



Government WORLD™

January - March 2025 British Edition

Government WORLD™

Published quarterly and representing news and opinions across all tiers of Government

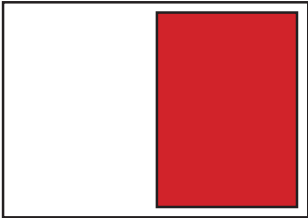
Submit your articles, press releases and announcements to submissions@government-world.com and if approved, we will include it on our website and in the magazine for FREE!

The magazine is published online and in hard copy for distribution at Council related conferences and events.

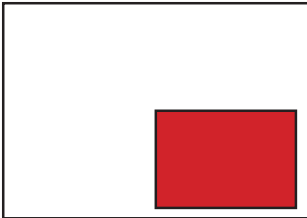
ADVERTISE IN OUR APR-JUN EDITION!



Full Page
148 x 210 mm



Half Page
105 x 135 mm



Quarter Page
105 x 68 mm

All display advertising should be in PDF 300 / CMYK digital files and sent to:
office@government-world.com

Full Page	£126.56	Inside Front Cover	£133.27
Half Page	£66.64	Inside Back Cover	£133.27
Quarter Page	£39.97	All rates are exclusive of VAT @ 20%	

Disclaimer: All artwork will be checked pre-press for technical set-up, however it is the responsibility of each supplying agency to make sure artwork is correct on sending out. Any artwork requiring modification must be charged. The publisher reserves the right to refuse any advertisement. Reservations and cancellations cannot be accepted after the closing date of each issue.

Subscribe FOR FREE!

GW is dedicated to promoting Government related issues in an unbiased manner. To benefit from a subscription to GW contact us today:
subscribe@government-world.com
for a **FREE** email subscription.



Subscribe and never miss a copy!

Contents

(January - March 2025)

News & Sports Roundup	4
Greener flights ahead for UK aviation	11
PM sets out plan to end waiting list backlogs through millions more appointments	13
Government announces reforms to boost profits for farmers with a cast iron commitment to food production	17
Government puts AI to work for bakers, road workers and more	19
Britain working at pace to curb rising synthetic drug threat	21
Innovating to detect deepfakes and protect the public	24
New satellite deal to boost military operations, jobs and growth	26
Almost £300 million to gear up new walking, wheeling and cycling schemes	28
Vehicle theft equipment to be banned under new government law	31
Wild beavers: Nature's engineers to return to English waterways	34
NHS patients receive first home-grown blood plasma treatments	37
Mass cancellation of government credit cards in crackdown on wasteful spend	39
Government to plant first National Forest in 30 years	41
£100 million to revamp local sports facilities across UK	44
Prison expanded to create UK's largest public sector jail and make streets safer	46
Bathing water reforms keep pace with Britain's love of swimming	48
Acknowledgements	51

Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of all articles, advertisements and other insertions in this publication, the publisher can accept no responsibility for any errors or omissions or incorrect insertions. The views of the contributors are not necessarily those of the publisher or the advertisers. The publisher makes no warranties, claims or guarantees in regard to accuracy, completeness or currency of information and cannot accept any liability resulting from the use or misuse of any such information. The Publisher does not accept responsibility for mistakes, be they editorial or typographical, nor for consequences resulting from them.

welters[®]
ORGANISATION
WORLDWIDE
Design and Innovation

Visit us on-line at
government-world.com

Advertising | Articles | News |
Letters | Editorials

welters organisation

Whithaugh, Newcastleton, Roxburghshire,
TD9 0TB

E-mail: office@government-world.com

Submissions should be sent to
Government WORLD
Email: submissions@government-world.com

ISSN 1744-6996



2 geese stopping for a chat in the early morning



News Roundup

Summary of the main news and sports events over the last three months

By Paul G Bazeley for Government World

January News Review

Donald Trump was inaugurated as the 47th president of the United States



at an indoor event in Washington, D.C. Trump is the first president since Grover Cleveland to serve non-consecutive terms. On his first day, the new president signed executive orders on gender and immigration and withdrew the US from the World Health Organisation. Trump also declared illegal immigration a national emergency and created the Department

of Government Efficiency (DOGE) to cut spending by the US government.

The man who was found guilty of killing three children and injuring 10 others in a stabbing spree in Southport, Merseyside, was sentenced to life imprisonment with a minimum of 52 years in prison at a court in Liverpool.



A ceasefire between Israel and the Hamas militant group took effect on 19th January. Hamas began by releasing 33 hostages in exchange for Palestinian security prisoners,



including some serving life terms. Humanitarian aid was also allowed entry into Gaza, and Israel withdrew from some areas of the Gaza Strip while allowing Palestinians to return home.

UK Chancellor of the Exchequer



construction of a third runway at Heathrow Airport.

14 wildfires ravaged the Los Angeles and San Diego regions, killing at least 30 people, displacing over 200,000 residents, and destroying more than



18,000 structures. A mixture of drought, dense vegetation, and the Santa Ana winds spread the fires, burning over 57,000 acres. The fires are now among the most destructive in California's history.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer visited



Ukraine and signed a 100-year agreement with them. The agreement formalised British economic and military support for Ukraine.

Justin Trudeau, the Canadian Prime Minister, announced his resignation as leader of the Liberal Party and announced he would resign as Prime Minister when a new Liberal Party leader is chosen.



The Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky announced that the country would not hold presidential elections while the country is under martial law. The president also stated that it would not hold an election even if it were a precondition for Russian negotiations.

IQAir, an air quality technology company, reported that Hanoi, Vietnam, had the worst air pollution of any city.



It stated that the levels of small hazardous particles measured 266 micrograms per cubic metre.

Meta Platforms announced an end to its third-party fact-checking program with a transition to a crowd-sourced model. The announcement was met with criticism and concern from many individuals, especially



with regard to the spread of misinformation and fake news.

Tulip Siddiq, the British Treasury Economic Secretary, resigned after an anti-corruption investigation in

Bangladesh involving her family.

Dinosaur footprints of the Cetiosaurus and Megalosaurus were discovered in a quarry in Oxfordshire. They are the largest site of dinosaur footprints and date back to the Middle Jurassic Bathonian stage, 166 million years ago.



The state funeral of former US president Jimmy Carter was held at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C., US. Five living presidents attended the funeral, including Joe Biden and Donald Trump.



The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists announced that the Doomsday Clock had been moved to 89 seconds before

midnight.



The 82nd Golden Globe Awards took place. Notable winners were The Brutalist (which won three awards), Emilia Perez (which won four awards), the TV series Shogun (which won four awards) and Fernanda Torres, who became the first Brazilian actress to win best actress in a motion picture–drama for I'm Still Here.

January Sports Review

Luke Littler beat Michael van Gerwen



7-3 in the PDC World Darts Championship final at Alexandra Palace to win his first World Darts Championship title. Littler also became the youngest player to win the world title at the age of 17.

In tennis, Madison Keys won her first major title after beating the defending champion Aryna Sabalenka in three sets to win the Australian Open women's singles title. Jannik Sinner defeated Alexander Zverev in straight sets to win his second Australian Open men's singles title.



February News Review

Prime Minister Keir Starmer met US President Donald Trump in Washington, D.C. for talks. The meeting saw Starmer present a

letter from King Charles III inviting



Trump to visit London later in the year. Both parties gave positive reviews of the meeting, with relations between the countries seeming to be in a good place.

US President Donald Trump signed an executive order to impose a 25% tariff on goods from Canada and Mexico. Justin Trudeau, the Canadian Prime Minister, announced a retaliatory 25% tariff on all US goods. The Mexican



President, Claudia Sheinbaum, announced a Plan B, including potential tariffs to defend the country's interests in response to the tariffs. Later in the month, it was announced that tariffs between the US and Canada and the US and Mexico were delayed for a month following discussions. Trump also announced a 10% tariff on goods imported from China. China responded by vowing to leave the World Trade Organisation and later retaliated with tariffs on energy, agricultural and automobile products. An executive order for 25% tariffs on all aluminium and steel imports was also signed by the President.



Negotiations for a peace deal between Russia and Ukraine began. President Trump spoke with Vladimir Putin, followed by a U.S. meeting with Ukrainian President Zelenskyy that ended abruptly, straining relations and

halting a planned mineral revenue deal. Following the meeting between Ukraine and the US, Prime Minister Keir Starmer and French President Emmanuel Macron proposed a ceasefire plan backed by a "coalition of the willing" with troops on the ground in Ukraine.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met with US President Donald Trump in a second phase of ceasefire negotiations on the Gaza Strip. President Trump announced a possible plan where the US would have "long-term ownership" of Gaza and that the US military would oversee Gaza's redevelopment. Trump also noted that Palestinians would have to leave the territory.

The United Nations reported that over 10,000 aid trucks had entered



the Gaza Strip since the ceasefire took effect.

UK Deputy Prime Minister Angela Rayner announced that Grenfell Tower



would be demolished following a meeting with relatives and survivors of the fire. The residential block was destroyed in a 2017 fire, which killed 72 people. The building has been derelict since.

US President Donald Trump signed an executive order preventing transgender women from competing in women's sports.



A 24-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of Islamic terrorism in Munich, Germany, after driving a vehicle into a crowd of people. At the time of writing, over 20 people were injured, and a mother and her child died as a result of their injuries.

The Vatican City stated the deteriorating health of Pope Francis after respiratory issues had left him in the hospital for more than a week. It stated the Pope was in a critical condition.



The 78th British Academy Film Awards were held in London. The Brutalist and Conclave both won four awards, with Conclave winning



best film.

At the 67th Grammy Awards, Kendrick Lamar won five awards for his diss track 'Not Like Us'. Beyonce won Album of the Year for Cowboy Carter, and Chappell Roan won Best New Artist.

NASA announced that the 2024 YR4 asteroid poses 'no significant threat'



to Earth in 2032 or beyond. They said the chances of impact were 1-in-59,000 (0.0017%), meaning a mission to intercept the object was not necessary.

Microsoft confirmed it will close Skype in May 2025 to focus on the support and development of Teams.

February Sports Review

The American football season closed with Super Bowl LIX. The

Philadelphia Eagles beat the Kansas City Chiefs 40-22 to win their second Super Bowl. It also ended the Chiefs' chance to win three Super Bowls in a row. Kendrick Lamar was the halftime show performer.



Volodymyr Zelensky, Trump paused all US military aid to Ukraine. The pause took place with immediate effect early in the month.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky met Prime Minister Keir Starmer in London for talks. Notably, a British loan of £2.26 billion for Ukraine to buy military supplies was signed off.

South Korea's military claimed that North Korea had sent over 3,000 extra soldiers to assist with Russia's war on Ukraine.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced that NHS England would be abolished

March News Review

Following their car crash meeting in February between US President Donald Trump and Ukrainian President



to bring the National Health Service back under democratic control and reduce bureaucracy. The announcement is likely to result in over 6,000 job losses.

After a 30-day pause, the 25% tariffs

on Mexican and Canadian imports took effect. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau imposed a reciprocal 25% tariff on American goods.



