

Government launches new £40 million Clean Growth Fund to supercharge green start-ups

- Government to contribute half of initial £40 million fund pot together with one of the UK's largest charity investors, CCLA to be managed by Clean Growth Investment Management (CGIM)
- Fund could reach £100 million by next year with additional private sector investment

The government is launching a new effort to support green start-up companies across the UK, joint-funding a £40 million venture capital fund to supercharge the development of next generation clean, low-carbon technologies.

The Clean Growth Fund will contribute towards the UK's plans to reach Net Zero by 2050 and will be accessible to UK-based companies driving green technology across the power, transport, waste, and building energy efficiency sectors. Potential examples of projects the fund could support include:

- energy storage and smart grid systems to bolster resilience in the power system
- renewable heating and ventilation technologies across homes and commercial buildings
- bio-fuels and bio-energy systems

With £20 million of government investment matched pound for pound by CCLA, one of the UK's largest charity fund managers, the fund could reach £100 million by Autumn 2021 through private sector fundraising.

Business Secretary, Alok Sharma, said:

The need for innovative and ambitious ideas across green industries has never been greater. I am pleased that with the help of this fund, promising clean growth start-ups will be able to step up to accelerate the UK's recovery, while supporting our path to Net Zero by 2050.

This pioneering new fund will enable innovative low-carbon solutions to be scaled up at speed, helping to drive a green and resilient economic recovery.

James Bevan, the CCLA's Chief Investment Officer said:

We decided it was time for CCLA to invest in the very best early stage technologies to support the UK Net Zero objective. In

partnership with BEIS, we have developed a solution, the Clean Growth Fund. Through the Clean Growth Fund, we now look forward to working with other investors to support these exciting young UK companies aiming to reduce carbon emissions.

The Fund is seeking to make investments at early stage, seed or Series A rounds in exciting, innovative clean growth start-ups. The fund will invest in businesses with a prototype product or service demonstrating a clear contribution to reducing greenhouse gases together with compelling evidence of market demand. It will be managed by Clean Growth Investment Management LLP (CGIM).

Beverley Gower Jones, Managing Partner of CGIM, said:

The Clean Growth Fund is a significant boost to the country's low carbon sector and is a clear signal from the UK Government that new and innovative technologies will be crucial to deliver Net Zero and the clean growth agenda. We want to hear from the very best clean technology businesses from across the UK.

The Fund is now seeking wider private sector investment and will aim to balance its portfolio across clean growth sectors. Investment parameters for the Fund focus on clean growth technologies, hardware, products and services in sectors including power generation, waste, energy networks, buildings management, industries, bioenergy and alternative fuels.

Notes to editors

[OSCE Programme Office in Dushanbe: UK statement](#)

We welcome and thank Ambassador Chiveri and his colleagues for his report to the Permanent Council and the work they have undertaken at the Programme Office in Dushanbe over the last year.

Tajikistan is an important partner to the UK and we will continue to support good governance, private sector development and economic reform. This includes through our own DFID Central Asia programme. Good governance is also vital for attracting external investment, and for allowing the private sector to thrive and create wealth and jobs. To this end, I am glad that the Programme Office has provided support to the Working Group on Tax Reform, and on the National Anti-Corruption Strategy. These are important steps in Tajikistan's path to future prosperity.

I was pleased to read the frequent references in your report to working closely with civil society organisations across a range of programmes. This includes border security, countering violent extremism, democratic participation, anti-corruption, human rights, combatting domestic violence, countering human trafficking, and ensuring freedom of the media.

Combating violent extremism and providing alternatives to extremist narratives is a priority for all of our countries. Respect for human rights, democratic participation, a level playing field for business and entrepreneurs, and opportunities for the young are all different aspects of the response to this complex problem, and we commend the efforts of colleagues from the OSCE mission across all three dimensions as a way to tackle this in partnership with the Government of Tajikistan.

