

News story: Mayank Prakash steps down from BPDTS Ltd's Board of Directors

The BPDTS board in December marked the departure of Mayank Prakash, one of the company's founding directors.

Thanking Mayank for his contributions, chair of the BPDTS Ltd board, Helen John, said:

Mayank was hugely committed to creating a successful partnership between DWP Digital and BPDTS. I'm sure that without him, there would be no BPDTS, and we wish Mayank all the best for the future.

Press release: PM: Launch of the NHS Long Term Plan marks an historic step to secure its future

The plan being launched tomorrow by NHS England, thanks to the government's investment of £20.5 billion a year in real terms by 2023/24, will transform patient care and make sure every penny of taxpayers' money is spent wisely.

Now in its 70th year, the NHS has unprecedented certainty to plan for the next decade, ensuring that patients will be supported with world-class care at every stage of their life.

From birth, through the challenges that life brings and into old age, the plan will ensure that the NHS is:

- Providing the best maternity care in the world – We will ensure every baby gets the best start in life by continuing to improve maternity safety, and providing greater mental health support to new parents.
- Supporting ageing and increasing independence – We will support people to age well by bringing different health and care teams together to make sure older people are getting the support they need to remain independent, avoiding unnecessary hospital admissions. We will make sure people have more say and control over the healthcare and support they are receiving, including by expanding the use of personal health budgets.
- Improving outcomes for all major conditions – Through better prevention, detection, treatment and recovery from serious diseases, we will improve

health outcomes so people live longer and healthier. For mental health services, greater support will be provided to almost 350,000 more children and young people, and at least an extra 380,000 adults over the next five years.

- Increasing the NHS workforce – We are improving access to mental health, primary care and community services, with tens of thousands more doctors, nurses and other health professionals – a full workforce plan is expected later this year.
- Bringing the NHS into digital age – We are rolling out new digital technologies to deliver improved access to NHS services. This will mean everyone in the country will have digital access to their GP, including being able to make appointments, manage prescriptions and view their health records online.
- Cutting waste across the NHS – We will continue to make sure we are using taxpayers' money efficiently, including through introducing new digital techniques and making back office savings of more than £700 million across the NHS.

With NHS spending in England increasing, extra money will also go to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland under the Barnett formula, which ensures every part of the UK gets a fair share of public spending. The devolved administrations will be able to use this money to improve their own services and develop their own long-term plans.

Prime Minister Theresa May said:

The NHS has always been the country's most beloved public service – there to provide outstanding care to us all whenever it is needed.

The launch of the NHS Long Term Plan marks an historic step to secure its future and offers a vision for the service for the next ten years, with a focus on ensuring that every pound is spent in a way that will most benefit patients. This will help relieve pressure on the NHS while providing the basis to transform care with world-class treatments.

Backed by our record investment of £20.5 billion a year in real terms by 2023/24, this shows what we can achieve with a strong economy and a focus on people's priorities.

Press release: 'Smart homes' to help older and disabled people get digital skills and tackle loneliness in rural areas

- Cash will also fund app for people with Down's Syndrome to improve health and wellbeing
- New money for projects to help those receiving palliative care and their families and carers

A number of 'smart homes' with digitally savvy older people demonstrating tech in their own homes are being created as part of an innovative scheme to boost the nation's digital skills.

The homes, to be created in rural West Essex by a partnership led by Uttlesford Council for Voluntary Service, will see home owners become trained 'digital boomers' to help others improve their digital skills. They will receive a digital assessment, before having their homes 'kitted out' in tech.

The experts will then open their homes for older people to visit so they can learn first hand from their peers how to make the most of smart technology to control household appliances, book GP appointments online, contact friends and family by video, and shop online. Younger, 'digital buddies' will also be on hand to support with digital skills.

The scheme is one of three to be given a share of £400,000 by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to improve older and disabled people's lives through the Digital Inclusion Innovation Fund.

The fund will also see an app created by the Down's Syndrome Association to allow people with Down's Syndrome to monitor their weight and exercise levels from their smartphones to promote good health and wellbeing.

More than 70 per cent of people with Down's Syndrome are classed as overweight or obese. The app will be the first of its kind specifically designed for those with Down's Syndrome. It will also aim to connect people with a wider community of users which can help combat loneliness.

The Weldmar Hospicecare Trust will also explore, for the first time, how the lives of end-of-life and palliative patients can be improved through new technology and skills.

The project aims to research and develop technology to allow users to report on their health on a daily basis; provide consultations in a timely, convenient and cost effective way via video to help patients with regular appointments; and support carers and families who are often also at risk of isolation and detrimental health and wellbeing impacts, while improving their digital skills.

Minister for Digital, Margot James, said:

We are committed to improving the digital skills of people of all ages and abilities so everyone can enjoy the benefits of modern technology.

These innovative projects will not only help some of the hardest to reach people live healthier and happier lives but also boost our mission to make the UK the best place in the world to start and grow a digital businesses.

