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July - September 2025 British Edition

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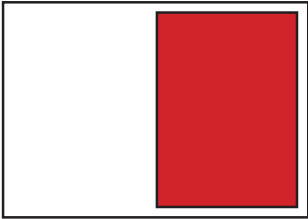
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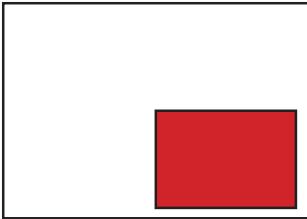
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News Roundup

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

By Paul G Bazeley for Government World

July News Review

The UK government announced it would lower the voting age to 16. The move will allow 16 and 17 year-olds to vote in the next general election. The reform must still pass Parliament before it can become law.



Prime minister Keir Starmer and

French president Emmanuel Macron announced a joint deal for the UK to deport illegal migrants to France in exchange for accepting asylum seekers with British family connections.



The UK National Crime Agency arrested four people for conducting cyberattacks as part of a crime ring. The cyberattacks were targeted on Marks & Spencer, Harrods and Co-op Food.



The European Parliament and European Council both approved Bulgaria's request to adopt the Euro. The currency will replace the lev as the official currency of Bulgaria on the 1 January 2026.



UNESCO added 26 landmarks to the UNESCO World Heritage list. The additions included NeuschawNSTein Castle, the German castle that served as inspiration for Walt Disney's Sleeping Beauty's palace, the Minoan Palatial Centres in Greece and Møns Klint in Denmark. The list aims to protect and



preserve sites of beauty, cultural and historical significance.

The rock band Black Sabbath performed their final concert called Back to the beginning at Villa Park in Birmingham. The event had a line-up including Metallica, Slayer and many others. The event raised £140m for charity.

The American rapper and music producer Sean Combs was found guilty on two counts of transportation to engage in prostitution. He was acquitted of sex trafficking and racketeering.

Ozzy Osbourne the singer, songwriter and media personality died at the age of 76. Osbourne co-founded the heavy metal band Black Sabbath and was later well known for the reality TV show The Osbournes. The singer had been suffering from Parkinson's disease and is said to have died from a heart attack.



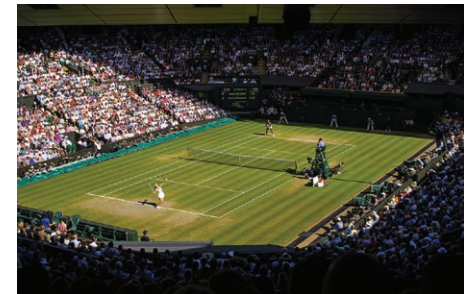
Felix Baumgartner, the Austrian skydiver and extreme sportsman died in a paragliding accident in Italy.

Baumgartner was most well known for jumping to Earth from a helium balloon about 24 miles up in the stratosphere in 2012.

Archaeologists announced the discovery of an ancient city in Peru. The city named Peñico is 3,500 years old and is believed to have been a large trading hub in the Pacific coast.

July Sports Review

In tennis, the Wimbledon Championships took place. In the women's draw, Aga Swiatek beat Amanda Anisimova in an emphatic 6-0, 6-0 win to claim her first Wimbledon title and become the first Pole to do so. On the mens side of the draw, Jannik Sinner defeated Carlos Alcaraz 4-6, 6-4, 6-4



to claim his first Wimbledon title and become the first Italian player to win a Wimbledon singles title.

Chelsea beat the French side Paris Saint-Germain 3-0 to claim the FIFA Club World Cup for the second time. The Chelsea winger Cole Palmer won the golden ball for the tournament.



England won the UEFA Women's Euros after beating Spain 3-1 on penalties. It means the team defended their title and won their second major championship.



In boxing, the Ukrainian, Oleksandr Usyk beat the Brit Daniel Dubois at Wembley Stadium in a fifth round knockout. The win meant Usyk became a two-time undisputed heavyweight champion.

August News Review

The UK summoned the Russian ambassador to the UK, Andrey Klein after the British Council office in Kyiv, Ukraine was badly damaged in an overnight Russian attack on the Ukrainian capital. One employee was injured.