Following further phone calls, Trump announces a pause on some tariffs on both Canada and Mexico until April. Trump did, however, announce that tariffs on Canadian steel and aluminium imports would rise from 25% to 50%; the Canadian finance Minister, Dominic LeBlanc, announced retaliatory tariffs the following day. The 10% tariff on China rose to 20% amid an ongoing trade war between the two countries.

Mark Carney won a landslide

victory in the Canadian Liberal Party leadership election and became Prime Minister-designate of Canada. Later in the month, he was sworn in as the 24th Prime Minister of Canada.

Heathrow Airport in London was closed for the majority of a day due to a power outage resulting from a fire at an electrical substation. The closure affected at least 1,351 flights, with many cancelled or diverted.



The world's largest iceberg (Iceberg A23a) ran aground in shallow waters near South Georgia, threatening local wildlife and potentially disrupting fishing activities. Scientists noted that as the massive iceberg, which is twice the size of Greater London, begins to break up, its nutrient-rich meltwater could fuel a surge of marine life in the surrounding

ocean.



An unexploded World War II bomb was discovered near the Gare du Nord railway station in Paris, France. The discovery stopped all trains running through the station, including Eurostar trains from London and Brussels.



The 97th Academy Awards were held in Los Angeles, US. Anora won five awards, including Best Picture and Best Actress for Mickey Madison. Best Actor went to Adrien Brody for the film The

Brutalist.

Charli XCX won a host of awards at the Brit Awards, claiming British Artist of the Year, British Album of the Year (for her album Brat) and Song of the Year (for Guess). Ezra Collective won Best British Group.

According to a report in the academic journal Science, the population of recorded butterfly species has declined 22% from 554 since 2000.



March Sports Review

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) unanimously voted to include boxing in the 2028 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles, US.

End

Greener flights ahead for UK aviation

January

From: Department for Transport and Mike Kane MP

The Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) Mandate will support thousands of skilled jobs, deliver economic growth and help make the UK a clean energy superpower.

- flights departing the UK will use greener fuels from today
- 10% of all jet fuel must be sustainable by 2030 as one of the world's first sustainable aviation fuel mandates comes into force
- forms part of government's Plan for Change and helps deliver mission to make Britain a clean energy superpower

Flights are set to be greener as the UK's ambitious Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) Mandate officially comes into force today (1 January 2025).

SAF is made from sustainable sources,

such as materials like household waste or used cooking oil and produces an average of 70% less carbon emissions than traditional fossil-based aviation fuel.

By law, this type of fuel must now make up at least 2% of all jet fuel in flights taking off from the UK from 2025, growing year-on-year to 10% by 2030 and 22% by 2040.

These ambitious but achievable targets should see around 1.2 million tonnes of SAF supplied to the UK airline industry each year by 2030 – enough to circle the globe 3,000 times.

Being one of the first countries in the world to sign the mandate into law, the



UK is at the forefront of decarbonising air travel and is helping to kickstart the government's Plan for Change.

Together with the other actions we are taking to grow a UK SAF industry, it will support thousands of skilled jobs in every part of the country, deliver economic growth and help make the UK a clean energy superpower.

Minister for Aviation, Mike Kane, said:

"From this moment on, aviation will be a greener, more sustainable form of travel and today marks a significant milestone for the UK SAF industry.

With thousands of jobs supporting the UK SAF industry and flying becoming popular than ever, the mandate will help deliver our Plan for Change helping to grow the economy and giving people the freedom to travel in a more sustainable way."

Tim Alderslade, CEO of Airlines UK, said:

“UK airlines support the SAF Mandate as both a powerful and practical tool for driving down aviation carbon emissions and a clear signal that the industry is fully committed to a net zero future.

Our priority is ensuring airlines have access to the increasing volumes of SAF required to meet the mandate as global demand soars, at the most competitive price possible for consumers.

The UK mandate is ambitious and scaling SAF production will mean further work to expand eligible feedstocks, incentives to help cut costs and, critically, ensuring the design of the revenue certainty mechanism enables the UK to increase production of advanced fuels this decade whilst keeping costs as low as possible, critical for achieving mandate compliance and avoiding supplier buy-out.”

Karen Dee, Chief Executive of AirportsUK, the trade body for UK airports, said:

“The SAF Mandate is an important step towards decarbonising air travel and we are pleased the government has continued the work of its predecessor to

implement it.

Aviation knows it must reduce carbon emissions and the mandate is something that it has long called for to help establish production of cleaner fuels. We will continue to work with all parties to ensure there is homegrown supply and that the UK benefits from this new industry through jobs and investment.”

Duncan McCourt, Chief Executive of Sustainable Aviation, said:

“Sustainable Aviation welcomes the introduction of this mandate, which will drive the demand needed to help deliver SAF at scale.

SAF is a critical component in the industry’s plan to reach net zero, representing almost 40% of the carbon reduction that will make net zero a reality in 2050.



Alongside the mandate, we also need a well-designed revenue certainty mechanism to help accelerate domestic SAF production and support compliance with the mandate, by kickstarting UK SAF production in earnest this decade. We look forward to the upcoming consultation and to the mechanism being delivered into law as soon as possible.”

The start of the SAF Mandate is only one milestone on the UK’s path towards decarbonising aviation and comes following the first meeting of the Jet Zero Taskforce – a new and refreshed group charting a clear path toward cleaner aviation.

The government has also confirmed it will introduce a revenue certainty mechanism for SAF producers to attract investment in new plants in the UK.

Working alongside the mandate, it will help to reduce risk, give investors the confidence they need to invest in UK SAF plants and encourage the supply of SAF for the UK aviation sector.

A further consultation on the revenue certainty mechanism will be launched early this year.

PM sets out plan to end waiting list backlogs through millions more appointments

January

From: Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street,
Department of Health and Social Care and The Rt
Hon Sir Keir Starmer KCB KC MP

Millions of patients will be able to access more appointments closer to home and get the treatment they need faster under a new plan to tackle hospital backlogs.

- Millions more appointments to be created through plan to get people the treatment they need quicker
- Up to half a million more appointments made available each year thanks to greater access to Community Diagnostic Centres and new or expanded surgical hubs

- Greater patient choice over follow-up care as part of a drive to open-up one million appointments, alongside better use of tech and other action to save another million missed appointments
- Reforms mark next step in delivering government's Plan for Change to deliver for working people

Millions of patients will be able to access more appointments closer to home and get the treatment they need faster under a new plan to tackle hospital backlogs set out by the PM today [Monday 6th January].

Tackling the 7.5million strong waiting list inherited by the government so that the NHS once again meets the 18 week standard for planned treatment is a key milestone in the government's Plan for Change. Restoring this standard will mean millions of patients no longer have to have their lives put on hold.

Currently, too many patients face long

waits for appointments or surgeries and may be referred to hospitals they don't choose at inconvenient times, while appointments and staff time are being lost to inefficiencies or inconsistencies in care.

The Elective Reform Plan, published today [Monday 6th January] by NHS England, sets out a whole system approach to hitting the 18-week referral to treatment target by the end of this Parliament. This includes expanded use of Community Diagnostic Centres so that many more people will be able to access tests and checks while going about their daily lives, and the NHS will also increase the number of surgical hubs, which help protect planned care from the impact of seasonal and other pressures.

The plan will drive forward progress on the government's first steps commitment to deliver 2 million extra



appointments in its first year, equivalent to 40,000 every week. The reforms will put patients first, harness technology to support staff and help the NHS to do things more efficiently.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer said:

“This Government promised change and that is what I am fighting every day to deliver.

NHS backlogs have ballooned in recent years, leaving millions of patients languishing on waiting lists, often in pain or fear. Lives on hold. Potential unfulfilled.

This elective reform plan will deliver on our promise to end the backlogs. Millions more appointments. Greater choice and convenience for patients. Staff once again able to give the standard of care they desperately want to.

This is a key plank of our Plan for Change, which will drive growth that puts more money in people's pockets, secures our borders and makes the NHS fit for the future so what working people live longer, healthier, more prosperous lives.”

Up to half a million more appointments a year are expected to be created in total by opening Community Diagnostic Centres

(CDCs) for longer and bringing 17 new and expanded surgical hubs online. Opening Community Diagnostic Centres (CDCs) 12 hours a day, seven days a week wherever possible will mean people can access a broader range of more appointments closer to home in their neighbourhoods. This will make sure they are treated more quickly and more conveniently, rather than having to rely on hospitals.

The plans also involve increasing the availability of same-day tests and consultations so that patients don't have to wait for weeks in between different stages of care. They will also expand the range of tests available at CDCs so people get better access to treatment, and enabling GPs to direct patients straight to diagnostic testing so that they receive their tests quicker, before having to see a specialist – in turn saving them time and travel.

Alongside the extended hours for CDCs,



14 new surgical hubs will be created within existing hospitals by June and three others expanded - with more expected in coming years supported by the £1.5bn capital investment confirmed at the Autumn budget. These will bring together the necessary expertise, best practice and tech under one roof to focus on delivering the most common, less complex procedures. The new hubs will be ring-fenced from winter pressures and will cut waiting lists for standard surgeries, in turn freeing up beds in acute wards needed for more complex cases.

Under the plan, 65% of patients will be treated within 18 weeks by the end of next year. Based on the size of the current waiting list, that would mean a fall of more than 450k people waiting more than 18 weeks for treatment.

Health and Social Care Secretary Wes Streeting said:

“We inherited record long waiting lists, impacting patients' lives and their livelihoods. Only the combination of investment and radical reform can turn this around, as we're setting out today.

Our Plan for Change set an ambitious target to cut maximum wait times from

18 months to 18 weeks, and we will achieve it by bringing care closer to home and give patients more choice over their treatment.

The NHS should work around patients' lives, not the other way around. By opening community diagnostic centres on high streets 12 hours a day, seven days a week, patients will now be able to arrange their tests and scans for when they go to do their weekend shopping, rather than being forced to take time out of work.

The reforms we're launching today will free up millions of appointments, so the NHS can be there for us when we need it once again."

NHS chief executive, Amanda Pritchard, said:

"NHS staff have worked tirelessly to bring down the longest waits, treating record

numbers of elective patients last year, but with one in nine people currently on a waiting list it is right that we now go further and faster.

This ambitious blueprint will build on our progress and support hard working NHS staff to deliver faster routine care for patients with the aim of treating nine in 10 within 18 weeks by the end of this Parliament.

The radical reforms in this plan will not only allow us to deliver millions more tests, appointments and operations, but do things differently too – boosting convenience and putting more power in the hands of patients, especially through the NHS app."

The reforms set out today are focused on doing things differently by putting patients first, looking at their treatment in the round and empowering them with more choice and control so that care is more convenient and fits better into their lives.

Further measures include:

- Using the NHS app to give patients greater choice and control over their treatment. This includes making sure patients can get better access to information via the app, such as the details of their appointments, results and waiting

times, and use it to book appointments in the location of their choice, with information about waiting times and patient satisfaction.