A healthy civil society environment is also an important indicator of the strength and resilience of a democracy, particularly in times of crisis, such as the current COVID-19 pandemic. Allowing the public to understand the nature and consequences of the pandemic – through free and uncensored reporting – is an important pressure valve that can help reduce fear and improve education of measures designed to prevent the spread. Mr Chair, we very much hope that Tajikistan will allow the space for independent media organisations to operate, and remain concerned about reports of the arrest and detention of journalists, and of denials of accreditation for journalists seeking to report in the country. As the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media said, “the necessity of a free media is even more vital and more crucial than ever.”

Mr Chair, I would like to highlight a couple of areas of work that I think deserve special attention.

Firstly, on security. I welcome the focus the mission has placed on border management. We believe that for border management to be successful, it should be comprehensive, involving multiple state actors as well as engagement with local communities. This is why we will be putting this on the agenda of an upcoming Security Committee meeting. I was therefore particularly pleased to read about the Office-supported public outreach activities on border management. These have enhanced dialogue and information sharing.

The international accreditation of the one-year blended-learning Postgraduate Diploma by the European Qualifications Framework is clear demonstration of the success of the Border Management Staff College.

The other area of welcome progress is on some third dimension issues. I would like to commend the ambassador on the progress made on support to the rule of law in Tajikistan. This includes anti-torture initiatives that resulted in an increase in the reporting and follow-up of cases. Elsewhere, the provision of free legal and psychosocial counselling to women and men to address domestic violence and to support victims is particularly important at this difficult time. This is as well as wider public awareness on the domestic violence law.

I understand from my colleagues in Dushanbe that the Office has played an important role in coordinating assistance with other donors responding to

pressing medical and other needs during the COVID-19 response. I thank the Ambassador and his staff for continuing to work professionally across all three dimensions of the OSCE. For this, and the work of the Office in progressing the OSCE's mandate in Tajikistan, we thank you.

[New measures announced ahead of Hidden Harms Summit](#)

The government will spearhead a new codeword scheme for domestic abuse victims, which will allow people in urgent or immediate danger to get help from shop workers by using a specific phrase that staff will be trained to identify.

The new scheme, which has been championed by the Victims' Commissioner, Domestic Abuse Commissioner and crisis support charities such as SafeLives and Hestia, will be discussed at the Hidden Harms Summit today (Thursday 21 May).

Representatives from government, law enforcement, victims' charities, front line practitioners and the private sector will drive forward action to support victims of crimes such as domestic abuse, sexual violence, child sexual abuse and modern slavery.

The virtual summit, hosted by Prime Minister Boris Johnson, is in response to the unique challenges victims have faced during the coronavirus pandemic and to ensure they continue to get support.

Attendees include representatives from the National Crime Agency, National Police Chiefs' Council, the children's, domestic abuse, anti-slavery and victims' commissioners and leaders from domestic abuse and children's charities, including the NSPCC, Refuge and Women's Aid.

Ahead of the summit the government has announced it is working with business groups, such as the National Pharmacy Association and British Retail Consortium, and domestic abuse charities, on the implementation of a codeword scheme to support domestic abuse victims.

In addition to this, funding will support law enforcement to target perpetrators sexually exploiting children and help those affected by abuse rebuild their lives. Around £10 million will boost the National Crime Agency's ability to tackle paedophiles operating on the dark web and a further £3.36 million has been allocated to projects to understand the threat posed by the most serious criminals.

This follows the unprecedented £76 million extra funding for vulnerable people from the government's £750 million package of support for charities.

This included £34.1 million to safeguard vulnerable children, £28 million to help survivors of domestic abuse, £10 million to support victims of sexual violence and £1.73 million for modern slavery support services.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

I am acutely aware that for some people home is not a safe space, and that coronavirus has brought with it additional dangers.

Just as I am committed to tackling the virus, we have to support the most vulnerable and keep them safe from harm and exploitation. That is why it is vital that we come together and bring all our collective expertise to ensure we are doing everything we can to support those at risk, and to help them rebuild their lives.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

While the necessary social distancing guidelines are keeping the majority of us safe, they are amplifying danger for others. Protecting vulnerable people from the most sickening crimes such as child sexual abuse and domestic abuse has been my priority since the very start of this crisis.

This summit will enable us, along with experts from the public and private sectors, to develop an action plan to protect victims as we seek to rebuild society.

