Newly trained dogs heading for prison wings to sniff out illegal drugs

- 176 new drug-dogs trained to stop illegal items entering the most challenging prisons
- 1000s of items, including sim cards and spice, diverted by dogs each year
- part of the government's £100 million package to bolster security in prisons

The new pack adds to the 630 dogs already in place across the estate which have proven to be crucial in the battle to keep illegal drugs, phones and tobacco out of our prisons.

In the past year alone more than 2,000 illegal items, including over 100 kilograms of drugs such as heroin, cannabis and spice, have been stopped from getting onto the wings by drug dogs currently in post. The new dogs are expected to aid this work even further.

Over 50 prisons are set to receive their new additions by March next year – with Bedford, Lewes, Norwich, Rochester and The Mount among the first in line. Each dog will be paired with their own dedicated handler, specially trained in detecting contraband items and further boosting the frontline.

Prisons and Probation Minister, Lucy Frazer, said:

> The smuggling of contraband into prisons puts hardworking staff at risk and undermines attempts to rehabilitate offenders.
>
> These dogs and their handlers will make prisons safer, more secure and ultimately better environments for rehabilitation.

Training for the latest cohort is currently underway, with the dogs having to complete multiple courses and assessments before being posted to the frontline. Their handlers, who are trained prison officers, will also have vigorous training and be re-assessed with the dogs yearly.

Drug dog handler, Nick Hayes who is based at The Mount, said:

> Drugs dogs are a great proactive tactic to address the conveyance of illicit items into our prisons.
>
> They are a force for good and such a powerful tool which can be used to keep all of us who live and work across the estate safe.

The dogs and handlers are being funded by the government's £2.75 billion commitment to transform the prison estate. This includes:

- £100 million to bolster prison security, clamping down on contraband such as drugs, weapons, and mobile phones that fuel violence, self-harm and crime behind bars
- £2.5 billion to provide 10,000 additional prison places and create modern, efficient jails that rehabilitate offenders, reduce reoffending and keep the public safe
- £156 million to tackle the most pressing maintenance issues to create safe and decent conditions for offender rehabilitation.

Notes to editors

- The prisons included in the roll-out are listed below
- The 176 trained dogs and 93 handlers will be in the 47 selected prisons by March 2021
- Training for this new cohort is currently underway, which sees each dog/handler complete a 6-week course before undergoing an assessment. They then complete a further four weeks training, again with another assessment, and are re-assessed yearly
- Handlers can use the dogs for people (passive) searches and area (active) searches
- Between April 2019 to March 2020 there were 2,236 finds of illicit items by dogs in prisons
- There can be more than one item within a find i.e. 2 phones in one find
- The value of illicit items varies within prisons. The current price of Psychoactive Substances (PS) ranges from £130 to £1000 for an A4 sheet of impregnated paper. Smaller pieces of impregnated paper, credit card sized, can range from £40 to £100 based on recent intelligence.

List of sites which will receive funding for dogs and handlers:

- Norwich
- Chelmsford
- Wandsworth
- Nottingham
- Doncaster
- Bristol
- Erlestoke
- Wormwood Scrubs
- Bullingdon
- Altcourse
- Lancaster Farm
- Featherstone
- Brinsford
- Brixton
- Forest Bank
- Berwyn
- Gartree
- Channings Wood
- Exeter
- Peterborough

- Hewell
- Lewes
- Pentonville
- Swaleside
- Thameside
- Bedford
- Lincoln
- Buckley Hall
- Aylesbury
- Dovegate
- Cardiff
- Onley
- Hindley
- Elmley
- Lowdham Grange
- Garth
- Ranby
- Risley
- Swansea
- High Down
- The Mount
- Preston
- Leicester
- Rochester
- Winchester
- Birmingham
- Northumberland

[36th Universal Periodic Review: UK statement on Libya]

The United Kingdom welcomes positive steps by the Libyan Government, including support to the Fact Finding Mission, but remains gravely concerned by the deteriorating human rights situation. Indiscriminate attacks, unlawful killings, sexual and gender-based violence, risks to migrants and refugees and the silencing of journalists, activists and human rights defenders remain concerning. We urge the Government to do its part to commit to implementing the ceasefire and to the UN-led political process.

We recommend that the Government of Libya:

1. End exploitation of migrants and refugees in detention centres, working towards closing and transitioning away from detention centres.

2. Ensure the full, equal and effective participation of women in conflict resolution and decision-making, and tackle sexual and gender-based violence.

3. Facilitate unrestricted/unfettered access for and cooperate fully with the Fact Finding Mission throughout Libya.

Thank you.