An order to relocate asylum seekers that were being housed in a hotel in Epping, Essex was overturned after the English Court of Appeal ruled the government may continue to use the hotel.



US president Donal Trump deployed three guided-missile destroyers off the coast of Venezuela. The US government authorised military



operations against Latin American drug cartels in their war on drugs. The move raised tensions between the US and Venezuela.

A protest in London in support of Palestine Action, which was proscribed as a terrorist group the month before, saw a total of 474 arrests.



Rushanara Ali, the Under-Secretary of State for Housing and Homelessness resigned amid controversy after she increased the rent at an east London property she owned by £700 to force the tenants to move.

Norway agreed to purchase a minimum of five British made anti-submarine Type 26 frigates for the Royal Norwegian

Navy. The deal is believed to have been around £10 billion. The ships will be built by a consortium led by BAE Systems.



The Japanese Meteorological Agency reported that Tokyo had recorded ten consecutive days of temperatures at or above 35 celsius, the longest streak since records began 1875.



OpenAI released their latest multimodal large language model, ChatGPT-5 to the public. The company claimed it has 'PhD-level intelligence'.



August Sports Review

Red Bull GmbH finalised the acquisition of the Newcastle Falcons rugby union club. It was the latest venture into sports following the companies ventures into football, Formula One and ice hockey.



September News Review

American President Donald Trump proposed a 20-point peace plan to end the Gaza war. The plan included the release of all hostages, and end to the war and the withdrawal of Israel, the disarming of Hamas and a temporary transitional government. The proposal was made at the end of the month and although hopes were high an agreement hadn't been reached at the time of writing.



Angela Rayner resigned as Deputy Prime Minister and left her other government posts after a scandal regarding her under paying on a property she owns in East Sussex. Prime Minister Keir Starmer appointed David Lammy, the foreign secretary, as

the new deputy PM. The Secretary of State for Justice, Shabana Mahmood was made the new home secretary.

The Bayrou government of France collapsed after losing a vote of no



confidence in the National Assembly. The government lost by 364 votes to 194. Francois Bayrou, the French prime minister, later submitted his resignation. President Emmanuel Macron appointed Sebastien Lecornu as the new prime minister. The appointment coincided with country-wide protests against austerity measures. Police and gendarmes were deployed nationwide to deal with the protests.

Approximately 890 people were arrested at a demonstration against the ban of the Palestine Action group in London. Later in the month more than

100,000 people protested against illegal immigration in London, the rally was led by Tommy Robinson the right-wing activist. Left-wing rounds and anti-racism protesters held counter-protestors.



The United Kingdom ambassador to the United States, Peter Mandelson was dismissed from the role after emails were released revealing a closer relationship with Jeffrey Epstein than previously acknowledged.

Charlie Kirk, the American right-wing political activist was shot dead during a debate at Utah Valley University in Utah, United States. Kirk was shot while discussing mass shootings in the US with an

audience member. The 22 year-old, Tyler James Robinson was arrested and was later charged with the murder days later. Prosecutors are believed to be seeking the death penalty due to the political motivation behind the killing.

Russian President Valdimir Putin signed a law denouncing and leaving the European Convention against Torture. The signing comes after the country left the Council of Europe in 2022.



South Korea announced it had suspended their 'Voice of Freedom' military radio broadcast to North Korea for the first time in 15 years. The move is believed to be a measure to reduce tensions between the countries.

The European Commission fined Google 2.95 billion Euros for allegedly abusing its position as the leading

search engine. It was said they committed anti-trust violation in advertising technology.



UNICEF reported that obesity had surpassed undernourishment as the leading form of global malnutrition

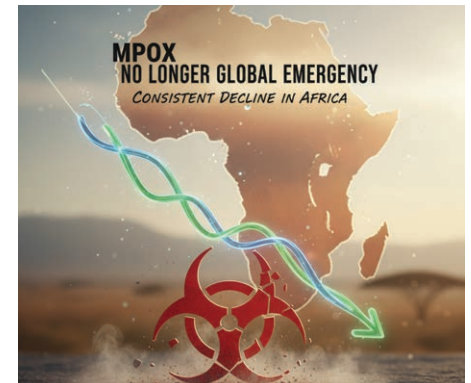


among children and adolescents for the first time.

