

# International Day of Education 2021: Joint statement

Madame Chair,

I am pleased to give this statement on behalf of Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Mongolia, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, USA and my own country Norway.

The International Day of Education was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 2019, as a reminder of education's foundational role for peace and development. On this occasion, two years on, we commemorate the tireless efforts of teachers, school administrators, government officials and other dedicated individuals who have made possible that children and youth continue to learn even against the largest disruption of our education systems due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The closure of schools has affected the lives of 1.6 billion students in more than 190 countries. Education is a human right, independently of any crisis and must therefore be an important part of the response to the covid-19 pandemic. School closures have in many cases stripped children of the opportunity to learn, a safe space and even meals. For girls, the probability of early marriage and early pregnancies has increased. Research also indicates that education inequalities have increased, as schools increasingly have needed to rely on distance education. Access to internet, computers, TV and radios, or a quiet room to study in, is not equal. Children with disabilities are often affected harder than their peers.

COVID-19 has exacerbated further the difficulties faced by those living in crisis-affected regions, where education is one of the first to be impacted by violence and conflict. Today more than ever, we must ensure that schools remain safe places, free of conflict and violence and protected from attack.

Education contributes to the maintenance of peace and security, as it provides stability and hope for a better future for children in conflict and post-conflict settings. Several of our field missions support education as a part of the comprehensive approach to security – and in Central Asia the OSCE Academy delivers high quality higher education to people of the region. The pandemic has also shown us that education systems worldwide need to have the tools and resources suitable for the 21st century. Bridging the digital divide will however be a long-term endeavour. Low-tech and no-tech solutions for distance learning will continue to be important to ensure that the poorest and most marginalised learners remain connected to the education system.

The crisis should also be seen as an opportunity. Increased competence in distance education and new digital solutions may provide exciting opportunities also after the pandemic, and our preparedness is increase should we experience a similar crisis in the future.

Madame Chair,

As Participating States are focusing on the immediate public health, economic and social welfare responses in tackling the impact of the pandemic, it will be important to ensure that learning continues in an equitable way. This is a prerequisite for the long-term stability.

---

## [Overhauled Windrush Compensation Scheme offers over £8 million](#)

News story

Since overhaul of the scheme in December 2020, early figures show an extra £4.5 million has now been offered.



The Windrush Compensation Scheme has now offered or paid more than £8 million – with more than half of that offered in the past six weeks since Home Secretary Priti Patel overhauled the scheme.

Last month the Home Secretary implemented significant changes to the Windrush Compensation Scheme, increasing the minimum award under the Impact on Life category to £10,000.

Provisional [figures released today](#) show that since 15 December 2020, a further 238 offers have been made worth more than £4.5 million. Up until the end of November 2020, the scheme had paid or offered £3.7 million.

The changes were made in close consultation with members of the Windrush generation, community leaders, stakeholders and the Cross-Government Windrush

Working Group co-chaired by Bishop Derek Webley.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

I am really pleased the changes we introduced to the scheme are having immediate impact, with more people receiving significantly higher payments, much more quickly.

The figures today show real progress and we must now keep up that momentum to help many more people get the compensation they deserve.

Bishop Derek Webley said:

Although it is early days, the impact of the changes made to the Compensation Scheme are starting to show. It is another step forward on our collective journey to acknowledge, support and improve the lives of those who were impacted by the Windrush scandal.

The new minimum award of £10,000 made in the Impact on Life category will be paid as a new early preliminary payment, as soon as someone applying on their own behalf or on behalf of a deceased relative, can show any impact on their life under the terms of the scheme. They do not need to wait for their whole application to be assessed.

Other changes announced last month include:

- maximum payment through Impact on Life category increases from £10,000 to £100,000 or higher in exceptional circumstances
- changes to the rules in the Loss of Access to Employment category, including removing the 12-month cap on payments in all circumstances
- £500,000 fund for community groups to raise awareness of the Windrush Compensation Scheme and Windrush Scheme.

Read [more information about the changes](#).

Published 29 January 2021

---

**England's 'national rainforests' to be**

# protected by new rules

The government has today announced plans to bring forward legislation to prevent the burning of heather and other vegetation on protected blanket bog habitats.

The new regulations will prevent the burning of any specified vegetation on areas of deep peat (over 40cm depth) on a Site of Special Scientific Interest that is also a Special Area of Conservation or a Special Protection Area unless a licence has been granted or the land is steep or rocky.

'Rotational' burning is used as a management tool on moorland and blanket bog. Land managers use controlled burning on patches of heather during winter months typically on a 8-12 year rotation.

There is a consensus that burning of vegetation on blanket bog is damaging to peatland formation and habitat condition. It makes it more difficult or impossible to restore these habitats to their natural state and to restore their hydrology.

Restoring England's peatlands is a priority for the government. It will help achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050 as well as protecting our valuable habitats, and the biodiversity those habitats support.

Blanket bog, a type of peatland, is a delicate habitat of international importance, with the UK having 13% of the world's blanket bog.

The government recognises that if moorland is unmanaged, there is a risk of wildfire which is most damaging of all and that these risks have grown due to climate change. Therefore, the government intends to work with land owners and managers to develop local wildfire control plans.