John Fisher, chief executive, Citizens Online said:

We were impressed with the standard of entries to the Digital Inclusion Fund. Digital inclusion is essential to help people improve their lives in this digital age and this fund, targeting those most in need is a welcome enabler.

The successful projects will produce valuable learning for all those working in this sector and help to improve the digital skills of older and disabled people.

Alex Rawle, Down's Syndrome Active project manager, said:

The Down's Syndrome Association are delighted to have been chosen to receive a grant from the Digital Inclusion Fund.

This will enable us to create and distribute a "Health Swap" app, made specifically with the needs of people with Down's Syndrome in mind. The app will encourage its users to live healthier and more active lives and will be a gateway to a world of further digital information and tools.

The Down's Syndrome Association is a national charity which aims to help people with Down's syndrome live full and rewarding lives.

Clive Emmett, chief executive of Uttlesford Council for Voluntary Service, said:

Organisations across Essex are backing the Digital Boomers which will see older people redesign their relationship using technology to become even more tech confident and retain their independence for longer.

Thanks to the Digital Inclusion Fund, our exciting Living Smart Homes and Digital Buddies pilots will help us rethink how older people use digital to support their health, wellbeing and

independence.

Caroline Hamblett, Chief Executive of Weldmar Hospicecare Trust, said:

We are delighted to have been awarded Digital Inclusion funding, which will enable us to continue the development of telehealth technologies for patients and their families/carers receiving palliative and end of life care.

With this funding we aim to test the possibility to extend the reach of this project through software development, possibly in the form of an app which will allow patients to record their symptoms and communicate with their clinicians from the comfort of their own home.

Research from Lloyd's Consumer Digital Index 2018 has revealed that older and disabled people with have been highlighted as being the slowest to adopt basic digital skills and also have the lowest internet usage (ONS).

These initiatives will complement Government's existing work to boost digital skills provision across the country. This includes:

The Digital Skills Partnership has seen Government, businesses, charities and voluntary organisations joining forces to deliver more than 2.5 million free training opportunities in areas such as basic online skills, cybersecurity and coding.

Three Local Digital Skills Partnership pilots in Lancashire, the South West and West Midlands bringing together businesses, charities, the education sector and public sector organisations to tackle local digital skills challenges to build thriving and inclusive local economies.

Notes to editors

Contact the DCMS Press Office on 0207 211 2210.

The Digital Inclusion Fund is being managed by Citizens Online and application for bids were open between September and October 2018.

Citizens Online has worked in more than 50 communities across the UK since 2000. It helps organisations make sure the switch to online doesn't exclude people and are passionate about digital inclusion. Its approach is based on detailed evidence and strong local partnerships. Further information on the fund can be found [here](#).

The government is also helping people interact with government online and ensure we deliver the best possible public services, as part of the SmarterGov campaign which has been launched to drive innovation, savings and public service improvement across government and wider public sector.

[News story: New pound coin goes global with rollout to British overseas nations](#)

Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies will, for the first time, be able to design and mint their own versions of the new 12-sided £1 coin.

The iconic £1 coin has long been recognised around the world and Brits living in UK territories may soon be able to spend unique versions of the new pound, replacing the older coins currently in use.

The coins are expected to feature images celebrating the heritage of these territories, with their history and culture pictured on the reverse side. Ministers believe this will symbolise the close links between the UK and its territories.

The new £1 coin, introduced in 2017, is the most secure of its kind in the world. Many territories and dependencies have coins based on older versions of UK currency and they will now have the choice to use this cutting-edge technology and design to protect their cash.

This decision taken by ministers to roll out the coin underpins the UK's commitment to its territories and dependencies, and will ensure they can benefit from the increased security that the 12-sided coin offers.

Robert Jenrick, Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, said:

The Great British pound is internationally recognised and as we extend the new £1 coin to our territories and dependencies, we will see new designs emerge that together symbolise our shared history.

In the same way that the rose, leek, thistle and shamrock are used on our coin to represent the four nations of the UK, these new designs will reflect the rich and varying British communities across the world.

From the Falklands to Gibraltar, this move sends a clear message of our unshakeable commitment to our territories around the globe.

Lord (Tariq) Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister of State for the Overseas Territories, said:

This is an exciting opportunity for our currency to reflect the breadth and variety of the British Territories. Each will be able

to create a design that reflects their own distinctive heritage as part of the British family. As well as helping to boost their identity, these new coins will also bring increased security to each of these economies.

Currently, many of the UK's territories and dependencies use their own versions of the pound which are pegged against Pound Sterling.

To produce their own 12-sided £1-coin, Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies will inform the Royal Mint, who will ensure that the same security standards are met before approving and supplying them with the necessary blank or struck coins.

Further information

The new £1 coin has a number of overt and covert security features, including its 12-sided shape, intermittent milled edges, and the denomination and year date incorporated in micro-text on the coin.