- Preventing unnecessary referrals. GPs will be funded to work with hospital doctors to get specialist advice before making referrals, so that more patients get the care they need without being referred onto the waiting list.
- Giving patients choice over non essential follow up appointments as part of a drive to free up around 1 million appointments a year for those who need them.
- Making more appointments available in the community instead of hospitals. More treatment for five specialties with particular pressure on waiting lists will also be made available outside of hospital through targeted reforms, including Ear Nose and Throat services, where around 30% of referrals currently made to secondary care could be provided in the community.
- Making convenience for patients a priority through the roll out of innovative 'collective care' approaches, for example, one stop clinics where patients can be assessed, diagnosed



or reviewed on the same day; where appropriate, offering group appointments where patients with long term conditions may benefit from being supported together; opening 'super clinics' which bring together a wider range of clinicians to oversee patient care under the oversight of a consultant, increasing the number of patients seen in a day.

- Driving up patient experience through a set of national standards for elective care. We will publish minimum standards that patients should expect to experience in elective care, including giving patients a shortlist of providers to choose from and clarity on how long they are likely to wait. In turn these standards will make it easier to identify where performance is falling short and how to improve it. Harnessing the benefits of new technology and AI is a central part of the government's mission to rebuild the NHS. Healthcare providers will be supported through these reforms to use technology to tackle inefficiencies holding up appointments.

For example, focused action across the healthcare system - including drawing on predictions by AI on which appointments are most likely to be missed – will help save up to 1 million missed appointments. Remote monitoring technology – for example, using wearable tech to collect vital

health data on patients without them having to see a healthcare professional face to face – will also be deployed more widely to help provide more personalised and more efficient care, ensuring appointments are scheduled because of clinical need, not just at routine intervals.

Reform will also tackle deep seated structural issues which have held back improvements to date by bringing funding mechanisms, performance oversight and delivery standards together with incentives for positive change. This will ensure the system is set up in a way that rewards and actively drives improvements.

Trusts who make the fastest improvements in cutting waiting times will be rewarded with additional funding for capital projects tailored to local needs. This could include investment in cutting edge AI diagnostic equipment or hospital ward maintenance.



There will also be greater transparency on performance and support in place for providers facing the greatest challenges, and new support for clinical and operational leaders on how to deliver more effective elective pathways.

The plan will also provide greater funding certainty, to help commissioners deliver their operational planning with more stability over their finances.

Tackling waiting lists is the first step in the government's mission to build an NHS fit for the future, as set out in the Plan for Change.

At the heart of this mission are three big reform shifts, which will be central to the 10-Year Health Plan currently being developed in consultation with NHS staff and the wider public and set to be published in spring 2025: hospital to community; analogue to digital; and sickness to prevention.

These are fundamental and necessary reforms in the way our health services deliver care and address the inherited challenges facing the NHS that Lord Darzi identified in his report published last year.

Government announces reforms to boost profits for farmers with a cast iron commitment to food production

January

From: Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs and The Rt Hon Steve Reed OBE MP

Environment Secretary to set out his vision to boost farmers' profitability and sustainability as part of the Plan for Change.

- First steps towards government to use its own purchasing power to buy British food
- Government to consider new reforms to speed up the planning process on farms to boost food production.



Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Steve Reed will today (Thursday 9 January) set out the Government's long-term vision to make farming more profitable and put more money back in the pockets of British farmers.

Speaking to farmers and landowners at the Oxford Farming Conference, Steve Reed will set out how the Government will work with farmers to deliver a profitable farming sector and unlock rural growth. This will include a cast iron commitment to food security while introducing reforms to help farmers diversify their income streams to support them during poor harvests.

As part of the Plan for Change, the Secretary of State will announce a series of reforms, delivering on the Government's New Deal for Farmers including:

- **Backing British produce:** For the first time ever, the Government will monitor food currently bought in the public sector and where it is bought from. This is a significant first step to deliver on a manifesto pledge and make it easier for British farmers to win a share of the £5 billion spent each year on public sector catering contracts.
- **Using planning reforms to support food production:** Ensuring our reforms make it quicker for farmers to build the buildings, barns and other infrastructure they need on their farms to boost food production.
- **Diversifying income streams:**



Helping farmers make additional money from selling surplus energy from solar panels and wind turbines by accelerating connections to the grid and support them during difficult harvests and supply shocks.

- A fair supply chain: Boosting profitability through fair competition across the supply chain. New rules for the pig sector will come this spring, ensuring contracts clearly set out expectations and changes can only be made if agreed by all parties. Similar regulations for eggs and fresh produce sectors will follow with the government ready to intervene with other sectors if needed.

- Protecting farmers in trade deals: The government will uphold and protect our high environmental and animal welfare standards in future trade deals.



Steve Reed, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs will set out his vision for the future of farming in three parts - food production, business resilience and nature restoration:

“The primary purpose of farming has - and always will be - to produce the food that feeds the nation.

Too many policymakers in Whitehall lose sight of that fact.

This Government is putting food production firmly back on the agenda.”

He is expected to say:

“We will work in partnership to achieve our vision for the farming sector.

First, a sector whose primary purpose is food production.

Secondly, a sector where farmers can access diverse income streams to make a fair profit and ensure their business remains viable in times of challenge.

And thirdly, a sector which supports farmers to restore nature – the foundations of sustainable food production.

It is only through pursuing all three that we will achieve long-term food security.”

This Government will work in partnership with the food and farming sectors to deliver the change needed starting now. The recently announced 25-year farming roadmap will act as the blueprint to get there.

The roadmap, which will be published later this year, will be the most forward-looking plan for farming in our country’s history and involve government and farmers working together to identify solutions to challenges and ensure government support is in place to enable farmers to take the actions that will let their businesses succeed.

These announcements come alongside the launch of the Accelerating Development of Practices and Technologies (ADOPT) Fund, which will provide grant funding for farmer-led trials of innovative technology and techniques that drive sustainable food production, tackle climate change impacts, and protect nature. Further details on how farmers can apply will be released shortly.

Government puts AI to work for bakers, road workers and more

January

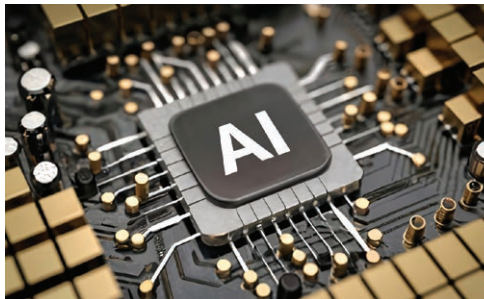
From: Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, Innovate UK, UK Research and Innovation and The Rt Hon Peter Kyle MP

Small businesses across the country will be helped to boost their productivity and efficiency through AI tools set to be trialled.

- 120 projects across the country will test how AI could turbocharge businesses of all kinds, from agriculture, to retail, to tackling potholes on the roads.
- Projects will receive a share of £7 million to trial AI tools across the economy, and unleash this technology's era-defining potential to deliver growth nationwide.
- Funding builds on the new AI Opportunities Action Plan: the Government's blueprint to make AI work for Britain and drive the Plan for Change, helping turbocharge growth and boost living standards

Small businesses across the country will be helped to boost their productivity and efficiency through AI tools set to be trialled - from tech that predicts potholes before they form, to AI models that help farmers make their dairy cows produce greater yields.

Announced today (Tuesday 14 January), the 120 projects will receive a share of £7 million in UK Government funding, enabling them to test AI tech that could give a boost to a whole range of businesses: from agriculture, to transport, to construction and more.



AI is set to be the defining technology of the 21st Century. It is already boosting businesses' productivity and overhauling public services like healthcare and education. The government is taking action to help Britain's businesses and job-creators embrace AI, so they can be more productive, competitive, and deliver the growth the UK needs to improve public services and put more cash in hardworking people's pockets as part of the PM's Plan for Change. As Europe's number one destination for AI businesses, the UK is already well-positioned to seize this opportunity.

The support announced today is focused on how AI could help smaller companies tackle pressing challenges to their businesses, and how researchers can use this tech to take on everyday problems we all live with.

This backing is what the

Government's Plan for Change looks like in action, giving people the tools they need to harness the power of new technologies like AI, which will ultimately grow the economy and benefit everyone. Other projects include:

- Using AI to cut food waste – and thereby protect profit margins – at a bakery by accurately predicting sales and forecasting how much of each product needs to be made daily.
- Road-testing an AI tool that can predict potholes before they form, so roads can be repaired earlier and more cheaply, and before they cause expensive damage to vehicles.
- Trialling an AI model that anticipates where mould is likely to grow in buildings, so they can be remediated before they become a health and safety issue.

Science and Technology Secretary Peter Kyle said:

“Putting AI to work right across the economy can help businesses cut waste, move faster and be more productive.

The huge range of projects receiving funding today, from farmers and bakers to those tackling potholes on our roads

and mould in residential properties, demonstrates the truly limitless benefits of AI that are there for the taking.

And take them we will, with our 50-point AI Opportunities Plan, published yesterday, to unleash AI across the UK, delivering a decade of national renewal and firing up our Plan for Change.”

The funding forms part of the UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) Technology Missions Fund, with the support being delivered by the Innovate UK BridgeAI programme.

This announcement builds on the AI Opportunities Action Plan published yesterday, which sets out the Government's ambitious vision to ramp up the adoption of AI right across the economy. The Plan is a roadmap to spread AI adoption across every part of the UK, help boost living standards, create jobs and unleash

economic growth. The difference AI is set to make to all walks of life is further underlined by this week's announcement of £1 million funding to develop bespoke AI tools to support teachers and transform education – with almost half of teachers across the country already using AI to help with their work.

As the projects today's funding will support show – from tech to help strawberry farmers protect their yields, to tools to help town planners predict their area's future transport needs – AI could make a positive impact in every field of work in the UK, and will be critical to kickstarting the growth the country needs. On top of the monetary support, the BridgeAI programme supports businesses by allowing them to tap into training and scientific expertise, as well as offering wider expert advice and guidance to develop their AI innovations.



Dr Kedar Pandya, UKRI Technology Missions Fund Senior Responsible Owner and Executive Director of Cross-Council programme at UKRI's Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council, said:

"Today's investment, funded through UKRI's Technology Missions Fund, is a major boost to the BridgeAI's target sectors where the adoption of AI technologies could help to improve productivity and efficiency.

UKRI is in a unique position to bring together businesses and research organisations across a wide range of sectors to discover where AI can make the most difference to people's lives and the UK economy."

Esra Kasapoglu, Director of AI & Data Economy at UKRI-Innovate UK said:

"The adoption of AI in UK industry is fundamental to supporting the country's economic growth. Today's investment will enable us, through BridgeAI, to help more companies to unlock the potential of AI in their business.

It will also allow further development of projects already demonstrating impact to continue their AI journey."

Britain working at pace to curb rising synthetic drugs threat

January

From: Home Office and The Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson DBE MP

More than 20 dangerous substances have been banned by the government as efforts stepped up to combat the increasing drug threat and make our streets safer.

Significant efforts are being made to combat the threat of devastating synthetic drugs, which the UK government warns is increasing.