Jaguar Land Rover were hit with a cyberattack that put a pause on vehicle production for around three weeks.

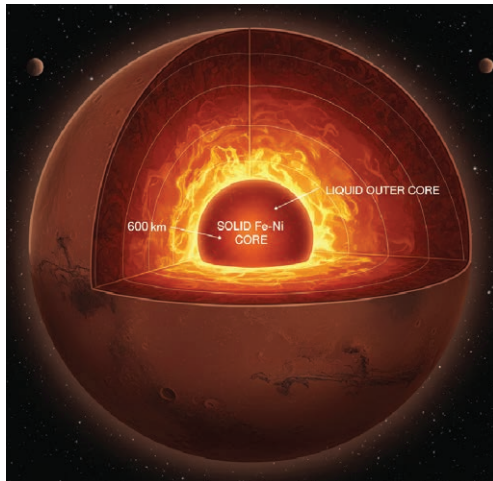


The director general of the World Health Organisation, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus declared that mpox was no longer a public health emergency of international concern. He cited a consistent decline in cases in Africa.



Ethiopia launched the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, the largest hydroelectric dam in Africa. The launch raised concerns about the water security of the Nile from Egypt and Sudan.

Scientist reported that Mars has a solid core of iron and nickel around 600 kilometres in radius, surrounded by a liquid outer core. The report was based on seismic data from the NASA InSight lander.



The 2025 Venice Film Festival closed with the Golden Lion going to Jim Jarmusch's *Father Mother Sister Brother*.

September Sports Review

In golf, Team Europe retained the Ryder Cup after beating the United States 15-13 in New York. The tournament was somewhat marred by stories of unacceptable crowd behaviour to the European team, staff and family members.



The England Rugby team beat Canada in the Women's Rugby World Cup final. England produced a dominant display and won by 33 to 13 to claim their third Women's Rugby World Cup.

In tennis, Aryna Sabalenka beat Amanda Anisimove 6-3, 7-6 in the women's singles final to win her second consecutive US Open title. On the mens side of the draw, Carlos Alcaraz

defeated the defending champion Jannik Sinner 6-2, 3-6, 6-1, 6-4 to win his second US title.

Terence Crawford beat Canelo Alvarez by unanimous decision to become the undisputed super middleweight champion. He also became only the second three-weight undisputed boxing champion.

In football, Frenchman Ousmane Dembele and the Spanish player Aitana Bonmati are awarded their first Ballon d'Or and third consecutive Ballon d'Or Feminin respectively.

Andrzej Bargiel became the first person to complete a continuous ski descent of Mount Everest without supplemental oxygen.



End



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England's mayors gather to pledge national walking, wheeling and cycling network, backed by government

July

From: Active Travel England and Simon Lightwood MP

National active travel network will provide 3,500 miles of safer routes for better connectivity, targeting areas where health and air quality are poorest.

- national active travel network to give healthier and greener travel options to millions across the nation
- pledge to deliver an initial 3,500 miles of safer routes to schools, shops and high streets, workplaces and transport hubs
- projects will help tackle the country's inactivity crisis, easing pressure on the NHS and boosting productivity, as part of government's Plan for Change

Ministers are backing a coalition of 12 of England's combined authority mayors, who have signed an ambitious joint statement pledging to create a national active travel network, enabling millions of

happier, healthier and greener journeys from Berwick to Bristol.

West Yorkshire's Tracy Brabin, South Yorkshire's Oliver Coppard, York and North Yorkshire's David Skaith, Hull and East Yorkshire's Luke Campbell, the North East's Kim McGuinness, the West of England's Helen Godwin and the East Midlands' Claire Ward met with National Active Travel Commissioner, Chris Boardman, and the UK's Chief Medical Officer, Professor Sir Chris Whitty, in York



yesterday (1 July 2025) to kickstart the plans.

Greater Manchester's Mayor Andy Burnham, Liverpool City Region Mayor Steve Rotherham, Tees Valley Mayor Ben Houchen, West Midlands Mayor Richard Parker and Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Mayor Paul Bristow have also signed the pledge published today. In addition, Mayor of London Sadiq Khan has added his signature in support of the agreement.