The three Crown Dependencies of the United Kingdom include:

- Isle of Man
- Jersey
- Guernsey

The United Kingdom Overseas Territories include:

- Akrotiri and Dhekelia
- Anguilla
- British Antarctic Territory
- Bermuda
- British Indian Ocean Territory
- British Virgin Islands
- Cayman Islands
- Falkland Islands
- Gibraltar
- Montserrat
- St Helena, Ascension Island and Tristan da Cunha
- Turk and Caicos Islands
- Pitcairn Island
- South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands

[Press release: UK aid removing Daesh](#)

explosives and helping Iraqis return home

More than a million Iraqis whose lives have been devastated by Daesh safely returned home in 2018, made possible in part thanks to a huge UK aid funded mine clearance mission.

The Department for International Development (DFID) has today (Saturday 5 January) announced further support to clear explosives from schools, hospitals and roads in Iraq, eradicating one of the lasting impacts of Daesh's reign of terror across the country.

Thousands of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) continue to threaten the lives of Iraqi men, women and children trying to rebuild their lives after the conflict and the UK's vital work will help even more people to return to normality without continued risk to their lives.

With the support of UK aid, approximately 16,500 explosives, 800 suicide belts and a staggering 2,000 deadly explosives traps were cleared in Iraq last year.

International Development Secretary Penny Mordaunt said:

Daesh's sickening use of explosive traps continue to threaten children in their schools, mothers in hospitals and thousands of innocent people trying to return to a normal life.

Thanks to this UK aid funded work, people can return to work, children can go back to school and lives are slowly being rebuilt.

The UK is a world leader in demining. I believe the UK public supports this work and can very clearly see its impact, in changing and saving lives.

This new funding will support projects across the country's Sinjar Province, an area with a historically large population of Yezidis who have been displaced by Daesh in their thousands, and one of the areas worst impacted by Daesh occupation.

UK aid will support six explosive clearance teams who will be deployed across the region making schools, hospitals and critical infrastructure safe from suspected explosive.

There is more work to do with 1.8 million people still displaced, many living in camps across the country. For many of them deadly explosives, rigged,

booby-trapped and hidden on an industrial scale mean that they are unable to return to their homes.

The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) has called the use of explosive traps a Daesh strategy to 'win on the cheap', continuing to devastate Iraq even as the Iraqi people try to rebuild.

UK aid funded explosive clearance teams have found:

- A hospital used as Daesh's HQ in Mosul where 3,500 explosive hazards, including hand grenades and missiles, had to be secured;
- A school in Fallujah rigged with 13 IEDs, which could have seriously injured or killed the 450 children attending the school;
- The British-built 'New Bridge' in Fallujah was rigged with 44 IEDs and 400 kilograms of explosives, blocking the only connection to Baghdad – preventing businesses from operating;
- A school in West Mosul which was used as a bomb factory, where 1,500 explosives, including 15 suicide belts, were found and secured.

UK aid is funding education experts to teach children and adults on how to keep safe from undiscovered explosives and what to do if they see a suspected device. Last year, DFID's support educated more than 400,000 people on the risks. This education may save their lives.

With hundreds of thousands of people in Iraq still in need of urgent humanitarian assistance, the UK has supported more than 400,000 people with food and provided life-saving healthcare services to over four million people since 2014.

NOTES TO EDITORS

- The additional support announced by DFID today is £5 million which will go to the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS). This is in addition to ongoing UK aid support for explosive clearance efforts in Iraq.
- In total, the UK has contributed £24.9 million to demining projects in Iraq since 2015, with £14.2 million from the Conflict, Stability and Security Fund and £10.7 million from DFID.
- Between 2016 and 2018, UK support contributed to a total of 663 infrastructure sites being cleared from explosive hazards, and 4.4 million square metres of land made safe. Between January and March 2018 alone, UK aid supported enabled the opening of 41 key installations such as the British built Iron and Al Karmah bridges in Fallujah.
- In April 2017, DFID committed to triple global spend on mine action to £100 million over three years. Our work is focused on some of the most heavily contaminated countries in the world, including Iraq.
- Using DFID funding, UNMAS will also support the national demining authority in Iraq to ensure they have the skills and knowledge to effectively regulate, coordinate and manage mine clearance.
- UK aid is providing this funding to UNMAS as part of an effort to stabilise Iraq, provide humanitarian support to those in desperate need, and assist the return of displaced people to areas previously under

Daesh occupation.

- In total, the UK has provided over £100 million to stabilisation efforts in Iraq since 2015, which includes: securing liberated areas, clearing Daesh-laid explosives, supporting the renovation of water facilities, power networks, clinics and schools and supporting communities who lived under Daesh occupation.
- To support stability in Iraq and support it in becoming a democratic, political and economic partner of the international community in the long-term, the UK backs Iraqi-led political and economic reforms, commercial links between Iraq and UK as well as a long-term military security commitment between Iraq, the Coalition partners and NATO.

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