Published 11 November 2020

Boost for restaurants, pubs and cafes as Jenrick extends takeaway services

- Government extends temporary freedom for pubs, restaurants and cafes to provide food takeaways by another year
- Freedoms enabling outdoor markets also extended in further boost for hospitality sector, enabling them to plan ahead for the economic recovery with certainty
- New protections for cultural venues, measures enabling emergency building such as Nightingale hospitals extended, and space standards introduced for new homes built through ‘permitted development’

Restaurants, pubs and cafes will get automatic freedoms to provide takeaway services for another year, Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick has announced today (11 November 2020).

The measures help give these businesses the confidence they need to continue to serve customers and retain their staff. It will also help them adapt to longer-term changes they may wish to introduce, such as serving their customers from market stalls.

This follows Robert Jenrick relaxing rules in March so businesses could offer a takeaway service during the pandemic, without having to go through a planning application process. This was due to end on 23 March 2021 but will now be extended by another year. The government will also consider whether to make these reforms permanent.

Whilst pubs and restaurants are currently restricted from selling alcohol on their premises to take away (but can still provide delivery or click and collect) due to the national covid restrictions in England, the law before March would have restricted pubs and restaurants from choosing to only offer food takeaway services.

The freedoms introduced in March and extended today mean pubs and restaurants can focus on selling food takeaways if they choose to, while being able to return to operating as a pub or restaurant from 2 December.

In July, the government also made it easier for businesses and communities to host markets and stalls. Mr Jenrick has today extended this option for the whole of next year. Again, the government will consider whether to make these reforms permanent.

The government also helped businesses offer more alfresco dining by making it easier and less expensive to get an outdoor seating licence and is similarly keeping this under review.

Under the national restrictions currently in place, markets can sell takeaways from stalls. However, the stalls must not have seating areas.

These measures build on the extra government support provided to help businesses and protect jobs. Including an extension of the furlough scheme at 80% until the end of March, grants of up to £3,000 for premises that must close, and £1.1 billion for councils to enable them to support businesses in their area.

Communities Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

> We’ve taken decisive action since the beginning of the pandemic to support our pubs, restaurants, cafes and markets. Making it easier for them to provide takeaways has helped these businesses to adapt and helped sustain many through an unbelievably difficult year.
>
> That’s why I am extending these simple but effective reforms to support these businesses – helping give them and their employees more certainty over the coming year. It will also be a boost for their customers who can now look forward to continuing to enjoy meals at home from their favourite restaurants. As these reforms have made such a difference, I will be considering making them permanent.

Kate Nicholls, Chief Executive of UKHospitality said:

> The ability to provide takeaway services was a valuable lifeline for many hospitality venues, not just during the lockdown but in the days of reduced and restricted trade, too.
>
> The extension will undoubtedly help many. For pubs, restaurants and cafes to operate as takeaways gives them a previously untapped revenue stream and a much better chance to survive what will be a tough winter. It will help avoid waste and allow businesses to retain a valuable link with their customers and communities.

Laws introduced today are also:

- Introducing minimum space standards for all homes delivered through Permitted Development Rights. All new homes in England delivered through these rights will have to meet the Nationally Described Space Standard once the amendment comes into force from 6 April 2021, ensuring they provide proper living space

- Helping to protect England’s cultural institutions by removing theatres, concert halls and live music venues from demolition. These buildings cannot be easily replaced and are an intrinsic part of our cultural heritage, which is why the government is clear that temporary social distancing restrictions should not be an excuse for them to be permanently lost. Planning permission is now required to demolish these venues

- Extending temporary measures enabling emergency development by councils and health service bodies from 31 December 2020 to 31 December 2021. This allows for buildings such as Nightingale hospitals

- Amending the right for emergency development by the Crown to allow for one year instead of the current 6 months and creating a new right for one year specifically in the case of a pandemic. This is currently being used to create additional capacity at Courts to enable social distancing and is supporting new test and trace facilities

- We also intend to roll-forward temporary changes that we made over the summer to ensure the planning system continues to operate effectively during the COVID-19 emergency and to support economic recovery. These include temporary freedoms on how planning applications are publicised, and on public inspection of planning documents

The right introduced last March allowing pubs, restaurants and cafes to provide a food takeaway service will be extended until 23 March 2022. Businesses must continue to tell their local planning authority when the new use begins and ends. The takeaway measure applies to food. Serving of alcoholic drinks will continue to be subject to licensing laws.

Businesses should contact their local council to enquire about a licence for an outdoor stall.

Last summer the government introduced laws to provide greater freedom over how people use their land. This doubled the length of time that temporary structures can be placed on land without needing an application for planning permission.

The time limits in the existing right for the temporary use of land were doubled from 14 days to 28 days for holding a market or motor car and motorcycle racing, and from 28 days to 56 days for any other purpose.

This makes it easier to host markets, stalls, marquees, car boot sales and fairs for longer without needing a planning application. This was due to expire on 31 December 2020 and is now being extended by another year until 31 December 2021.