Launching in autumn 2025, the programme will begin with Mayoral combined authorities agreeing an initial network of 3,500 miles of safer routes connecting housing to schools and high streets, targeting areas where health and air quality are poorest, helping to reduce stark health inequalities.

This will help more of their regions' 20 million residents meet recommended

activity levels, reducing risks of type 2 diabetes, heart disease and depression while supporting the government's Plan for Change by easing pressure on the NHS and boosting growth. The new routes and projects will focus on prevention rather than cure, by building health and wellbeing into everyday activities.

The multi-region project will begin work in around 1,000 schools, creating 300 safer routes for people walking, wheeling and cycling.

National Active Travel Commissioner, Chris Boardman, said:

“Our regional leaders have today marked the start of an exciting chapter by pledging to give people across the country more transport choice.

We know that more walking, wheeling and cycling will improve our country's mental and physical health, but it will do much more, it's the foundation for thriving integrated public transport networks, it increases access to work, boosting local economic growth and it will give millions of children more independence.

People will only consider travelling actively if it is easy and safe. That's what the mayors have today pledged to do and that's why government is backing them. It's

going to have a hugely positive impact on millions of people's daily lives.”

Local Transport Minister, Simon Lightwood, said:

“I know I am one of many who enjoy the physical and mental health benefits that come with walking or cycling to work or school.

That's why this government is investing £616 million over the next 4 years, on top of £300 million announced in February, to give more people around the country high-quality and healthy ways to get around, and supporting mayors' plans to create a joined-up network.

It is a key part of our Plan for Change, boosting local businesses, growing local economies and easing pressure on the NHS.”

As part of the agreement, the Mayors have committed to:

- Work with the Department for Transport, Active Travel England and local authorities to create a country-wide national walking, wheeling and cycling network, comprising local networks that are safe and easy to use. This will give their regions' 20 million residents access to high-quality, safe routes in their communities.

- Transform the school run by delivering high-quality, safer routes in neighbourhoods nationwide.

- Boost regional integrated transport networks by giving people easy walking, wheeling and cycling access to buses, trams and trains, which will link to new housing and support local economic growth.

The initiative comes as recent research shows 1 in 6 early deaths could be prevented with regular moderate exercise. Meanwhile, a study from 2023 to 2024 found that, in England, 35.8% of year 6 children were overweight or living with obesity, with 22.1% living with obesity.



Chief Medical Officer Professor, Chris Whitty, said:

“Increasing physical activity has health benefits across the life course. As part of this, we need to make walking and cycling more accessible and safer, as well as access to green space easier and more equitable.

This will help remove barriers to improving physical activity levels and could significantly improve the health of England’s increasingly urban population.”

The first wave of improving active travel routes to schools will include the delivery of proven and popular schemes, including school streets, traffic calming measures, new crossings and better pavements, clear of obstructions.

Regional mayors will lead local implementation with interventions tailored to their communities’ needs and develop programmes to enable more active travel, such as walking and cycling buses for children.

The programme will be delivered using regional resources with additional targeted investment from Active Travel England, improving efficiency by combining separate funding streams in a mission-led approach.

Parents urged to read more to boost children’s life chances

July

From: Department for Education and The Rt Hon Bridget Phillipson MP

The Education Secretary is calling on parents to lead by example and make reading a daily habit to help reverse the decline in reading for pleasure, to help give kids the best start in life as part of the Plan for Change.

The call comes as the Department for Education and National Literacy Trust join forces to launch a National Year of Reading, starting in January 2026 to kick start a reading revolution. It will reverse the trend as just one in three aged 8 to 18 said they enjoyed reading in their free time in 2025.

Bringing together parents, schools, libraries, businesses and literacy experts, the campaign aims to foster a love of reading for pleasure in children and young people, ensuring all children get the best start in life.

Reading for pleasure isn’t just a hobby. It’s linked to a range of benefits including stronger writing skills, improved wellbeing and confidence, and even higher future earnings, with new data showing those proficient in reading and writing in primary school earn £65,000 more over their lifetime.

