener, driving the creation of thousands of new green jobs and leading the world in tackling climate change.

Energy and Clean Growth Minister Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

Climate change is the biggest issue that we need to tackle to protect our planet for our children and grandchildren. While the government has invested billions of pounds so we can end the UK's contribution to climate change, we will not reach our net zero target without mobilising private capital and unleashing the power of the free market.

The UK Centre for Greening Finance and Investment in London and Leeds will encourage financial services to turn the tide of their investments and focus on sectors and companies that have a smaller

environmental footprint. Doing so will support industries and businesses to develop clean green innovations, creating thousands of jobs across the country – ensuring we build back greener.

Economic Secretary to the Treasury and City Minister John Glen said:

We've set the ambition for net zero – now we must ensure our financial sector has the tools and information to get behind the transition. We're already improving the climate data available by mandating TCFD-aligned disclosures across the economy and implementing a green taxonomy.

This new centre will advance the UK's leadership in green finance and bring forward the day when firms can access environmental data and analytics for every place on Earth, past, present and future.

It is estimated that successfully reducing climate change and adapting to life in a changing climate will deliver multi-trillion pounds of additional private sector investment every year. The new Centre for Greening Finance and Investment will help divert investment away from unsustainable activities such as deforestation and fossil fuels, and towards low carbon sectors, creating green jobs, building industries of the future, and ensuring the climate and environment at the heart of UK financial decision making.

The Bank of England's executive sponsor for work on climate change Sarah Breedan said:

Integrating climate and environmental data and analytics into decision making will allow financial institutions to identify, measure and manage the financial risks and opportunities from climate change, and so support the Bank's objective to ensure the financial system is resilient to these risks and supportive of the transition to net zero.

The Bank of England is delighted that the CGFI will support firms' efforts in this important area, including for the forthcoming Climate Biennial Exploratory Scenario.

Lord Mayor of the City of London William Russell said:

As we look to build a more resilient post-pandemic global economy, it's clear that it must also be a more sustainable one. The demand across the sector for deep expertise in the green finance space – such as that which will be provided by the CGFI – demonstrates that the UK is well-placed to take advantage of this opportunity. I'm therefore delighted that the CGFI will introduce a new layer of innovation to the City of London in sustainable finance.

Today's announcement delivers on commitments made in the government's [2019 Green Finance Strategy](#) to deliver a pioneering research and innovation programme aimed at enhancing data and analytics on climate and environmental hazards, as well as vulnerability and exposures.

The Centre for Greening Finance and Investment also furthers the Chancellor's [new chapter for UK financial services](#).

Additional quotes

Chair of the Environment Agency and Chair of the CGFI Advisory Board, Emma Howard Boyd said:

We don't have time to lose, the benefits of properly pricing climate and environmental risk are estimated to be worth trillions of dollars every year. Closing investment gaps, by avoiding investments in at-risk assets and improving the efficiency of capital allocation across society, will speed up net zero, nature recovery and our preparations for climate impacts like storms and droughts.

Director and Principal Investigator of CGFI and the Lombard Odier Associate Professor of Sustainable Finance at the University of Oxford, Dr Ben Caldecott said:

The Centre for Greening Finance and Investment will allow financial institutions to access scientifically robust climate and environmental data for any point on planet earth now and projected into the future, and for every major sector of the global economy. Doing so will create public goods and unlock innovation.

The UK is perfectly placed to transform the availability of climate and environmental data in finance. We have world-leading capabilities in all the various areas that need to come together to solve the problem.

Executive Chair of the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC), part of UKRI Professor Sir Duncan Wingham said:

Good data and analytics – based on the best science – is fundamental to understanding and managing climate and environmental risk exposure in support of the transition to a more sustainable global finance system.

This investment by NERC and Innovate UK will enable improved access to, and understanding of, physical and transition climate and environmental risks as they impact both sides of the balance sheet. It will help the finance sector to support delivery of a low carbon

economy and the recovery and restoration of our natural environments.

Notes to editors

The government has invested £10 million into the UK Centre for Greening Finance and Investment through UK Research & Innovation (UKRI).

About the UK Centre for Greening Finance and Investment (CGFI)

- CGFI will involve a consortium of major UK institutions, led by the University of Oxford, and including the University of Leeds, University of Bristol, University of Reading, Imperial College London, The Alan Turing Institute, Satellite Applications Catapult, and the Science and Technology Facilities Council
- funding for the CGFI was allocated through the Climate and Environmental Risk for Resilient Finance programme launched by the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and Innovate UK in February 2020
- the CGFI is the UK national centre established to accelerate the adoption and use of climate and environmental data and analytics by financial institutions. It will unlock opportunities for the UK to lead internationally in greening finance and financing green
- the CGFI is a global initiative. Our partners include international organisations that will help us accelerate our reach globally, such as the World Bank and the UN Environment Programme Financial Initiative (UNEP FI)
- to achieve this exciting vision, the CGFI consortium brings together a world-leading, multidisciplinary team, particularly through 6 flagship projects covering all the main material risks. The senior leadership team are all globally recognised experts in their respective fields with a track record of delivering high-impact research, tools, analytics, and information relevant to a range of financial institution needs
- 5 major UK universities plus a range of partner institutions reflects our strategy to bring together the diverse range of expertise, across climate and environmental risks, disciplines, financial institutions, and geographies, required both to meet the needs of financial institutions now and to create the strong, broad foundation necessary to scale-up the envisioned world-leading national centre for the long-term
- our broad base of expertise includes climate, earth systems and environmental science, geography, computing, data science, mathematics, water, engineering, systems science, statistics, economics, business, innovation, decision science, and finance, and our team includes both career researchers and those with practitioner backgrounds