The government has today amended the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development (England) Order 2015 (S.I. 2015/596) to remove permitted development rights for demolition of theatres, concert halls and live music performance venues.

EU citizens urged to take action during EU transition

The UK has left the EU, and is in the Transition Period which ends at the end of this year. The Withdrawal Agreement provides citizens with the certainty they need about their rights going forward.

For EU citizens living in the UK by 31 December 2020, that means they can continue to receive benefits on the same terms as they do now.

People need evidence they were living in the UK by 31 December 2020, and to apply to the EU Settlement Scheme in order to be covered by these provisions.

For those thinking of moving to the UK on or after 1 January 2021, the benefit rules will change.

The deadline for applying to the EU Settlement Scheme is 30 June 2021. To apply, visit the EU Settlement Scheme.

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 3267 5144

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Published 11 November 2020
Last updated 11 November 2020 + show all updates

1. 11 November 2020

   First published.

[New powers to protect UK from malicious investment and strengthen economic resilience]

- The National Security and Investment Bill will strengthen the UK's ability to investigate and intervene in mergers, acquisitions and other types of deals that could threaten our national security
- investors and businesses will have to tell the government about proposed deals in a limited number of sensitive sectors, such as defence and AI, and our screening powers will be extended to include assets and intellectual property as well as companies
- proportionate new laws will protect our national security from potential risk while ensuring the UK remains a global champion of free trade and an attractive place to invest: providing slicker clearance processes, and more certainty for business

A new Bill to modernise the government's powers to investigate and intervene in potentially hostile foreign direct investment that threatens UK national security will be introduced by ministers today (11 November 2020).

Under the National Security and Investment Bill, the government will be taking a targeted, proportionate approach to ensure it can scrutinise, impose conditions on or, as a last resort, block a deal in any sector where there is an unacceptable risk to national security.

The new regime will update the UK's current powers – which are almost 20 years old and do not reflect the threats we face today – and bring them in line with those of our closest allies, without hindering the UK's world-leading reputation as an attractive place to invest.

This will mean that no deal which could threaten the safety of the British people goes unchecked, and will ensure vulnerable businesses are not successfully targeted by potential investors seeking to cause them harm.

The new regime will apply to investors from any country, but will remain targeted and proportionate, so most transactions will be cleared without any intervention and foreign direct investment projects can continue to boost jobs and stimulate the economy across the UK, while ensuring the UK remains an attractive place to invest.

By bringing the UK's regime into the twenty-first century, the government will make the screening system slicker and quicker for investors, providing certainty and transparency by working to clear timelines for decisions and making administrative procedures smooth.

Under the Bill, investors and businesses will have to notify a dedicated government unit through a single digital portal about certain types of transactions in designated sensitive sectors, such as our defence, energy and transport sectors, to ensure it can investigate and take action to address any national security risks.

The Bill will also extend our screening powers so we can interrogate the acquisition of sensitive assets and intellectual property, as well as the acquisition of companies.

Investments will be screened much more quickly than the current regime, assessing transactions within 30 working days – and often faster – with timelines set out in law rather than by the government on a case-by-case basis as is currently the case.

The vast majority of transactions will require no intervention and will be able to proceed quickly and with certainty in the knowledge that the government will not revisit a transaction once cleared unless inaccurate information was provided.

Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:

> The UK remains one of the most attractive investment destinations in the world and we want to keep it that way.
>
> But hostile actors should be in no doubt – there is no back door into the UK.
>
> This Bill will mean that we can continue to welcome job-creating investment to our shores, while shutting out those who could threaten the safety of the British people.

Kevin Ellis, Chairman of PricewaterhouseCoopers said:

> It's vital that the UK continues to be an attractive destination for foreign investment and these measures will help to give much needed certainty and transparency to investors and businesses.
>
> While we shouldn't underestimate the UK's attractiveness for investment, competition for FDI is getting much fiercer. Across all industries and markets the bar is being raised and we can't rely on existing skills, historical relationships or legacy perceptions to drive future success.
>
> Now more than ever we need to make it easier for that investment to materialise. FDI is crucial to fund build back better and for the economy, innovation, and most importantly, jobs.

The UK is consistently placed as one of the leading destinations for foreign investment in Europe and around the world, thanks to the strength of its workforce, innovation and lack of red tape.

We are in a unique position in terms of language, legal system, time zone, and regulatory approach, which cannot be replicated anywhere else.

In what represents a major addition to the UK government's ability to attract foreign investment, earlier this week the Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced the creation of the Office for Investment (OFI), a new unit staffed by highly experienced individuals tasked to land high value investment opportunities in infrastructure, clean technologies and research and development.