Measures are being stepped up across government to better equip policing, healthcare and Border Force to deal with this growing issue, as well as contributing to international efforts to better protect communities.

Latest figures show since June 2023, there have been at least 400 drug-related deaths across the UK linked to nitazenes, a type of synthetic opioid, and this figure is expected to increase in the coming years.

As part of the effort to make our streets safer, legislation will come into force today (Wednesday 15 January) which bans xylazine, as well as several other synthetic drugs that can be hundreds of times more potent than heroin, meaning tougher sentences for drug dealers.

Xylazine, often known as 'tranq', is a high-strength veterinary sedative, which has increasingly been used in combination with opioids such as heroin. Its effects can leave users prone to non-healing skin lesions and more liable to overdose.

The UK is also training Border Force dogs to detect a range of nitazenes and fentanyl – currently the only country in the world doing so – to stop these substances entering the country in the first place.

As of December 2024, police officers in forces across the country are now trained to carry and administer naloxone – a lifesaving medicine that reverses the effects of opioid overdose. The government is working closely with the National Police Chiefs' Council to see the provision rolled out across most forces.

The National Crime Agency is also working in partnership with policing and Border Force to ensure that all lines of enquiry are prioritised and vigorously pursued to stem any supply of nitazenes and fentanyl to and within the UK.

Policing Minister Dame Diana Johnson said:

Synthetic drugs cause devastation wherever they are found – to individuals, to families, to our town centres and our communities.



I have been concerned about the growing presence of these drugs on UK streets and I don't think enough has been done in recent years to get a grip on it. Stepping up efforts to tackle this threat will form a key part of this government's approach to drugs, which we hope to set out later this year.

As part of our Plan for Change and mission to make our streets safer, we are dedicated to driving down drug misuse and harms through prevention and treatment while acting quickly to stop the criminals peddling these harmful substances.

As part of the international effort to combat these substances, the UK is spearheading a workstream under the US-led Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats which will focus on how governments across the world can control the availability of these drugs through legislation and further strengthen efforts at the border by sharing intelligence.

This is a multi-nation effort run by core coalition countries, who are developing their own initiatives that aim to disrupt supply chains and enhance public health interventions.

The government also has an enhanced early warning system, which is designed

to improve our ability to respond to emerging drug threats with several new data streams, such as hospital admissions and lab-tested police seizures, which are monitored and fed into the decision-making processes.

Today's legislation will see 22 substances banned under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, 6 of which will be controlled as Class A.

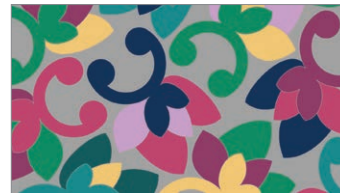
This means that anyone caught producing or supplying these could now face up to life in prison, an unlimited fine, or both. Anyone caught possessing a Class A drug can also face up to 7 years in prison, a fine or both.

Xylazine will be controlled as a Class C substance, meaning its unlawful supply carries a maximum sentence of up to 14 years in prison, a fine or both and unlawful possession up to 2 years, a fine or both.

A generic definition of nitazenes, a type of synthetic opioid, has also been introduced into law today, which will prevent drug gangs from trying to make adjustments to drug recipes to attempt to bypass UK drug law.



KeithWelters



Visit KeithWelters' shop on REDBUBBLE to view and purchase designs and products (a few examples shown above). Visit www.redbubble.com/people/KeithWelters or click on the QR code above.

Innovating to detect deepfakes and protect the public

February

From: Accelerated Capability Environment

The rise in deepfakes generated by artificial intelligence (AI) has been scarily rapid – a projected eight million will be shared in 2025, up from 500,000 in 2023. This sheer scale combined with greater sophistication and convincingness means finding ways to quickly detect and mitigate this ever-growing threat is an increasingly urgent priority.

Concerns over criminal manipulation of digital text, images and video are not new, but the proliferation in recent months of generative AI tools that enable anyone, anywhere to quickly, easily and cheaply create deepfake images has significantly changed the game.

As deepfakes threaten to hit the mainstream across a range of harmful activity, from online child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSEA) to fraud and election interference, there is a corresponding drive to develop the tools

and methods needed to tackle them at the required scale and pace.

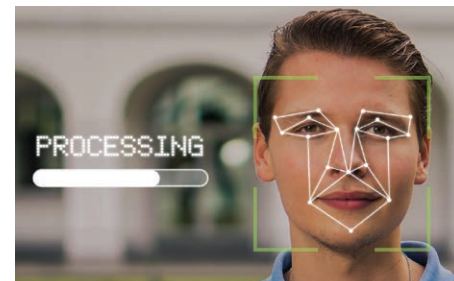
In its role as an innovative enabler connecting frontline government and law enforcement with cutting-edge technology from industry, the Accelerated Capability Environment (ACE) is at the heart of this ramp-up in activity designed to find practical solutions to arguably the greatest challenge of the online age. And 2024 was a year where the marriage of cutting-edge technology, collaboration and fresh thinking enabled significant strides forward.

Circular collaboration

Clear results that accelerate crucial deepfake detection in a range of domains have been made across a series of focused commissions carried out by ACE. And just as importantly, learnings and practical experiences developed in one commission have been shared with others to pass on deeper knowledge and skills.

The biggest event in this space was the Deepfake Detection Challenge. Initiated by the Home Office, the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, ACE and the renowned Alan Turing Institute, this visionary idea brought together academic, industry and government experts to develop innovative and practical solutions focused on detecting fake media.

More than 150 people attended the initial briefing where five challenge statements pushing the boundaries of current capabilities were launched.



The critical importance of collaboration and sharing of skills and knowledge was a recurring theme, and major tech companies including Microsoft and Amazon Web Services (AWS) provided practical support.

Eight weeks were spent developing innovative ideas and solutions on a specially created platform, which hosted approximately two million assets made up of both real and synthetic data for training and testing. Following this, 17 submissions were received, and six teams from our community - Frazer-Nash Consulting, IBM, Oxford Wave Research, Open Origins, Safe and Sound from the University of Southampton, and Naimuri - were selected to demonstrate their ideas in front of more than 200 stakeholders.

Solutions from Frazer-Nash, Oxford Wave, the University of Southampton and Naimuri, a combination of existing products that have been identified as potentially showing operational value as well as early-stage proof of concepts being developed against specific use cases including CSEA, disinformation and audio, are now going through benchmark testing and user trials.

Key insights from the initial challenge work, alongside the clear success

in accelerating the state-of-the art in deepfake detection possibilities, included that curated data was critical to be able to make as much progress as possible in the time and conditions available, and that creating a dataset that was more representative of real-world operational scenarios would have been helpful.

Using better data to detect child abuse deepfakes

When another significant commission to further deepfake detection was brought to ACE by the government's Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (DSTL) and the Office of the Chief Scientific Adviser (OCSA), data development was a top priority.

To mature the EVITA (Evaluating video, text and audio) AI content detection tool the focus shifted away from volume.

As part of developing next-step recommendations, ACE leveraged its expertise from the Deepfake Detection Challenge to create a reusable 'gold standard' dataset. This dataset was designed to effectively test detection models, including those targeting child sexual abuse material (CSAM).

By combining this 'gold standard' dataset

with ACE's extensive domain and community expertise - drawing on insights from Naimuri and Bays Consulting - ACE delivered rapid insights into the maturation of EVITA through comprehensive and diverse testing.

This work not only enabled ACE to deliver the requested next-step recommendations for the EVITA programme but also led to the development of a repeatable testing and evaluation approach for deepfake detection. This approach enhances the ability to interpret and understand the results generated by detection tools.

Alongside this, another piece of work was taking place exploring how AI can be used to detect deepfakes in policing. The biggest challenge is in digital forensics where, the ACE team heard, officers can be faced with up to



a million child abuse images on a single seized phone.

This commission, working with community members Blueprint, Camera Forensics and TRMG, seeks to understand where deepfake detection tooling fits into the investigation stage to add most value. Next steps in this particular project are 'making this real' - working towards commissioning a proof of concept or trial of an existing capability.

And so the learning is becoming circular once more as the next stage of the Deepfake Detection Challenge progresses. This will push further than any work in this field so far, focusing on making the initial solutions presented more user-centric and deeply relevant to practitioners in the field.

Deepfakes are both a growing menace and an evolving threat, but bridging the gap between models and reality will be critical to tackling them at scale and at pace. ACE, its customers and suppliers remain laser focused on this evolution from the theoretical to the practical. The potential of innovation combined with collaboration has already proved to be a potent force in this area, the challenge – in all ways – is maximising the potential of what comes next.

New satellite deal to boost military operations, jobs and growth

February

From: Ministry of Defence, Defence Equipment and Support and Defence Science and Technology Laboratory

Armed forces personnel will have access to the latest space-based imagery for military operations, following a deal signed for a new satellite system, named Oberon.

- New satellite system to enhance military operations, named 'Oberon', will be designed and built in the UK.
- The £127 million contract with Airbus will support around 200 skilled jobs in



Stevenage and Portsmouth, boosting the UK's space sector and delivering on the government's Plan for Change.

- Oberon will strengthen the UK's intelligence, reconnaissance and surveillance capabilities.

Armed forces personnel will have access to the latest space-based imagery for military operations, following a deal signed for a new satellite system, named Oberon.

The £127 million deal with Airbus will support around 200 skilled jobs in Stevenage and Portsmouth, boosting the UK's space capabilities and delivering on the Government's Plan for Change.

The Oberon satellite system, made up of two Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) satellites, will be able to capture day and night-

time images of the Earth's surface, strengthening the UK's Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities. Expected to launch in 2027, Oberon will have advanced imagery sensors, building on the capabilities of Tyche, UK Space Command's first satellite which successfully launched in August last year.

The deal comes as UK Space Command has published the first images captured by Tyche. The images of Heathrow Airport, Sydney, Washington DC, and the California wildfires, demonstrate Tyche's ability to capture imagery from anywhere on earth when Defence needs it.



Both satellites form part of the Ministry of Defence's space-based Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance programme, known as ISTARI, which will deliver a constellation of satellites and supporting ground systems by 2031.

These satellites will support military operations, for example by monitoring adversary activities, and contribute to other government tasks, including natural disaster monitoring, the development of mapping information, and tracking the impact of climate change around the world.

UK Space Commander, Major General Paul Tedman said:

"Through UK Space Command, defence is partnering with industry and continuing to invest in advanced and innovative space technologies.

Oberon, alongside Tyche and other satellites in our ISTARI constellation, will allow us to observe what's happening on Earth from space at any time and through any weather. This will enable and enhance UK and allied military operations around the world."

The contract for Oberon was awarded via competitive procurement to Airbus, which

worked with Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises across the UK to leverage innovative new technologies for the 400kg satellites. The antennas for the spacecraft will be supplied by Oxford Space Systems, which has developed carbon fibre structures that stow away in very small volumes for launch but spring into shape once in orbit.