Justice Secretary & Lord Chancellor, Rt Hon Robert Buckland QC MP, said:

We have taken every measure possible to protect the most vulnerable throughout this pandemic. This includes an unprecedented £750 million boost for front line charities and making sure victims can still access the support they desperately rely on remotely.

Our message is clear that despite these difficult times no one should suffer in silence.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Now more than ever, we must make sure the most vulnerable children and families in our society are protected from any hidden harms they may face, including abuse, exploitation or neglect.

We know that the nature of such harms have changed, and this summit is an opportunity for us to reaffirm our wholehearted commitment to working together to keep children safe.

The summit will also provide an opportunity to show victims that support is available, empower them to reach out for help and give a forum for key stakeholders to come up with further solutions to tackle these harms.

It will also discuss the proactive and innovative tactics being piloted by police forces to tackle domestic abuse, such as Cumbria, South Wales and Sussex, which include methods for better identifying those posing the highest risk of offending and multi-agency approaches to prevent re-offending.

As well as the opening session chaired by the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary, Lord Chancellor and Education Secretary will also lead meetings on law enforcement, victim support and safeguarding vulnerable people in the community.

Further measures announced ahead of the summit include:

- £2 million funding boost for domestic abuse charities affected by the COVID-19 pandemic
- £1.4 million for the Modern Slavery and Organised Immigration Crime Programme – this will support the police to increase prosecutions and crack down on organised immigration crime
- launching a £2.8 million child sexual abuse Support Services Transformation Fund to improve support available for children and young people affected by sexual abuse by building our understanding of what support works for victims and promoting best practice between providers and communities
- a pledge of £3.7 million to continue support for 11 local authority-led projects in England through the Trusted Relationship Fund, to support young people identified as at high risk of sexual or criminal exploitation by providing bespoke help from adult role models such as youth workers, police officers and other professionals
- £800,000 for a helpline, email service, and online tool to assist unrepresented victims seeking an emergency protective order from the family court with making their applications
- a commitment to review the delivery model for victim support services
- commissioning further work to identify the best law enforcement responses to domestic abuse by analysing data and intelligence on incidents during the lockdown period – working with police forces and leading academics, this will ensure we develop a deeper understanding of emerging trends, such as the nature of offending and perpetrators – to encourage forces to share best practice the government will convene a further ministerial roundtable on domestic abuse with academics, police and other key stakeholders

National Crime Agency Director General Lynne Owens said:

Tackling child sexual abuse must be a priority for all of us, this includes the tech industry. The NCA and UK policing relentlessly fight the online child sexual abuse threat, arresting more than 650 child sex offenders and safeguarding around 750 children each month.

The additional funding for this financial year will enable the NCA to de-anonymise and arrest more child sex offenders operating on the dark web and safeguard more children.

SafeLives Chief Executive Suzanne Jacob, CEO, said:

In normal times domestic abuse victims and survivors talk about walking on eggshells. During this period of lockdown they have talked about walking on glass.

We warmly welcome the chance to speak about this to the Prime Minister and Ministers with responsibilities for mental health, law enforcement and child safeguarding, and are delighted that a SafeLives Pioneer – an expert by experience – can also have her voice and views heard directly by those who shape UK policy.

Susie Hargreaves OBE, Chief Executive of the Internet Watch Foundation, said:

Now is the time, more than ever, to work together to make sure children are not exposed to risk or harm online. Over the last month, 8.8 million attempts have been made in the UK alone, across three internet service providers, to access known child sexual abuse imagery. On top of this, there has been an 89% reduction in the number of webpages being removed from the IWF's URL list, meaning this content is remaining live for longer.

In the past week, our analysts have taken action on the first self-generated indecent image of a child created over the lockdown period. We simply have to act now to avoid things worsening further, and the IWF will be working alongside the Government, technology companies, parents, and other partners to make sure our children are kept out of harm and can use the internet safely.

