

Social media, young people and mental health

An Irishman, a Barbadian and a Kiwi...

Sorry, there's no punchline – I just wanted to talk about our England cricket team, who I met on the way over here at Downing Street.

And our brilliant England captain, star bowler and star batsman, and this entire generation of England cricketers, who come from so many different backgrounds to play for our country.

Because these guys – like the England Women's World Cup team – are role models to so many boys and girls in this country.

And it's a sign of how far we've come since Norman Tebbit's infamous 'cricket test' that nobody cares where you come from, only where you want to call home. And I hope that we call it a new cricket test that we are a meritocracy as a country wherever you come from.

I thought it was worth starting with the England cricket team, not only to cheer everybody up but also because we have to make sure that we remember what the recent past was like when we decide on the future.

Our sporting role models now reflect what our country looks like – and this itself is a huge sign of progress. I think we can take that analysis into the space we're talking about tonight.

Because things weren't always better for children and teenagers before smartphones and social media. We often discuss the impact of social media and the challenges it brings but as mentioned in the introduction we must also remember the great advances it brings.

By most metrics it's never been better: smoking is down, alcohol misuse is down, drug abuse is down. More young people are staying in school and going to university than ever before.

You see the thing is, no matter how much we care about improving our country, we've always got to base those improvements on an honest assessment of where we are. An honest assessment means also reflecting that each age brings new challenges and our task is to rise to those new challenges and harness those for the benefit of our society.

This afternoon some of the biggest social media companies in the world – Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Google, YouTube, Tumblr and Snapchat – all came together at the Department for Health and Social Care...

...the Matt Hancock app was also represented.

And what we discussed is exactly what we're talking about tonight – young

people, social media and the impact on mental health. And the word that kept coming up in the meeting – and not just from me – was responsibility.

It was clear: the penny has now dropped – social media companies get that they have a social responsibility, and that we all have a shared responsibility for the health and wellbeing of our children.

This was the third social media summit I've called this year, and so far we've managed to get the big tech firms – which includes Twitter – to agree to remove suicide and self-harm content, and start addressing the spread of anti-vax misinformation, Instagram have introduced a new anti-bullying tool, and they've all repeated to me that they recognise they have a duty of care to their users, particularly children and young people.

The next step from the work we've been doing is research. Today, we agreed that we must build a scientifically-rigorous evidence base so we can better understand the health impact of social media, and so we can better identify what more we need to do to keep our children safe online.

We will use the data that social media companies hold for social good. Because, while we've made significant progress in these past few months, there is still much more to do.

And ultimately we need to ensure we allow those who express themselves on social media as a cry for help to make that cry while not subjecting others to the damaging impact of viewing material that promotes self-harm or suicide.

And I have made it crystal-clear that if they don't collaborate, we will legislate.

So today, we agreed to start a new strategic partnership between the Samaritans and 'the big 6': Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, Google, YouTube and Twitter.

We want the social media companies to contribute at least £1 million to get this partnership off the ground. The government is playing a leading role in bringing this partnership together, and has also contributing funding.

Our mission will be to follow the evidence: develop a scientifically based understanding of what the challenge is, and what resources, support and guidelines we need to establish and better protect children and young people online.

And the key will be to ensure we have a clinically credible analysis of what should and shouldn't be online and ensure when social media companies want to take down content that is harmful, or are required to take down content that is harmful, the boundary of what should and shouldn't be online is defined by clinical standards. There's a clear need for a partnership here to make sure we get that line right.

Ultimately technology isn't the problem: cars don't kill people because of a design flaw. People die in car crashes, most of the time, due to human error.

The challenge with social media is also a human challenge.

I'm well known for caring about driving technological upgrades through the NHS and before that across the economy as culture secretary. The reason I care about technology is because I care about people.

Ultimately, harnessing people to harness technology – that is the challenge that we face. The challenge we face online is to ask the question: are humans going to do the right thing?

Are social media companies going to play their part by making their services safer?

Are governments going to hold these companies to account?

And how are we going to support parents and carers to keep their children safe and healthy online?

Essentially, how are we all going to live up to our responsibilities?

And I believe we will. For 2 reasons.

First: history shows us that new technologies sometimes develop faster than our ability to fully understand their impact, but when we do catch up, we act successfully.

It took a century of speed limits, vehicle inspections, traffic lights, drink-driving laws, seatbelt legislation, to make driving as safe as it is now. And now, per mile driven, cars have never been safer.