Oberon will play a key part in securing critical UK skills in the growing global space sector. The aerospace sector added almost £40 billion to the economy last year, a growth of 50% in the last 10 years, and employs tens of thousands of people. The project will also help inform the procurement strategy for future space capability requirements.

Space-based intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance offers unparalleled earth observation, operating over any part of the globe. Constellations of ISR satellites can use different sensors and cameras, allowing focus to move quickly from one area of the world to another. In contrast to conventional cameras, Oberon will use Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) to capture imagery in all-weather conditions.

Ben Bridge, Airbus Defence and Space UK Chairman, said:

“Oberon’s satellites will give the UK a much-needed sovereign capability and greatly enhance its space surveillance autonomy.

Airbus in the UK has more than 45 years’ experience in the design and build of high-resolution radar satellites and, once in orbit, these spacecraft will play a vital role in keeping our Armed Forces safe around the world.”

Paul Russell, Space team leader at DE&S said:

“This has been a superb team effort by members of DE&S, Space Command, DSTL and industry.

With the award of the Oberon contract, we will deliver the next in a series game changing capabilities to UK Space Command providing the UK military with leading Space Based Synthetic Aperture Radar whilst helping to keep our nation safe and prosperous.

We are looking forwards to working with Airbus as our Mission Partner to deliver this important capability together.”

Almost £300 million to gear up new walking, wheeling and cycling schemes

February

From: Active Travel England and Simon Lightwood MP

We are making sure local authorities can provide high-quality and easily accessible active travel schemes across England.

- 300 miles of brand new footpaths and

cycle tracks will help encourage 30 million more journeys by bike or foot every year

- new guidance to help councils engage and ensure local communities are involved in new projects

- funding will lead to 43,000 less sick days a year to ease pressure on the NHS and help deliver government mission of building an NHS fit for the future

Millions of people will benefit from 300 miles of new walkways and cycle lanes thanks to almost £300 million in funding to boost walking, wheeling and cycling in England.

The funding package announced today (12 February 2025) by the government and Active Travel England (ATE) will also allow the construction of improved crossings



and junctions to make walking, wheeling and cycling easier, safer and better across the country. The investment will also help fund cycle training for hundreds of thousands of children.

In addition to today's funding, ATE is publishing its guidance to help councils ensure that local residents and businesses are heard when designing and delivering transport changes in neighbourhoods.

The improvements will help people make 30 million more journeys by bike or foot every year, including more than 20 million new walk-to-school journeys by children and their parents.

Cycle lanes and walkways funded today will lead to 43,000 fewer sick days a year, due to the health benefits of increased active travel, easing pressure on the NHS and helping people live happier and healthier lives.

The new infrastructure will also add £9 million every year to the economy by supporting local businesses and making it easier to walk and cycle to work, as the government continues to deliver its Plan for Change.

National Active Travel Commissioner,

Chris Boardman, said:

“Making it simple and safe to walk, wheel or cycle to schools, shops and workplaces is one of the most effective actions we can take to improve the nation's health, economy and get to net zero, all in one.

Free exercise, zero emissions and no risk of getting stuck in traffic are benefits already being enjoyed as standard by our European neighbours and it's time we had the same life-improving choices.



This funding will help make our towns, cities and villages happier, healthier and greener places to live.”

Minister for Local Transport, Simon Lightwood, said:

“Walking and cycling is an affordable way to get around and is hugely beneficial for both mental and physical health. We're making sure local authorities can deliver high-quality and easily accessible schemes for everyone.

Investing in our national cycling and walking infrastructure is a key part of our mission for growth and today's investment will not only provide better connectivity but boost local businesses, grow local economies and ease pressure on the NHS, helping us deliver our Plan for Change.”

In total, today's £291 million funding package includes:

- £222.5 million to local authorities for the development and delivery of local walking, wheeling and cycling schemes, alongside community engagement and training

- £30 million to provide Bikeability cycle training to children
- £30 million to the Sustrans charity to deliver improvements to the National Cycle Network, a UK-wide network of signed active travel routes
- £8.5 million for Cycling UK, Living Streets and Modeshift to deliver walking, wheeling and cycling initiatives in schools and communities

In addition to providing this funding, ATE is dedicated to ensuring that new schemes are built faster and to a high quality that works best for their communities. With ATE expert advice, local authorities have completed active travel projects at more than twice the rate of other small transport schemes.

Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, said:

“Helping more people to get the health benefits of walking, wheeling and cycling is at the heart of the Bee Network. Our plan to connect 95% of our residents to within 400 metres of high-quality active travel routes is arguably the boldest in the country.

We’re already seeing more people

choose active travel over the car for short journeys. This latest funding will help us build on our success to date and demonstrates confidence – at the highest level – in the Bee Network.

Stockport is the blueprint for what we want to deliver across Greater Manchester, focusing new homes and regeneration around excellent public transport infrastructure in our town centres.

The more people we can persuade to leave the car at home, the more we will make the traffic flow and the roads better for everyone.”

National Active Travel Commissioner, Chris Boardman, and Local Transport Minister, Simon Lightwood, will mark the announcement of this funding with a visit to Greater Manchester, where active travel policies have been hugely successful.

A recent report by Transport for Greater Manchester found infrastructure upgrades are encouraging more residents to get about under their own steam, with the number of people walking short journeys now at 57%, up from 52% 5 years ago.



The image is a vertical banner for the Keith Welters Organisation. At the top, there are three small square images: a colorful geometric design with the text 'SOUTH BANK EXHIBITION LONDON' and 'FESTIVAL OF BRITAIN 2008', a circular logo for 'THE WYCOMBE AND DISTRICT WHEELRIG MANUFACTURERS', and a square graphic with concentric squares. Below these is a black rectangular box with the text 'Keith Welters' in a stylized font and 'FURNISHING' in a smaller font. Underneath this is the main logo 'welters' in a large, bold, sans-serif font, followed by 'ORGANISATION' and 'WORLDWIDE' in a smaller, all-caps, sans-serif font. Below that is the tagline 'Design and Innovation' and the website 'www.welters-worldwide.com'. At the bottom of the banner is a bronze sculpture of an elephant standing and facing left.

Vehicle theft equipment to be banned under new government law

February

From: Home Office and The Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson DBE MP

Possession or distribution of electronic devices used to commit vehicle theft will be banned, carrying a maximum sentence of 5 years.

Sophisticated electronic devices used by criminals in 40% of vehicle thefts in England and Wales will be banned under new laws, as part of the government's mission to make the nation's streets safer.

Having your vehicle stolen is a costly and distressing experience for victims. It disrupts livelihoods, stopping people from working and from seeing their families.

As the government works to prevent crimes from impacting working people's lives, police officers and the courts will be given new powers to target criminals who steal vehicles using electronic devices, including 'signal jammers', along with the organised groups who manufacture and

supply these devices.

Previously, prosecution for handling these devices was only possible if it could be proved by police that they had been used to commit a specific crime.

Under these new laws, anyone who is found in possession of one, or to have imported, made, adapted or distributed them, could receive a maximum penalty of 5 years' imprisonment and an unlimited fine. The burden of proof will instead fall on the owner to prove they were using



the device for a legitimate purpose, to avoid being prosecuted.

This new measure acts on a key milestone in our Plan for Change to protect our neighbourhoods and is part of the government's flagship Crime and Policing Bill, which will be introduced to Parliament on Tuesday.

Minister for Policing, Crime and Fire Prevention, Dame Diana Johnson, said:

These thefts have a devastating effect on victims, who need their vehicles to go about their everyday lives. We are aware of the real concerns people feel with the use of these electronic devices being so prolific.

This is why we are introducing new laws focused on tackling this issue at source, which is what our Safer Streets mission and Plan for Change are all about. These new laws will prevent

these devices from getting into the hands of thieves and organised crime groups.

We will also continue to work closely with the National Police Chiefs' Council, which includes supporting their National Vehicle Crime Reduction Partnership, which brings together the police and manufacturers to clamp down on vehicle crime.

The most common way theft from a vehicle – or the theft of the vehicle itself – occurs is with the use of these electronic devices, with keyless repeaters and signal amplifiers being used to scramble the signal from remote locking devices.

According to the 2022 to 2023 Crime Survey for England and Wales, an offender manipulated a signal from a remote locking device in 40% of thefts

of vehicles. There were also 732,000 incidents of vehicle-related theft in the year ending September 2024.

The Metropolitan Police Service estimates that, in London, signal jammers are used in approximately 60% of vehicle theft.

A significant proportion of vehicle theft is driven by organised crime groups, as there is a demand for stolen vehicles, which means this is a highly attractive and lucrative area for criminals to gain profit. Organised criminals are constantly trying to find ways to overcome security measures on vehicles, even in the latest models, by exploiting vulnerabilities in vehicles and new technologies.

In support of the new measures, RAC head of policy Simon Williams said:

With government statistics showing an average of 370 vehicles being stolen every day, outlawing the possession and distribution of signal jammers cannot come soon enough and we welcome the government's action on this.

Having your car stolen is not only a violation, it causes massive amounts of stress and inconvenience as well as higher insurance costs for the individual concerned and drivers generally.

AA president, Edmund King, said:

This is a positive step, and these tougher sentences should make would-be thieves think again before stealing cars. As fast as vehicle technology has evolved, thieves have always tried to keep pace and beat the security systems.

Relay theft and signal jamming is all too frequent and these measures will give police forces more opportunities to tackle car crime.

ACC Jenny Sims, National Police Chiefs' Council lead for vehicle crime said:

We welcome the announcement of new offences to criminalise the possession, manufacture, sale and supply of signal jammers which have provided an easily accessible tool for criminals to use in the theft of vehicles for far too long.

These devices have no legitimate purpose, apart from assisting in criminal activity, and reducing their availability will support policing and industry in preventing vehicle theft which is damaging to both individuals and businesses.





Full body interment provision
- installation ~1995



Full body interment provision
- installation 2020/21



Cremated remains interment provision
- installation ~1993



Cremated remains interment provision
- installation 2015/19

welters®

ORGANISATION WORLDWIDE

DESIGN AND MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS

RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND
MANUFACTURING

**The Originators and
Leaders in the industry**

INNOVATION BY DESIGN
Creative and original

Over the past three decades, **welters®** have introduced new and innovative above and below ground interment and memorial facilities to the industry.

Today, many of these systems are accepted as standard nationwide and the company continues to produce new and original concepts, leading the way into the next decade.

Supplying products & systems for all full body interment needs, below & above ground, cremated remains & memorialisation.

Visit us at
www.welters-worldwide.com

Wild beavers: Nature's engineers to return to English waterways

February

From: Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs and Natural England

Government to allow reintroduction of beavers into the wild after centuries of absence in a huge boost for nature conservation

- Brilliant beavers reduce flood risk, create new wetlands, and boost biodiversity



- Reintroductions to be carefully managed under licence from Natural England

Nature's original master builder – the Eurasian beaver – is set to return to our waterways after centuries of absence, following a government decision to allow wild release.

Beavers are prodigious ecosystem engineers and proven climate champions – creating natural flood defences that can reduce flood risks and building wetlands which are thriving havens for wildlife.