The government inherited a system which is holding too many children back from future success with over a quarter leaving primary school not meeting the expected standard in reading. This grows to 40% and 59% respectively for children from white-working class backgrounds and those with special educational needs.

The Year will build on the action already underway to drive high and rising standards in literacy including investing £27.7 million to support the teaching of reading and writing in

primary school and targeted support for struggling readers in secondary school, as well as the ongoing curriculum and assessment review.

The campaign contributes to the government's driving mission to break the link between a child's background and what they go on to achieve and comes as the Education Secretary sets out her vision for ensuring every child gets the best possible start in life and starts school ready to learn including by boosting early literacy skills through the expansion of the government's network of English Hubs.

Education Secretary, Bridget Phillipson said:

"As someone whose love of reading was sparked in childhood, I know just how powerful books can be in shaping young



lives.

Reading holds the keys to so much of children's education, so the decline in reading for pleasure among young people should sound alarm bells loud and clear.

This can't be just a government mission. It needs to be a national one. So, it's time for all of us to play our part, put our phones down and pick up a book.

When parents take the time to read with their children early on, they lay the foundations for strong literacy skills, helping kids to be school ready. By making reading a daily habit, even just 10 minutes a day, we can help give kids the best start in life, as part of the Plan for Change."

To kick start the reading revolution this summer, the National Literacy Trust will distribute over 72,000 new books to children in areas with the highest rates of child poverty to support positive reading habits at home.

This comes during the Summer Reading Challenge to ensure more children have the opportunity to take part and build a love of reading over the break.

CEO of the National Literacy Trust,

Jonathan Douglas, said:

"At a time when we are witnessing the lowest levels of reading enjoyment and daily reading in a generation, we are delighted to be working with the government to deliver the National Year of Reading 2026 - a bold, society-wide campaign to reimagine how we understand, support and promote reading. Reading is the foundation of a successful life - the key to unlocking potential, strengthening social cohesion, enhancing wellbeing and boosting skills.

The National Year of Reading 2026 presents an opportunity to join forces across sectors and redefine reading as a powerful, contemporary activity for a generation. Working closely with schools, families, libraries, communities and partners across the country, we will make reading a shared national mission - because every child, no matter their background, deserves the best start in life and every adult deserves to get the best out of life."

The campaign will be packed full of exciting school and community events and activities supported by a

dedicated website, backed by over 30 organisations so far including Premier League, Julia Rausing Trust, Arts Council England, the Very Group and a range of publishers.

Clare Sumner, Chief Policy and Social Impact Officer at the Premier League said:

“The Premier League has worked alongside the National Literacy Trust for nearly 25 years, using the power of football to inspire children across England and Wales to develop a love of reading from a young age. Through our Premier League Primary Stars and Premier League Inspires education programmes we continue to support children and young people aged five to 18. Since 2017, we have provided over 350,000 free books to schools and a range of free curriculum-linked resources using children’s passion for football to engage them in learning. We look forward to working alongside the National Literacy Trust and the Department for Education to engage young people as part of the National Year of Reading.”

CEO of the Publishers Association, Dan Conway, said:

“Publishers are proud to be working

with the government and partners to help transform lives through reading. A wide range of publishers of all sizes have contributed financially and the whole publishing industry is ready to get behind this campaign to ensure it sparks lasting behaviour change. This is a once in a generation opportunity for us to work with the government and make a huge difference for the benefit of society. Reading for enjoyment is the best indicator of a child’s future success and brings a huge number of benefits from supporting mental health, helping develop empathy and encouraging children to explore their interests independently.”

Karen Napier MBE, CEO, The Reading Agency said:

“The Reading Agency is delighted to be here in the No 10 Garden to champion this year’s Story Garden Summer Reading Challenge, which brings



together the magic of nature and the joy of books. It is a wonderful moment to celebrate the power of stories to spark imaginations across the country.

We believe every child deserves access to the transformative power of reading, and that journey begins in the library this summer. Sign up for this free, fun way to keep children reading all summer long.

With 26 years of evidence behind it and with the National Year of Reading approaching, we look forward to everyone building on the 15 million reading journeys already started through this life-changing programme.”