And we're still not done, because driver-less cars will be the next step – proof that progress is driven both by advances in understanding and improvements in the technology itself.

And of course that progress, itself, is never complete.

I take inspiration from the first modern labour law in this country, introduced by a Conservative: Robert Peel, father to Sir Robert Peel, one of our greatest prime ministers.

The 1802 Health and Morals of Apprentices Act recognised that cotton mill owners needed to better protect the children working with this new-fangled machinery.

Now, it took a few more decades, and a few more factory acts, before child labour was outlawed altogether, but that first Factory Act, introduced by a Conservative mill owner, started the course of gradual improvements to make the world of work safer for children, women and men.

This task of harnessing new technology for the benefit of society does not take one act of parliament – it is a constant effort to make sure our rulebook is up to date, to allow for the great innovations of our age but to also ensure the benefit of that innovation is brought to the whole of

society.

The history of technology, the history of humanity itself, is one of constant and gradual improvements. Now, gradual does not mean slow – that's not to say we need to wait decades for change to happen.

The pace of technological transformation is faster now than at any point in history so we must pick up the pace of progress to make this technology safer, sooner.

Look at it this way: Facebook is 15 years old now, which in tech years is about... 46. They've even appointed Nick Clegg – and you don't get more of a grown-up than Sir Nick.

So this technology is maturing, there's more middle-aged people now using Facebook than teenagers, and through improving our understanding and improving the technology, we can make it safer for everyone. That's the first reason I have confidence that we will get this right, but it requires constant effort to upgrade the laws by which we live.

Second: Mental health, thanks to the actions of this Prime Minister, and her predecessor, is finally being talked about, and taken as seriously as physical health.

[Political content withdrawn]

We've started a fundamental shift in how we think about mental health in this country, and the approach the NHS is taking to preventing, treating and supporting good mental health in the future.

This fundamental shift is important but it is by no means complete. We've put a record amount of funding into mental health services but there is so much more to do.

And I think it's very important that we talk about the impact of social media, and the wellbeing of young people, in this wider context of good mental health: how do we promote and encourage good mental health?

So the third, and final thing, I'd like to touch on tonight is resilience, which is really another way of saying prevention: the guiding principle of the NHS over the next decade.

How can we help people, particularly children and young people, to become more resilient in the first place?

This isn't about telling people to toughen up – it's about teaching people the cognitive and emotional skills they need to deal with adversity.

It's about promoting positive mental health and preventing problems from causing illness.

Because life will throw at you challenges, times of stress and adversity – losing a job, divorce, bereavement. It's how we respond, how resilient we

are, that ultimately determines the impact on our mental health.

The child development expert, Professor Ann Masten, puts it brilliantly:

Resilience does not come from rare and special qualities, but from the everyday magic of ordinary, normative human resources in the minds, brains, and bodies of children.

Everyday magic, but it is not automatic. Resilience isn't a fixed attribute. It's something we can teach. It's something that can be learned, it's something that must be nurtured.

It's an essential life skill that we should equip every child and young person with, so they can meet challenges head-on, face adversity, learn and grow, and improve as a person.

I'm delighted we're working with our colleagues at the Department for Education to equip and empower children, from a young age, with this essential life skill.

Teaching resilience, along with self-respect and self-worth, learning about the importance of honesty, courage, kindness, generosity, trustworthiness and justice.

Values to live by, and vital to our mental health.

We're also teaching children about the dangers of fake news and why truth matters – whether it's falsehoods about vaccines or falsehoods about people.

As a parent, I want to protect my children from the dangers in this world, but I know I can't be with them every minute of the day – I don't think they'd like it very much if I tried.

But I hope that what I've taught them will help prepare them for the challenges they will face in the future.

As parents, as a society, we can't remove every challenge, but we can teach young people how to overcome them, how to cope with adversity, and how to become more resilient.

So it comes down to this:

Responsibility: everybody playing their part – social media companies, government, parents and carers.

Research: building the evidence base to improve our understanding, and improve the new technology.

Resilience: teaching the right way to respond to challenges.

That's how we protect our children. And that's how we build a safer, healthier world for them to grow up in.

And it is an area in which we can succeed – we are leading the world and we must not fail if we're going to ensure the next generation grows up to live the happy and fulfilling lives that we all want to see.

Launch of Smart Farm Pilot at EXPO in Paraguay

The event will take place next July 15 at 19:00 Hs., at the Annual Expo of Mariano Roque Alonso exhibit, the largest annual agribusiness fair.