Known as a keystone species because the habitats they create benefit myriad other species, they were once abundant in England but became extinct due to overhunting. In recent years, beavers have been returning to our waterways through a system of licensed releases into enclosures, and a limited trial of wild release in Devon.

Now in a major boost for conservation, the government has today (Friday 28 February) set out a new approach which will allow beavers to live wild in England's treasured landscapes.

Ministers have set out how we will provide the certainty needed for conservationists, landowners and farmers in a new policy statement. It includes the detail of a new licensing system, support for landowners and farmers, and a commitment to produce a plan in consultation with these stakeholders for the long-term management of beavers in England.

The return of beavers will be carefully managed to avoid impacts on farming, food production and infrastructure. New wild release projects will need to have a project plan in place covering a 10-year period to support the

introduction of beavers into a landscape before Natural England would consider granting a licence.

Nature Minister Mary Creagh said:

“Beavers are cherished creatures who bring so many benefits for people and our precious natural environment. They create wetlands which are havens for wildlife, reduce flood risk and improve the water quality of our rivers.

Reintroducing beavers to the wild is a critical milestone for this Government’s plan to protect and restore our natural world.”

Tony Juniper, Chair of Natural England, said:

“Beavers have been missing from our landscapes for about four hundred years and this careful approach for their planned return is a significant landmark for Nature recovery in England.

Beavers are environmental engineers. The dams, ponds and canals they build not only create amazingly rich habitats for many other species, but can also help reduce flood risk, purify water and catch carbon.

Under licence from Natural England, the release of wild beavers will be managed to secure the long-term environmental benefits while seeking to minimise and avoid unwanted impacts.”

All existing beaver populations will be allowed to remain and expand naturally and will ensure that appropriate management measures are put in place. Existing populations of wild beavers will continue to be proactively managed by their local beaver management group.

Through this carefully planned reintroduction programme which is defined by a 5 step management approach, we will support farmers and communities to live alongside beavers, ensuring these natural problem-solvers benefit everyone.

The government will also now begin work



on developing a long-term beaver management plan in England. This will build on the approach announced today and be developed with input from key stakeholders, to ensure we meet the challenges and opportunities posed by an expanding beaver population well into the future.

It is expected that the first release of wild beavers will happen at Purbeck Heaths National Nature Reserve soon with a licence issued to the National Trust.

Hilary McGrady, Director General of the National Trust said:

“This is fantastic news for nature recovery and people’s livelihoods. Beavers are unparalleled in their ability to restore landscapes, create wetlands that manage flood risk, improve our water quality, and bring back wildlife.

Since 2020, we’ve introduced beavers at three National Trust sites through licensed, enclosed releases. We’ve seen first-hand the amazing benefits these fascinating mammals provide, and we’re thrilled to receive a licence for the first wild beaver release in England.

It's important to us, and the communities we work in, that beaver releases across wider landscapes happen in a responsible, carefully managed way. This licensing process is in everyone's best interests. It will lead to well-chosen sites, minimise disruption to other landowners, and ensure local communities are fully consulted and involved enabling both people and nature thrive."

Alan Lovell, Chair of the Environment Agency said:

"As part of our work to reduce flood risk and restore rivers to good health, the return of wild beavers will improve water quality, boost biodiversity and build resilience to climate change through nature-based solutions.

Beavers help reduce flooding in nearby towns, remove pollutants from our precious waterways and help to create clean water. Working alongside our partners, the Environment Agency will continue to support the careful management of wild beavers".

Applications for further wild release licences will first need to submit an 'expression of interest' to Natural England. The deadline for the first round

of applications is 2 May 2025, with further application windows due to open in due course.

Dr Roisin Campbell-Palmer of Beaver Trust said:

"This landmark moment in England's beaver story could be a significant step toward helping to address some of the key environmental challenges we face. We welcome Government recognition of beavers' potential and hope they now demonstrate their commitment through widespread license granting and proactive restoration of this species across England.

We are generations behind the rest of Europe in bringing this species back, we have high levels of public support for their return, so we now need a government-led national strategy and effective mitigation framework in order to facilitate population expansion and to realise the valuable societal benefits beavers can bring.

We look forward to seeing details of the government's announcement and hope that it will support measures that encourage people to live alongside beavers and form a productive step toward normalising this native species."

Nature and Technology

welters® environmental orbs in this image have, over time, become one with nature. The moss and ferns have grown over the top of the orbs, almost camouflaging them at the base of a tree where mushrooms already grow in abundance.



NHS patients receive first home-grown blood plasma treatments

March

From: Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England, NHS Blood and Transplant and Baroness Merron

The first NHS patients in a generation have started to receive life-saving plasma from the blood of UK donors

- Treatments will help save 17,000 NHS patients' lives every year
- Move will deliver government's Plan for Change by building domestic medical

supply chains, reducing reliance on imports and with savings between £5 million to £10 million a year

The first NHS patients in a generation have started to receive life-saving plasma from the blood of UK donors, thanks to a partnership between NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) and NHS England.

Since a longstanding ban on UK plasma was lifted in 2021, the UK has been building its own supply of plasma medicines amid a global shortage. This will reduce reliance on imports, saving the NHS between £5 million and £10 million per year and strengthening the UK as a powerhouse for life sciences under the government's Plan for Change.

Around 17,000 NHS patients with immune deficiencies and rare diseases rely on vital human-donated plasma to save or improve their lives. It is also used in emergency medicine for childbirth and trauma care.

Health Minister, Baroness Gillian Merron, said:

"This is a significant milestone for the NHS as we take a step towards UK self-sufficiency in these vital medicines.

As part of our Plan for Change, we are improving access to life-saving treatments for thousands of NHS patients and strengthening healthcare security.

By sourcing our own medicine, we are building a more resilient and domestic medical supply chain and boosting economic growth."

Sir Stephen Powis, national medical director of NHS England, said:

"This landmark moment ensures patients relying on crucial plasma-derived medicines will always have access to the treatment they need.



Thanks to NHS efforts, new plasma-derived products, owned from start to finish by the UK, will reduce our reliance on imported stock and boost the fortitude of hospital supplies.

Thousands of people with serious and potentially life-threatening conditions, including immunodeficiencies and neurological conditions rely on these products, and strengthening the supply chain of plasma-derived treatments through UK donations will help NHS clinicians ensure these vital medicines are available for all who need them.”

Jill Jones made history by becoming the first patient to be given UK-sourced plasma at John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford. She has received treatments every 3 weeks following a diagnosis of Non-Hodgkin lymphoma 20 years ago, and described



the infusions as “life-changing”.

The initiative will also build UK capacity in the global plasma medicines industry, which was valued at over \$30 billion in 2023 and is projected to reach \$45 billion by 2027. It will help establish the NHS as an engine of economic growth to drive investment in public services and raise living standards for everyone.

NHSBT has collected 250,000 litres of plasma from donors in England since 2021. From this, 2 vital medicines are being produced: immunoglobulins, which treat autoimmune conditions, and albumin, which is essential for surgery and treating liver conditions.

The NHS plans to reach 25% self-sufficiency in immunoglobulin by the end of 2025, rising to 30 to 35% in 2031, and 80% self-sufficiency in albumin by next year.

Global medical supply issues worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic. In July 2024, a national patient safety alert was issued due to critically low blood stocks, demonstrating the importance of building self-sufficiency in the UK.

Dr Jo Farrar, Chief Executive of NHS Blood and Transplant, said:

“Thanks to the incredible generosity of

our donors, NHS patients are now receiving life-saving medicines made from UK plasma for the first time in a generation.

Plasma makes up 55% of our blood and contains antibodies which strengthen or stabilise the immune system. It is used to save lives during childbirth and trauma and is used to treat thousands of patients with life-limiting illnesses such as immune deficiencies.

These lifesaving medicines can only be made from our blood. We need more donors to help save more lives. Please go to Give Blood to become a donor.”

Jill Jones from Oxford, the first patient to receive UK-sourced plasma medicine, said:

“Coming to the immunology ward is like catching up with friends. The staff are delightful and you get to know staff and patients really well. You have a cup of coffee and chat. Today I was talking about knitting and kittens as I was being transfused!

Infusions have been life-changing for me in keeping me well. Before I started on them, I was regularly in hospital with infections - which just doesn't

happen now. It's made a huge and positive difference to my life and my family's life."

I felt really privileged today to be the first patient in the UK to be receiving immunoglobulin that was made from UK plasma for the first time in a very long time.

Previously, the NHS relied solely on imported plasma medicines due to a long-standing ban on using UK plasma.

The ban was introduced in 1998 as a precautionary measure against Variant Creutzfeldt–Jakob Disease (vCJD), linked to mad cow disease.

In 2021 following rigorous scientific reviews, the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) confirmed that plasma from UK donors is safe, supported by robust safety measures.

Decades of rigorous research showed no confirmed cases of vCJD transmission through plasma-derived medicines.

Plasma comes from blood donations. The plasma in blood contains antibodies that strengthen or stabilise the immune system. The antibodies are separated out and made into immunoglobulin medicines that treat people with life-limiting conditions such as immune deficiencies, bleeding disorders, as well as severe burns.

Mass cancellation of government credit cards in crackdown on wasteful spend

March

From: Cabinet Office and The Rt Hon Pat McFadden MP

The Cabinet Office instructs departments and their agencies to freeze almost all of around 20,000 Government Procurement Cards as part of plans to cut spending

- Thousands of government credit cards will be cancelled, cracking down on wasteful spending in government in favour of delivering the Plan for Change.

- Departments and their agencies will be instructed to freeze all cards this week, with a tough new application process to cut the numbers in circulation by at least 50%.

- Spending on the cards has quadrupled in four years.

- Move follows PM's intervention last week to go further and faster to reshape the state and make it deliver for working people.

Thousands of government credit cards will be cancelled under plans to cut spending and ensure every pound of taxpayer money is targeted at delivering for the public.

The Cabinet Office will instruct departments and their agencies to freeze almost all of the around 20,000 Government Procurement Cards in circulation this week, with Civil



Service cardholders forced to reapply and justify that they really need them - if they don't the cards will be cancelled by the end of the month.

Only a minority of cards, used for specific operational purposes such as by diplomatic staff working in unstable environments, will be exempt from the mass freeze.

A strict new application process will be introduced, with departments told to approve the minimum number of new cards possible. It is expected the number of cards will be reduced by at least 50%.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Pat McFadden said:

“We must ensure taxpayers’ money is spent on improving the lives of working people.

It's not right that hundreds of millions of pounds are spent on government credit cards each year, without high levels of scrutiny or challenge. Only officials for whom it is absolutely essential should have a card.

Our clampdown on government credit cards will deliver savings that can be used to drive our Plan for Change -

securing our borders, getting the NHS back on its feet and rebuilding Britain.”

This follows the Prime Minister's intervention last week where he said the Government must go further and faster to reshape the state and make it work for working people.

The move is part of a civil service wide efficiency drive to cut down on wasteful spending across government, which includes making it quicker and easier to remove poor performers from post.