Simon Fourmy, Director of The Julia Rausing Trust, said:

“The National Year of Reading 2026 is an exciting campaign that builds on the Trust’s longstanding support of literacy initiatives. It will encourage people across the UK to engage with books, bringing opportunities to develop essential skills and a life-long love of reading. The Julia Rausing Trust is proud to be an early funder, and we encourage others to join us in supporting this important campaign”.

Amnesty launched as part of mission to halve knife crime

July

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

Young people across the country are being urged to surrender bladed weapons including ninja swords to help prevent further loss of young lives to knife crime.

With the support of Word 4 Weapons and FazAmnesty, young people will be able to anonymously hand in any weapons to surrender bins or a purpose-built and fully secure van, across London, Greater Manchester and West Midlands – the 3

highest areas for knife crime in England.

Part of the government's most ambitious surrender scheme yet and Plan for Change, the 37 new amnesty bins and the locations of the mobile surrender van will be strategically placed in these high-risk areas throughout July, in partnership with local councils, to provide young people with an accessible, alternative way to hand in weapons without needing to go to a police station.

Throughout the month the government's Coalition to Tackle Knife Crime and other grassroots organisations will be using their platform as trusted voices in communities to encourage young people to hand in their weapons via these routes, while signposting them to local support services.

From 1 August 2025, deadly ninja swords will be banned in full – illegal to possess in public or private – and so, in addition to

the surrender arrangements across the 3 hotspot areas, people will also be able to hand in ninja swords to designated police stations across the country.

Policing Minister Dame Diana Johnson said:

"The launch of today's scheme is a result of months of collaborative working with the Coalition to Tackle Knife Crime and I'm optimistic about what we can achieve together over the next month and then the years to come as part of our Plan for Change.

I am incredibly grateful to Pooja Kanda, Sandra Campbell and Faron Paul whose work to tackle knife crime is making a real difference to young peoples' lives.

This scheme is just one part of addressing knife crime. We will not



stop listening to those who are directly working with those impacted by this crime.”

The scheme has been designed to provide people with a range of ways to hand in weapons outside of police stations. Word 4 Weapons and FazAmnesty, both members of the government’s Coalition to Tackle Knife Crime, have a proven track record in supporting young people to surrender dangerous weapons and directing them towards local support.

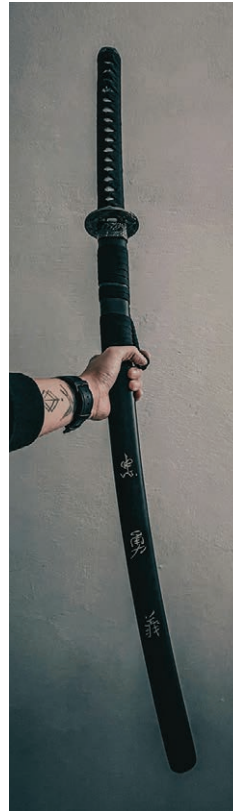
Faron Paul, Founder of FazAmnesty said:

“I’m proud to support the extended surrender scheme and the launch of the mobile amnesty van which gives people a safe and easy way to hand in weapons, knives and other dangerous items. By taking this service directly into communities, I hope we can reach more individuals, encourage positive decisions and help reduce the number of harmful items on our streets.

This initiative is an important step towards preventing violence, building trust and supporting our ongoing efforts to create safer, stronger communities for everyone.”

The ninja sword surrender and

compensation scheme will also be running in tandem throughout July in police stations across England and Wales. The ban on ninja swords is a result of the tireless campaigning of the Kanda family, who tragically lost their



son Ronan in 2022 when he was killed with one of these deadly weapons. The ban on ninja swords is part of Ronan’s Law which was introduced to Parliament this year and includes measures to stop the illegal sale of knives online. Ronan’s Law will be included in the Crime and Policing Bill.

Members of the public wishing to surrender a ninja sword in exchange for compensation should take them to their local police station. Ninja swords can also be surrendered

in any available surrender bin however this will not result in any compensation. Full details about how to claim compensation for ninja swords can be found on GOV.UK or via local police.

Pooja Kanda, knife crime campaigner and mother to Ronan said:

“It has been 3 years since Ronan’s life was tragically taken as a result of the wounds inflicted by a ninja sword. Since then, we have relentlessly campaigned for ninja swords to be taken off the streets as they have no place in society.