Lyndsey Dearlove, Head of UK SAYS NO MORE at Hestia, said:

Since launching Safe Spaces nationwide, Hestia's UK SAYS NO MORE campaign has seen an immediate response from pharmacies across the UK to open their consultation rooms to allow victims of domestic abuse to seek specialist support. Key workers in pharmacies hold a unique position within the community and through their rapid response Safe Spaces are now operating in a quarter of all pharmacies in the UK.

We welcome the government's support to enhance measures for victims of domestic abuse that can provide the opportunity for victims to discreetly seek specialist support as part of someone's daily routine.

Employers Initiative on Domestic Abuse Chair Elizabeth Filkin said:

Today's virtual Hidden Harms Summit is an important opportunity for businesses to work with domestic abuse charities and other stakeholders at an unprecedented time for those affected by domestic abuse.

The Employers' Initiative on Domestic Abuse has long championed the role of businesses in helping to identify and tackle domestic abuse, so we welcome the prospect of the codeword scheme. We all have a role to play in rooting out domestic abuse from our society, a fact underscored by the significant rise in reports of abuse during the lockdown.

As public health restrictions begin to be relaxed, the role of businesses and colleagues in helping to support those at risk of abuse will be all the more important. That's why today's summit is a crucial opportunity to discuss and share ideas on the challenges which lie ahead.

Multi-million pound flood scheme in Rochdale and Littleborough given the green light

Led by the Environment Agency in partnership with Rochdale Council, the new scheme features a range of measures to reduce the risk of flooding across Rochdale and Littleborough including a new flood storage area at Gale, as well as raised walls and improvements to culverts and bridges in areas including Greenvale Brook, Town House Brook, Eales Brook, Buckley Brook and Hey Brook.

The approved plans incorporate the first phase of a three-step process that has been developed to create what will eventually become one of the largest and most complex inland flood risk management schemes in the north of England. Once completed, the Rochdale and Littleborough Flood Alleviation Scheme will improve flood protection for 1,000 residential properties and 200 local businesses as well as major infrastructure such as the tram network, the bus interchange, schools and colleges, a grid substation and the waste water treatment works.

Proposed works for the Phase 1a planning application are set to include defences at various locations in Littleborough, the replacement of Riverstone Bridge and the widening of the river channel at the same location as well as

the removal of Charles Street Bridge and temporary access works into the Gale site to allow it to be turned into a flood storage reservoir, as part of Phase 1B. Works will also combine the permanent diversion of Greenvale Brook at Gale East and a culvert extension within the same site.

During the planning application process, Rochdale Borough Council's planning department consulted with a large number of customers and stakeholders before making the recommendation to grant planning permission on Friday 8th May.

Approval for the scheme was granted subject to the discharge of a series of planning conditions prior to commencement of actual construction related works

Pete Costello, Area Flood and Coastal Risk Manager for the Environment Agency, said: "Rochdale and Littleborough residents have been waiting for a number of years for increased flood protection in their community. Those who still live with the trauma of the Boxing Day 2015 flood event, and more recent instances of flooding during Storm Ciara and Dennis, should not be made to wait any longer than necessary get these flood defences in place. We are therefore delighted that the planning authority has now approved the plans for the first phase of the Rochdale and Littleborough Flood Alleviation Scheme.

"This is great news for the area as it will allow us to better protect hundreds of homes and businesses while also bringing improved environmental and economic benefits to the areas. We look forward to additional progress on the ground in the coming months and will continue to keep residents and businesses affected by our work informed about the scheme at every stage of its development. Community drop in events for Riverstone Bridge will restart once it is safe to do so as and when coronavirus restrictions are lifted."

Councillor Neil Emmott, cabinet member for environment at Rochdale Borough Council, said: "It's great to see this vital scheme taking a major step forward. We saw first-hand the devastation caused by the Boxing day floods in 2015 and have been working hand in hand with the Environment Agency to protect our communities and businesses from the impact of any future floods.

"We've already completed a number of important projects with the Environment Agency, including the construction of new storage reservoirs at Calder Brook, Littleborough. This scheme is one of the largest flood defence projects in the North West with the potential to protect 1,000 residential properties and 200 businesses. It will help protect many of our residents and businesses at significant risk of future flooding and provide important infrastructure to support our economic growth."

Universal Credit: surplus earnings

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