It will ensure resources are targeted at delivering the Government's Plan for Change - ending hospital backlogs, putting police back on the beat and securing the country's borders.

While some credit cards are operationally necessary to deliver services, the amount spent on them has more than quadrupled in the past four years with spending in the last financial year reaching over £600 million in central departments and core agencies.

The move aims to reduce the money spent on Government cards, redirecting business critical spend into more appropriate procurement routes that deliver better value for money.

Tighter new spending controls will also be introduced, with the maximum spend for hospitality - often needed for officials working in trade or diplomatic roles - slashed from £2500 to £500, and any spend over £500 requiring Director General approval.

Civil servants will also be banned from using cards where there is either a departmental or cross-Government procurement route. These procurement routes deliver better value for money by procuring at scale for common goods and services, like booking official travel, training, or office supplies.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Pat McFadden ordered a review of the cards after examples of unnecessary spending were highlighted.

Departments have been asked to review spending on Government Procurement Cards by their officials. Where they identify examples of spending on cards found to be incompatible with guidance they have been told to take action, including disciplinary action and the revocation of the card in question.

Government to plant first National Forest in 30 years

March

From: Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs and Mary Creagh CBE MP

A new national forest stretching from the Cotswolds to the Mendips is set to be created, the government has announced today (Friday 21 March).

The Western Forest will see 20 million trees set to be planted across the West of England in the coming decades, creating at least 2,500 hectares of new woodland.

The government manifesto committed to three new national forests and today's announcement is a significant first step. The forest will serve over 2.5 million residents, bringing trees and woodlands closer to where people live, including in urban centres such as Bristol, Gloucester and Swindon.

The Western Forest will be spearheaded by the Forest of Avon, one of England's Community Forests supported by up to

£7.5 million of government funding over five years alongside accelerating tree-planting in local areas. The project will work to revitalise existing woodlands and other important habitats to create a forest network for people and wildlife at a truly landscape scale.

The new national forest will help the drive to net zero while promoting economic growth and creating jobs in Wiltshire, Gloucestershire and across the West of England, as part of the Government's Plan for Change. It will also help us meet our nature and legal environment targets including halting the decline of species and protecting 30% of land for nature by 2030.

Nature Minister Mary Creagh said: "The Government was elected on a mandate to plant three new national forests this parliament, as part of our commitment to reach net zero



and drive sustainable growth under the Government's Plan for Change.

"We will plant 20 million trees in the Western Forest to bring nature closer to people, prevent flooding and support wildlife."

Alex Stone, Chief Executive of Forest of Avon, England's Community Forests, said: "The Forest of Avon is thrilled to have led a wonderfully diverse and engaged partnership to bring the Western Forest to life. This is about resource, funding and expertise coming directly to landowners, partners and communities, planting millions of trees in the right places. Together, we will enhance landscapes for all to enjoy, improving the lives of our 2.5 million residents and visitors to the region.

"Encompassing two of England's Community Forests and working alongside the National Forest Company and Defra, the Western Forest will enhance, connect and improve our urban and rural landscapes, support investment into the region, create jobs and skills opportunities and bring the endless benefits we get back from planting and caring for our trees. It is a very exciting time for this region, and we look forward to helping shape what the Western Forest will become."

The National Forest Company, who manage the National Forest, will provide expertise and mentorship to the Western Forest project team.

National Forest Chief Executive John

Everitt OBE said:

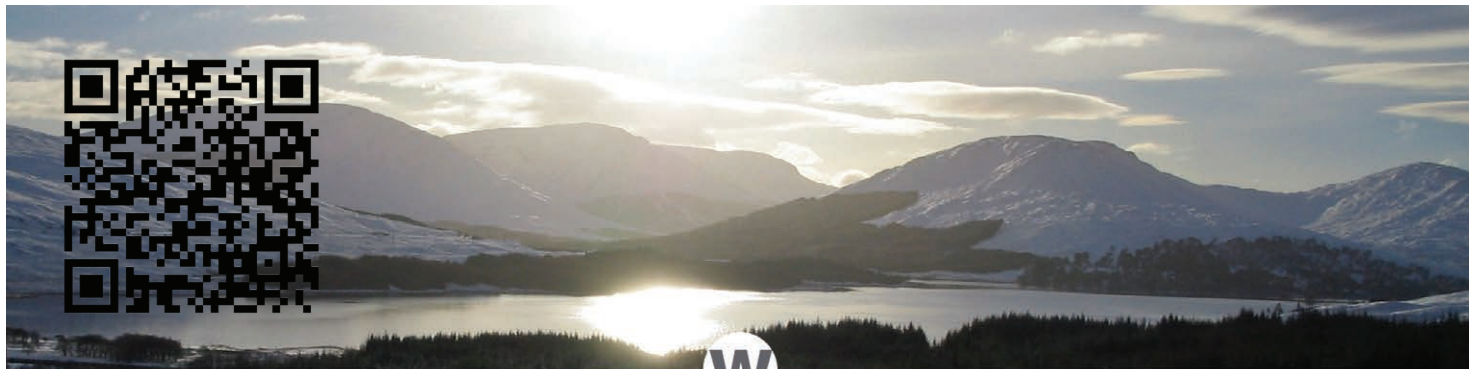
"The National Forest Company is delighted to see the announcement of the Western Forest as the first of the government's new national forest commitments.

"This initiative builds on the success of the National Forest in the Midlands, where planting more than 9.8 million trees has transformed the landscape, benefitting wildlife, communities and the economy.

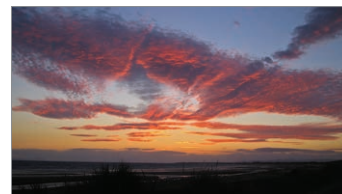
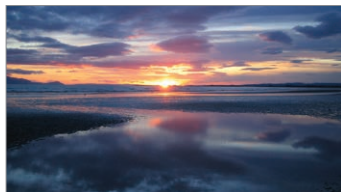
"The Western Forest was selected because of its ability to demonstrate a similar scale of ambition, with trees and woods supporting growth and farming while enhancing nature's recovery and access to green space."

Our countryside and woodlands are a source of great national pride, and today's announcement is a further example of this government delivering for nature, following historic announcements on the wild release and management of beavers in England, a new approach to neonicotinoid pesticides on crops grown in England and new measures to strengthen our protected areas and meet 30x30.





KeithWelters



Visit Keith Walters' shop on SHUTTERSTOCK to view and purchase images (a few examples shown above). Visit www.shutterstock.com/g/Keith+Walters or click on the QR code above.

£100 million to revamp local sports facilities across UK

March

From: Department for Culture, Media and Sport and
The Rt Hon Lisa Nandy MP

People across the UK will benefit from upgraded sports facilities in their local area thanks to £100 million invested by government today.

- Major package to upgrade hundreds of local grassroots sports facilities with new and improved pitches, changing rooms, goalposts and floodlights

- Investment will target deprived areas and support greater access and participation levels among under-represented groups

- At least 40% of funded projects have a multi-sport offer ensuring more can participate and get active as the Government delivers its Plan for Change
People across the UK will benefit from upgraded sports facilities in their local area thanks to £100 million invested by

government today.

Working together with the Premier League, The FA and Government's Football Foundation in England, the Cymru Football Foundation in Wales, and the Football Associations in Scotland and Northern Ireland, the funding is expected to support hundreds of new and improved pitches, changing rooms, goalposts and floodlights to improve access to sport and physical activity for local communities.

It will be targeted at deprived areas and support greater access and participation



levels among under-represented people including women and girls, ethnic minority groups and disabled players.

The major package delivers on the Government's Plan for Change, with the funding designed to break down barriers to opportunity and tackle persistent health inequalities through prevention, that will support an NHS fit for the future. These facilities also encourage communities to come together and give young people opportunities to build vital skills and connections while creating a sense of purpose and pride in where they live.

Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy announced the funding during a visit to Bonnyrigg Rose Community Football Club, a grassroots football facility in Midlothian, Scotland which supports over 700 players.

The funding will be invested in sites during 2025/26, with £82.3 million allocated to projects in England (including a £2 million uplift of new investment committed in the current financial year), £8.6 million in Scotland, £6.1 million in Wales and £3 million in Northern Ireland.

It follows the Culture Secretary's pledge to inspire the next generation as the Lionesses go to UEFA Women's EURO 2025 this summer as defending champions, and England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland look ahead to hosting UEFA EURO 2028.

Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy said:

"Grassroots sport clubs are at the heart of communities across the UK. That's why we're investing £100 million to support new and upgraded pitches, changing rooms and clubhouses across the country, providing transformational funding to the areas that need it most.

As we deliver our Plan for Change, we will remove barriers to an active lifestyle and increase opportunity for all, ensuring that wherever people may live, they can access high quality sports facilities and experience the joy that sport brings."

Government funding through the Multi-

Sport Grassroots Facilities Programme is amplified by significant contributions by The FA and Premier League in England. Delivery partners also leverage investment from local stakeholders through initiatives such as the Scottish FA and Scottish Football Partnership Trust's 'Pitching in' campaign which aims to raise £50 million for football facilities over the next five years.

Of the funded projects, at least 40% will have a multi-sport offer so that more people can participate in sports other than football, meaning more people can get access to a wider variety of sports and activities that appeal to

them including rugby, cricket and basketball.

Clubs and organisations across the UK are now being urged to come forward and apply for funding. Applications can be made in England via the Football Foundation on an ongoing basis, and in Wales via the Cymru Football Foundation. Dedicated windows are opening shortly in Scotland and Northern Ireland with those interested encouraged to check relevant FA websites for more details. The first tranche of beneficiaries are expected to be confirmed in summer 2025.



Intellectual
Property
Office

welters[®]
ORGANISATION
WORLDWIDE
Design and Innovation



PRODUCTS • DESIGNS • SERVICES
IDEAS IN ACTION

Prison expanded to create UK's largest public sector jail and make streets safer

March

From: Ministry of Justice, HM Prison and Probation Service and Lord Timpson OBE

More dangerous criminals will be taken off the streets thanks to a 700-place expansion which will turn a Suffolk jail into the UK's largest public sector prison.

- three new houseblocks to be built at HMP Highpoint in Suffolk by summer 2027
- key milestone in efforts to deliver 14,000 extra prison places nationwide by 2031
- part of Government's Plan for Change to create safer streets

The three new, four-storey houseblocks at HMP Highpoint will boost its capacity by more than 50 percent– and is the latest step in Government action to create safer streets.

The houseblocks will include innovative

workshops and teaching facilities to train prisoners with skills to secure a job on release and turn their backs on crime for good. The new cells will be fully operational by summer 2027.

The construction is a significant milestone in the Government's plan to deliver 14,000 more prison places by 2031 to lock up dangerous offenders and keep



the public safe.

Minister for Prisons, Probation and Reducing Reoffending, Lord James Timpson said:

“This government is fixing the broken prison system it inherited – wasting no time in getting shovels in the ground to deliver the spaces needed to protect the public.