Local authorities and guests linked to the agricultural and cattle sector, as well as businesses will be in attendance. Representatives from UK-based businesses that work on Agri-Tech will also be present, offering their products to the agriculture sector in Paraguay. The companies will take part in business round tables during their visit to Paraguay.

The objective of the Paraguay Satellite Demonstration Farm is to provide an initial monitoring test facility to validate cutting edge British technologies that have the potential to significantly improve agricultural productivity for farming systems in Paraguay.

This first pilot is in implementation phase at a private cattle ranch, located in the San Pedro district in the north of the country. The results of this pilot have proven the value of the technology to increase farm profitability and suitability for promotion of their adoption in Paraguay and other countries in the region. As the British Ambassador in Asuncion, Matthew Hedges said:

The launch of this pilot is the culmination of years of careful work between the Foreign Commonwealth Office, through our Embassy in Asuncion, the Department of International Trade and British businesses offering cutting-edge technology for agribusiness.

We hope this is the first of many business opportunities to take advantage of the innovation the UK has to offer

GREAT Campaign

The launch of the Smart Farm pilot received support from the GREAT campaign, a cross-Government initiative aimed to showcase the best of the UK and encourage people to visit, do business, invest and study in the UK. It is the Government's most ambitious international promotional campaign ever, uniting the efforts of the private and public sectors to generate jobs and growth for Britain.

Further information

If you want to learn more about the pilot farm, visit the website of the [AgriEpi Centre](#).

For other information about the launch, contact Karina Rodriguez, Political and Communications Officer at the British Embassy in Asuncion, at Karina.Rodriguez@fco.gov.uk.

For more information about the events and activities of the British Embassy in Paraguay, follow us on:

Collecting evidence to use in holding Daesh accountable for crimes against humanity

Mr President, I would like to start by thanking Special Advisor Karim Khan for his informative update on the recent progress made by the UN Investigative Team. I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and welcome the recent appointment of his Iraqi deputy, Dr Salama. The United Kingdom is grateful to them and to their team for the excellent work that they have undertaken so far.

The United Kingdom emphasises the importance of recruiting further Iraqi members of the team as soon as possible. This recruitment, alongside training and development opportunities, will provide an important legacy for Iraq in building capacity and sharing expertise.

Mr President, we welcome the strong and positive engagement of the team with the Government of Iraq, both in Baghdad and here in New York. We are grateful to the Government of Iraq for their continued commitment to and support for UNITAD's work. This message of commitment was conveyed strongly to the Council during our recent visit to Baghdad from the highest levels of the Government of Iraq. We also welcome the continued collaboration between the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government with the team to agree modalities for cooperation. Over the next reporting period, we encourage the team to redouble and prioritise its engagement with the Government of Iraq to ensure the greatest possible use of evidence collected in Iraqi domestic proceedings, including allowing for the prosecution of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide under domestic law. This would constitute a remarkable step forward for promoting accountability for survivors and the families of Daesh's victims.

Maintaining and strengthening this close engagement with the Government of Iraq, the International Community, Non-Governmental Organisations and the people of Iraq will be essential over the coming months.

Mr President, less than 12 months after UNITAD received its first budget, the team has made remarkable progress. Over the last six months, they have established a new official headquarters, developed an investigative strategy, conducted excavations in Sinjar, as well as making important progress towards putting in place the necessary systems to ensure evidence is safely stored. We welcome this progress and hope that their digital storage system will be fully up and running by the time of our next briefing. We also look forward to the planned excavation in Mosul, and to the remaining field operation units become fully operational soon.

Mr President, the Council's recent visit was also an important reminder to us all of the scale of the task ahead for the Government of Iraq in transitioning into a post-conflict environment. Reconciliation, reconstruction and accountability for all survivors of Daesh violence is essential. The enormity of the task ahead for UNITAD in gathering further evidence is also clear. The collection of forensic, physical and biological material from mass grave sites in Iraq is an essential first step for providing closure for the families of their victims. We urge the team to continue to focus on this important task, and to share further details on their investigative strategy as it develops, as well as any challenges that they may face.

The United Kingdom also acknowledges the valuable work the team has undertaken so far in gathering witness testimonies. We urge all UN bodies in Iraq to work collaboratively to ensure they avoid duplication of effort and to mitigate the risks around the potential re-traumatising of victims. In this regard, we urge UNAMI, UNITAD and the UN Iraq Team of Experts to work together to coordinate their efforts and to share best practice and technical expertise.