The UK is not alone in making such changes to its regime, which means global investors will be familiar with our approach. Like us, earlier this year the United States introduced mandatory notification requirements for transactions concerning specified types of businesses as part of a broader programme for reform. The Australian Government introduced legislation to their Parliament requiring foreign investors to seek approval to acquire a direct interest in sensitive national security businesses. And, like us, several other major recipients of investment, including France and Italy, have regimes that make certain transactions which take place without prior approval legally void.

Overall, the National Security and Investment Bill will make interactions with government much slicker as we remain open for trade and continue our fight against COVID-19.

The Investment Security Unit will sit within the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and provide a single point of contact for businesses wishing to understand the Bill and notify the government about transactions. The unit will also coordinate cross-government activity to identify, assess and respond to national security risks arising through market activity – providing certainty for businesses that they will not be targeted and exploited by hostile actors.

Notes to editors:

- Examples of possible conditions that could be put on deals posing a risk to national security include altering the amount of shares an investor is allowed to acquire, restricting access to commercial information, or controlling access to certain operational sites or works.
- There will also be sanctions for non-compliance with the regime, which include fines of up to 5% of worldwide turnover or £10 million – whichever is the greater – and imprisonment of up to 5 years. Transactions covered by mandatory notification which take place without clearance will be legally void.
- We are also taking a five-year retrospective power to call in transactions in the wider economy which were not notified to us but may raise national security concerns, both of which are similar to the powers under the French, German and Italian regimes. However, these powers will not apply to transactions which took place prior to the Bill's introduction to Parliament, so businesses and investors have certainty about historical deals.
- The government's existing national security powers under the Enterprise Act 2002 will continue to apply while the Bill completes its passage so only transactions that do not meet the thresholds of that legislation

are likely to be affected.

- The government has been considering these reforms for some time – publishing a Green Paper on national security and investment in October 2017, followed by a White Paper in July 2018. Since those publications, the government has further considered what powers are necessary.
- The government will clearly and tightly define what types of transaction will require mandatory notification.
- The government expects some transactions in the following sectors will face mandatory notification, and will consult on what parts of these sectors should be covered:
  1. Civil Nuclear
  2. Communications
  3. Data Infrastructure
  4. Defence
  5. Energy
  6. Transport
  7. Artificial Intelligence
  8. Autonomous Robotics
  9. Computing Hardware
  10. Cryptographic Authentication
  11. Advanced Materials
  12. Quantum Technologies
  13. Engineering Biology
  14. Critical Suppliers to Government
  15. Critical Suppliers to the Emergency Services
  16. Military or Dual-Use Technologies
  17. Satellite and Space Technologies
- The legislation will apply to the whole of the UK.
- The Bill will include a safeguarding mechanism for parties to appeal where necessary.
- These powers will be exclusively for use on national security grounds, and this stipulation will be written into law. The government will not be able to use these powers to intervene in business transactions for broader economic reasons.
- Inward investment stimulates economic growth in every part of the UK. In 2019/20, over 39,000 jobs were created in England thanks to foreign direct investment (FDI) projects, with over 26,000 coming outside London. Almost 3,000 were created in Scotland, and more than 2,500 in Wales and 2,000 in Northern Ireland respectively.
- FDI also promotes job creation across the economy. In 2019/20, 10,224 jobs were created in the software and computer services sector thanks to FDI projects, 4,750 jobs in the food and drink sector, 5,109 jobs in electronics and communication, 2,225 jobs in the advanced engineering and supply chain sector, 3,212 jobs in the automotive sector, and 1,522 jobs in the aerospace sector.
- There have been 12 public interest interventions on national security grounds since 2002.
- The amendment to section 243 (the ‘overseas disclosure gateway’) of Part 9 of the Enterprise Act 2002 will remove the restriction on UK public authorities, including the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), disclosing to overseas public authorities information that comes to them

in the exercise of their merger functions. This will strengthen the CMA’s ability to protect UK markets and consumers as it takes a more active role internationally.

- Barring narrow exceptions, the government’s current powers are limited to mergers involving target enterprises with a turnover of £70 million or a combined share of supply of 25% or more. Unlike the Enterprise Act 2002, the National Security and Investment Bill does not include minimum turnover and share of supply thresholds.
- Assets in scope of the Bill are land, tangible moveable property, and (covering intellectual property) any idea, information, or technique with industrial, commercial or other economic value. Things that are not in scope:
  1. Transactions involving stakes of below 15% in entities unless such a holding (alone or in combination with other rights or interests) amounts to the acquisition of “material influence over the policy of the entity”
  2. Transactions involving an existing holding in an entity of over 25% moving to a new level of 26-50%
  3. Transactions involving an existing holding in an entity of over 50% moving to a new level of 51-74%
  4. Transactions involving an existing holding in an entity of 75% or more, moving to a new level of 76-100%
  5. Assets bought by consumers – e.g. personal computer software, mobile phones, GPS.