These new houseblocks have been designed with a laser-focus on cutting crime and are a major step in our plan to deliver 14,000 more prison places by 2031.

But we cannot simply build our way out of this crisis, which is why we're also reviewing sentencing so we can lock up dangerous offenders, cut crime and make our streets safer.”

HMP Highpoint Prison Governor Nigel

Smith said:

“The expansion at Highpoint will provide much-needed prisoner places in our region.

The new accommodation will provide a safe and secure environment for us to rehabilitate prisoners and get them ready for release.

We are pleased that the construction work has officially begun and we look forward to working with our contractors to get things delivered.”

The build will be delivered by Wates Group, a leading family-owned development, building and property maintenance company. Once completed Highpoint will be the largest public sector prison in terms of land size in North-West Europe and the largest in the UK based on prisoner population.

It will help provide an economic boost to East Anglia with hundreds of jobs created during construction and over 200 permanent jobs at the prison once built. Construction alone will bring investment into local businesses with 30% of materials/subcontractors coming from within a 50-mile radius.

Phil Shortman, Regional Managing Director at Wates said:

“We are proud to be involved in the major programme of delivering much-needed prison spaces.

Through the construction of this project, around 2,000 building components have been crafted in prison workshops, providing meaningful employment opportunities, helping develop valuable skills and supporting brighter futures.

We look forward to continuing our collaboration with the government delivering additional prison capacity with a focus on rehabilitation, sustainability and social value for the local community.”

The development is part of the government’s 10-year prison capacity strategy published in December. It includes 6,400 places through new houseblocks and 6,500 places via new prisons. One thousand rapid deployment cells will be rolled out across the estate while more than 1,000 existing cells will be refurbished.

A 1,500-capacity prison in Yorkshire, HMP Millsike, will be opened in the coming weeks. The government is investing £2.3 billion to deliver these prison builds, while

a further £500 million will go towards vital building maintenance across prisons and the probation service.

The strategy will work alongside the Independent Sentencing Review to ensure the most serious offenders can always be sent to prison to protect the public.



Bathing water reforms keep pace with Britain's love of swimming

March

From: Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, Emma Hardy MP and The Rt Hon Steve Reed OBE MP

As part of this first shake-up to our bathing waters since 2013, the government is developing plans to expand the definition of 'bathers' to include participants in water sports other than swimming, such as paddle boarders and surfers. To make sure that people can enjoy these activities safely, the government will also look to introduce multiple monitoring points at each bathing water location.

The news comes as the government confirms applications for new bathing waters in England will re-open in May, the start of the 2025 bathing water season. Prospective sites will be assessed against the government's newly reformed standards, set to become law later this year.

After years of failure, our water infrastructure is crumbling, and public anger is growing over sewage spills. That is why the government is modernising the

outdated bathing water Regulations, to make sure sites are given the right technical and financial support to improve.

Updating bathing water regulations is part the wider action government is taking to fix our water system - from banning bonuses for polluting water bosses through the Water (Special Measures) Act to ringfencing customer money for vital infrastructure upgrades. The government has also launched the largest review into the water sector since privatisation, to consider where further reform is needed.

This is part of the government's Plan for Change to support the infrastructure Britain needs to boost growth, construct 1.5 million new homes, and clean up our rivers, lakes and seas for good.

Water Minister Emma Hardy said:

"Bathing water sites are the pride of local communities across the country.

But safety and cleanliness is paramount, and we must go further and faster to open up our waterways for families to enjoy.

The Government is upgrading outdated regulations so they are fit for purpose. It is also why we are re-opening applications for new bathing sites in England, so that more people have the opportunity to experience the benefits of our beautiful waters."

Wales's Deputy First Minister, with responsibility for Climate Change Huw Irranca-Davies added:

"Wales is home to some of the most beautiful bathing waters in Europe and we are committed to ensuring they remain safe, sustainable, and accessible for future generations.

These reforms mark an important step forward and, by modernising how we manage our bathing waters, we can

strengthen protections in a way that means these natural spaces can still be enjoyed safely.”

Key reforms will include:

- Removing fixed bathing season dates (which currently runs from May to September) from the regulations to allow for a more flexible approach to monitoring, and to better reflect when people use bathing waters.
- Further considering a site’s feasibility to improve, public safety and environmental considerations when applications for new bathing waters are assessed.
- Ending the automatic de-designation of bathing water status after 5 consecutive years of a site being rated ‘poor’, which can damage local tourism and businesses. Instead, underperforming sites will be individually reviewed by regulators, taking into account their unique circumstances.



Following a public consultation, members of the public, environmental groups, farmers, businesses and local authorities showed clear support for modernising bathing water regulations. UK and Welsh governments have worked collaboratively when considering these contributions and will now look to formally update the regulations in their respective areas this Autumn. Both Defra and the Welsh governments will work closely with the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales to ensure the new measures are implemented effectively, using innovative approaches to adapt to challenges and ensure everyone has the opportunity to safely access bathing waters.

This week, the Environment Secretary and Water Minister Emma Hardy will visit seven iconic water sites across the country, to see where investment in water infrastructure will underpin the building of new homes, create jobs and turbocharge local economies – a cornerstone of the government’s Plan for Change.

Over £100 billion of private sector money will be invested into the water sector. This is the largest investment into water in history, and the second largest investment into any part of the economy over the lifetime of this parliament.

Environment Agency Chair Alan Lovell said:

“We know just how important England’s bathing waters are to people and to local economies, so we welcome the opportunity to improve their management as we all want to see better bathing water quality.”

Ben Seal, Head of Access & Environment at Paddle UK, on behalf of the Clean Water Sports Alliance said:

“For the water sports community, the commitment to modernise our outdated bathing water regulations is an encouraging development.

More people than ever want to be in, on or alongside our waterways, to relax, to explore, to spend time with friends and importantly, to stay healthy.

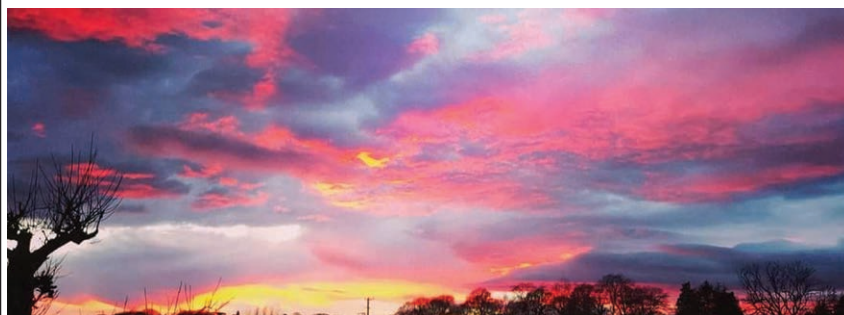
We are pleased that with these new reforms, the Government is showing it recognises the diversity of where, when and how the public wish to enjoy blue spaces.

We hope this announcement will have a ripple effect on the government’s plans for wider reform across all our waters, helping turn the tide on pollution and giving more people an opportunity to access cleaner, safer waters for recreation.”

Forthcoming articles under consideration

- How will the new minimum wage affect you?
- What are we, as a country, doing to protect nature and our environment? Is it enough?
- How are tariffs affecting the UK economy?
- Climate change. What part can we play, individually and as businesses, in the UK and globally, to slow climate change?
- How much power can wind farms produce and can they help to reduce energy costs?

Check out the Jan-Mar 2025
edition of Welters World



considered by our Editorial Department for the Spring edition as alternatives to the final chosen cover

COVER OPTIONS

Acknowledgements

Grateful acknowledgement is made to the following sources:

- Pg 3 image by Keith Welters
- Pg 4 image by George Hodan - CC0 Public Domain
- Pg 4 image by RDNE Stock Project - Pexels
- Pg 4 image by CHUTTERSNAPE - Unsplash
- Pg 4 image by Insight Photography - Pixaby
- Pg 5 image by Egor Vikhrev - Unsplash
- Pg 5 image by Leonhard_Niederwimmer - Pixaby
- Pg 5 image by Dillon Kydd - Unsplash
- Pg 5 image by Foto-Rabe - Pixaby
- Pg 5 image by Julio Lopez - Pexels
- Pg 6 image by Djamel Ramdani - Pexels
- Pg 6 image by Library of Congress - Unsplash
- Pg 6 image by Aleza - Pixaby
- Pg 6 image by Afif Ramdhasuma - Unsplash
- Pg 6 image by Jean Beaufort - CC0 Public Domain
- Pg 7 image by Keith Welters
- Pg 7 image by Markus Winkler
- Pg 7 image by Gerd Altmann - CC0 Public Domain
- Pg 7 image by padrinan - Pixaby
- Pg 8 image by the blowup - Unsplash

- Pg 8 image by gerald - Pixaby
- Pg 8 image by Ashwin Vaswani - Unsplash
- Pg 8 image by Alex Borland - CC0 Public Domain
- Pg 8 image by Pixaby
- Pg 9 image by Mick Haupt - Unsplash
- Pg 9 image by wir_sind_klein - Pixaby
- Pg 9 image by Adam Mills - Unsplash
- Pg 9 image by chapay - Pixaby
- Pg 10 image by CabService London - Unsplash
- Pg 10 image by Harrison Haines - Pexels
- Pg 10 image by Adeline Moutier - Unsplash
- Pg 10 image by Erik_Karits - Pixaby
- Pg 11 image by Pixaby - Pexels
- Pg 12 image by Handon Lu - Unsplash
- Pg 13 image by tungnguyen0905 - Pixaby
- Pg 14 image by Kaboompics.com - Pexels
- Pg 15 image by RDNE Stock Projects - Pexels
- Pg 16 image by Olga Guryanova - Unsplash
- Pg 17 images by Keith Welters
- Pg 18 image by Keith Welters
- Pg 19 image by Rostislav Kralik - CC0 Public Domain
- Pg 20 image by cottonbro studio - Pexels
- Pg 22 image by Hal Gatewood - Unsplash
- Pg 24 image by Tumisu - Pixaby

welters[®]
ORGANISATION
WORLDWIDE
Design and Innovation

- Pg 25 image by gerald - Pixaby
- Pg 26 image by SpaceX - Pexels
- Pg 27 image by Wikilimages - Pixaby
- Pg 28 image by Brett Sayles - Pexels
- Pg 29 image by Dave Goudreau - Unsplash
- Pg 31 image by Dalton Douglas - Pexels
- Pg 32 image by katigori - Pixaby
- Pg 34 image by Steve Raubenstine - Pixaby
- Pg 35 image by Jasper Kortmann - Pexels
- Pg 37 image by Charlie-Helen Robinson - Pexels
- Pg 38 image by Obi - Unsplash
- Pg 39 image by Circe Denyer - CC0 Public Domain
- Pg 41 image by Keith Welters
- Pg 42 image by Keith Welters
- Pg 44 image by Terrace Grain - Unsplash
- Pg 46 image by Ron Lach - Pexels
- Pg 47 image by Guido Coppa - Unsplash
- Pg 49 image by Hanif Mahmad - Unsplash