Mr President, in November 2019, the United Kingdom will be hosting a conference on preventing sexual violence called "Time for Justice: Putting Survivors First." We hope that all Council members will send senior representatives from their Governments to signify their commitment to PSVI, and to ensuring accountability for the perpetrators and support for survivors, their children and relatives.

When Resolution 2379 was adopted unanimously in September 2017, it demonstrated the Council's full support for efforts to bring Daesh to justice. Since its inception, when Nadia Murad addressed the Council, survivors and victims have been at the heart of the team's efforts.

We commend the team's approach in emphasising there is no hierarchy of victims and the recognition that all Iraqis suffered at the hands of Daesh. Their work will be important in supporting the Government of Iraq and its efforts towards national reconciliation.

The United Kingdom is proud to support the important work of the

investigative team and I am pleased to announce today an additional £1 million in funding to the Investigative Team, taking the total contribution from the United Kingdom so far to £2 million.

We thank the growing number of Member States who have also pledged support to the team and we encourage other countries to consider financial and in-kind support to ensure the team can continue with – and accelerate – its valuable work.

Mr President, in concluding, I would like to reiterate the United Kingdom's full support for the efforts of the Special Adviser and his team. We look forward to the unanimous renewal of the team's mandate in September.

I thank you, Mr President.

New equipment to help combat illegal fishing

The new kit, which cost over £15,000, consists of a high grade digital SLR camera, night vision monocular and night vision binoculars. It will allow officers to carry out more regular patrols and make night checks for illegal fishing in the Great Ouse and Fenland catchment area more effective.

The technology was funded by Defra's Water and Environment Improvement Fund, which is used to enhance fisheries and the environment as part of Defra's 25 Year Environment plan.

Alex Thomson, fisheries enforcement officer for the Environment Agency in East Anglia, said:

The new kit will enhance our detection and surveillance capabilities. Combined with our specialist training and specific powers, the technology will allow us to cover more ground, get better evidence, and work more effectively into and through the hours of darkness.

This is invaluable in detecting and preventing illegal poaching activities, and protecting our valuable coarse fish and eel stocks.

Fisheries officers have the power to arrest and detain, enter lands, stop and search, seize boats, vessels, vehicles and instruments and require the production of fishing licences. Those caught can be given a range of punishments, including fines of up to £2,500.

To report any illegal fishing activity, call our 24-hour incident hotline on

0800 80 70 60.

To buy a fishing licence, [visit our fishing page](#)

Fines for anglers caught flouting the Law

Punishments issued during a day of sentencing at Brighton Magistrates' Court on 26 June 2019 saw 5 anglers fined £220 each.

Each angler was ordered to pay £127.47 in costs and a victim surcharge of £30.

The total amount of fines the 5 must pay came to £1,100, the total costs amounted to £637.35 and the victim surcharge total was £150.

Those found guilty of offences were:

- Andrei Ngrei, 27, of Gulliver Close, Kempston, Bedford, was caught fishing during the close season and without a licence on the River Great Ouse at Bedford on 24 March
- Ciprian Crimu, 33, of Alexandra Avenue, Harrow, was caught fishing during the close season and without a licence on the River Great Ouse at Bedford on 24 March
- Chris Biggs, 52, of The Rye, Eaton Bray, was caught fishing without a licence on 7 February 7 at Grand Union Canal, Three Locks, Soulbury, and then failed to provide his address when asked by the bailiff
- Vladas Lekutis, 49, of Earls Street, Thetford, was caught fishing during the close season and without a licence on the Little Ouse River, Redmere, Littleport, on 17 March
- Algiradas Paulaskis, 54, Earls Street, Thetford, was caught fishing during the close season and without a licence on the Little Ouse River, Redmere, Littleport, on 17 March

None of the defendants attended court on the day and the charges were proven in their absence and the fines imposed.

Environment Agency Fisheries Team Leader Ian Hirst said:

It's a crime to fish without a valid licence and offenders can be fined up to £2,500, have their fishing equipment seized and be banned from fishing. Our enforcement officers inspect rod licences throughout East Anglia and could turn up at any time.

These cases show that anyone found fishing illegally or fails to provide their name and address to an officer carrying out their

duties may face prosecution and a fine.

The money raised through the sales of rod licences is re-invested and enables us to enhance and improve all fisheries for anglers, including rivers. Our officers routinely undertake licence checks and we urge anyone with information about illegal fishing activities to contact us.

Illegal fishing should be reported to the Environment Agency's incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60.