There will be specific circumstances where the ban does not apply, such as on steep land or where scree makes up half the land area. In addition, the Secretary of State may also issue licences for the burning of heather on blanket bog for the purposes of wildfire prevention, for a conservation purpose or where land is inaccessible to cutting or mowing machinery. These licences may cover several years so that they can be aligned with coherent management plans for sites.

Environment Secretary George Eustice said:

Our peatlands have great potential as a natural store of carbon, as well as protecting habitats, providing a haven for rare wildlife and being a natural provider of water regulation.

We want to work with land owners to restore the natural hydrology of many of these sites through our new agricultural policy to support our ambitions for the environment. The burning of heather on these sites makes it more difficult to restore their natural

hydrology which is why we are taking this step today.

Natural England Chair Tony Juniper said:

This is a hugely welcome announcement which will see better protections for our globally important peatlands. Blanket bog is an amazing habitat that provides essential environmental benefits, including carbon storage, a home for wonderful wildlife, clean drinking water and flood mitigation. This is why it is vital we ensure these systems are healthy with peat-forming species, such as Sphagnum mosses, thriving in water-logged conditions.

We will continue to work with Defra and land managers to help with the successful implementation of these measures, including by providing advice on good upland management and leading a new peatland restoration grant scheme as part of the Nature for Climate programme.

This will provide funds to carry out restoration work on these precious ecosystems, ensuring their recovery and protection for the benefit of both present and future generations.

Today's move marks a key step for meeting the Government's nature and climate change mitigation and adaptation targets, and part of the Government's [25 Year Environment Plan](#) commitment to bring 75% of SSSIs into favourable condition.

The Government will be setting out further measures to protect England's peatlands this year as part of a package of measures to protect England's landscapes and nature-based solutions. The government's £640m Nature for Climate Fund also includes funding to kick-start a programme of peatland restoration over the next 5 years.

The statutory instrument will be laid before Parliament for its approval before it comes into force.

---

## [December 2020 Price Paid Data](#)

News story

HM Land Registry Price Paid Data tracks land and property sales in England and Wales submitted to us for registration.



Image credit: DrimaFilm/Shutterstock.com

This release contains updates to the releases we've made this year, as well as introducing the first release of data for December 2020.

As we will be adding to the November data in future releases, we would not recommend using it in isolation as an indication of market or HM Land Registry activity. However, when the full dataset is viewed alongside the data we've previously published, it adds to the overall picture of market activity.

There is a time difference between the sale of a property and its registration at HM Land Registry.

In the dataset you can find the date of sale for each property, its full address and sale price, its category (residential or commercial) and type (detached, semi-detached, terraced, flat or maisonette and other), whether or not it is new build and whether it is freehold or leasehold.

Published 29 January 2021

---

## [International Affairs Appointments in No.10 and Cabinet Office](#)

The Prime Minister has appointed Lord Frost as his Representative for Brexit and International Policy and head of a new International Policy Unit in No.10. He has asked Lord Frost to lead the UK's institutional and strategic relationship with the EU, and to help drive through changes to maximise the opportunities of Brexit, including on international trade and economic issues. Lord Frost will work with Sir Stephen to finalise the Integrated Review and will continue to advise on foreign policy issues as necessary. He will take up this new role on 1 February.

Lord Frost has been the Prime Minister's Chief Negotiator with the EU since July 2019.

The Cabinet Secretary, with the approval of the Prime Minister, has appointed Sir Stephen Lovegrove as National Security Adviser. He will be responsible for managing the foreign, international economic and national security teams within the Cabinet Secretariat and advising the Prime Minister on all matters of international and domestic security. Stephen will take up the role at the end of March.

Sir Stephen Lovegrove has been Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Defence since April 2016. Prior to MoD, he was Permanent Secretary to the Department of Energy and Climate Change.

**The Prime Minister, Boris Johnson said:**

"I am hugely grateful to Lord Frost for his herculean efforts in securing a deal with the EU, and I am thrilled that he has agreed to be my representative for Brexit and International Policy as we seize the opportunities from our departure from the EU.

"I am also delighted to appoint Sir Stephen Lovegrove as my National Security Adviser. Stephen brings with him a wealth of experience from across Whitehall and in National Security and I look forward to working closely together to deliver this Government's vision for the UK in the world."

**Lord Frost said:**

"I am delighted to take up this new role as the Prime Minister's Representative on Brexit and International Policy. With a new agreement with the EU in place, we have huge opportunities to boost our wealth and define what we stand for as a country internationally, and I very much look forward to supporting the Prime Minister on this."

**Sir Stephen Lovegrove said:**

"It has been an immense privilege to serve as the Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Defence for the past five years. Working with the whole force – our armed forces, both regular and reserve, civil servants, our suppliers and everyone that makes up the Defence community – has been an honour.

"I am delighted now to be taking up the role of the National Security Adviser. On this broader canvas I aim to deliver the Prime Minister's vision for an enhanced and more engaged role for the UK in the world, leading the national security community to embrace the opportunities now available to us, while ensuring we are well prepared to deal with the challenges we face."

**Notes to Editors:**

- These arrangements represent a change to those provisionally announced in July 2020.
- Lord Frost will continue to be a Special Adviser. He is on leave of absence from the House of Lords.