The government has now introduced a much needed ban on ninja swords, and we encourage those in possession to surrender them to make the community a safer place where children can walk home without fear.”

CEO of Word 4 Weapons, Sandra Campbell, said:

“Word 4 Weapons, in partnership with the Home Office, proudly supports the ninja sword ban and the removal of dangerous weapons and knives from public spaces to help build safe communities for all.”

UK to lead crackdown on cyber criminals with ransomware measures

July

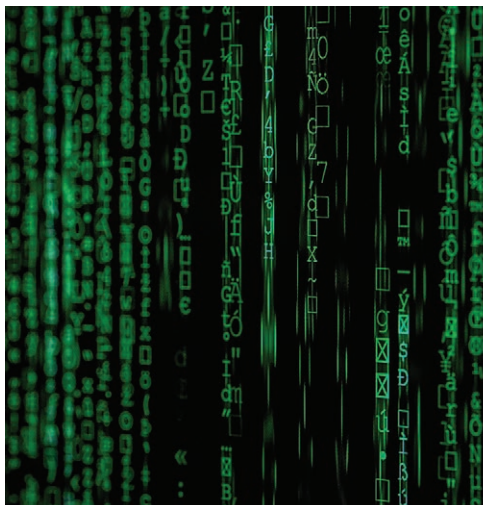
From: Home Office, National Cyber Security Centre and Dan Jarvis MBE MP

Measures to tackle the threat of ransomware and protect businesses and critical services will be taken forward with industry following public consultation.

Hospitals, businesses, and critical services are set to be protected under measures designed to crack down on cyber criminals and safeguard the public, following public consultation on ransomware proposals.

Ransomware is software used maliciously by cyber criminals to access victims' computer systems. Systems and data can be encrypted, or data stolen, until a ransom is paid. Ransomware is estimated to cost the UK economy millions of pounds each year, with recent high-profile ransomware attacks highlighting the severe operational, financial, and even life-threatening risks.

Public sector bodies and operators of critical national infrastructure, including the NHS, local councils and schools, would be banned from paying ransom demands to criminals under the measure, with nearly three quarters of consultation respondents showing support for the proposal.



The ban would target the business model that fuels cyber criminals' activities and makes the vital services the public rely on a less attractive target for ransomware groups.

Under the proposals, businesses not covered by the ban would be required to notify the government of any intent to pay a ransom. The government could then provide those businesses with advice and support, including notifying them if any such payment would risk breaking the law by sending money to sanctioned cyber criminal groups, many of whom are based in Russia.

Mandatory reporting is also being developed, which would equip law enforcement with essential intelligence to hunt down perpetrators and disrupt their activities, allowing for better support for victims. Consultation responses showed

strong support for a new mandatory reporting regime to better protect British organisations and industry.

The new package of measures will lead the way in tackling ransomware and are designed to strike against cyber criminals' business model, bolstering our national security and protecting key services and businesses from disruption - delivering on our Plan for Change. They follow an extensive consultation with stakeholders across the UK which showed strong public backing for tougher action to tackle ransomware and protect vital services.

Security Minister Dan Jarvis said:

“Ransomware is a predatory crime that puts the public at risk, wrecks livelihoods and threatens the services we depend on.

That's why we're determined to smash the cyber criminal business model and protect the services we all rely on as we deliver our Plan for Change.

By working in partnership with industry to advance these measures, we are sending a clear signal that the UK is united in the fight against ransomware.”

In addition to the proposed new measures, the government continues to

urge organisations across the country to strengthen their ability to maintain operations in the event of a successful ransomware attack. This includes having offline backups, tested plans to operate without IT for an extended period, and a well-rehearsed strategy for restoring systems from backups.

Cyber criminals have not only cost the nation billions of pounds but in some cases have brought essential services to a standstill.

The devastating consequences are not just financial but can put lives in danger,



with an NHS organisation recently identifying a ransomware attack as one of the factors that contributed to a patient's death.

These attacks have brutally exposed the alarming vulnerability at the core of our public and private institutions, from flagship British retailers and essential supermarkets including the Co-op to NHS hospitals.

British Library Chief Executive Rebecca Lawrence said:

“The British Library, which holds one of the world's most significant collections of human knowledge, was the victim of a devastating ransomware attack in October 2023.

The attack destroyed our technology infrastructure and continues to impact our users, however, as a public body, we did not engage with the attackers or pay the ransom. Instead, we are committed to sharing our experiences to help protect other institutions affected by cyber-crime and build collective resilience for the future.”

NCSC Director of National Resilience Jonathon Ellison said:

“These new measures help undermine the criminal ecosystem that is causing harm across our economy.

Ransomware remains a serious and evolving threat, and organisations must not become complacent. All businesses should strengthen their defences using proven frameworks such as Cyber Essentials and our free Early Warning service, and be prepared to respond to incidents, recover quickly, and maintain continuity if the worst happens.”

Co-op CEO Shirine Khoury-Haq said:

“We know first-hand the damage and disruption cyber-attacks cause to businesses and communities. That’s why we welcome the government’s focus on Cyber Crime.

What matters most is learning, building resilience, and supporting each other to prevent future harm. This is a step in the right direction for building a safer digital future.”

These robust proposals are part of the government’s Plan for Change to defend businesses, services, and infrastructure against cyber threats to better protect the public.

Laptop recycling at Sellafield helps to bridge the digital divide

July

From: Sellafield Ltd

A collaborative laptop recycling scheme, is helping to bridge the digital divide across our local communities.

Passing on a previously used laptop might seem like a simple act of generosity—but at Sellafield, when it comes to boosting educational attainment, our laptop recycling scheme

is helping bridge the digital divide across our local communities.

The initiative, in partnership with our IT supplier Atos and Information Services Organisation (ISO), is now in its fourth year of repurposing decommissioned laptops—which are no longer suitable for Sellafield’s secure network—into vital educational tools for schools, charities, and community groups.

Over the past 18 months, our social impact team has revisited recipients to understand the real-world impact of these donations. The results speak volumes.

Thanks to partnerships with Western Excellence in Leadership and Learning (WELL) Programme and Laptops for Kids in Warrington, schools have introduced new courses in graphic design, film, photography,



and engineering. These opportunities are helping disadvantaged students build confidence, develop digital skills, and thrive in a technology-driven world.

Teachers, too, are seeing the benefits. With access to reliable, modern devices, they can focus more on teaching and less on troubleshooting outdated equipment—saving time and reducing frustration.

The scheme's reach extends beyond the classroom. Local charities have used donated laptops to support young people researching opportunities like the Duke of Edinburgh's Award, while others have transitioned from bulky desktop setups to lightweight laptops.

This shift has enabled them to repurpose space for adult learning and job-seeking support, amplifying the scheme's community impact.

Our commitment to social value continues to drive innovation in how surplus assets can be used for public good proving that sustainability and community development can go hand in hand.

Pam Collis and Emma Graham, from the ISO team within Sellafeld Ltd, who introduced this process within ISO, explain the importance:

We all recognise the vital role modern Information and Communication Technology (ICT) plays in the workplace, and the same holds true for school classrooms.

The future workforce needs access to the right tools, software, and equipment to develop their skills and progress. Without this access, they risk being left behind.

This potential for a digital divide is something we were determined to address through our social impact commitments.

By sharing ICT equipment that no longer meets our needs, we realised we could tackle digital poverty and boost digital literacy.

While we donate the devices, our supply chain partner Atos cleans, repairs, and prepares them for reuse, ensuring our data is securely removed. It's truly a collaborative effort.

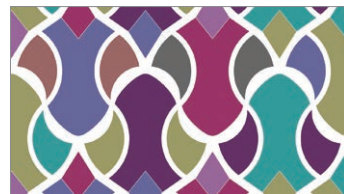
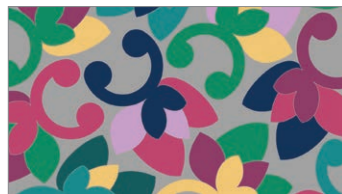
Our social impact team collaborates with projects and groups to make sure these devices reach those who need them most. And it's not just schools, local charities and community groups can benefit as well.



The collage features several distinct elements. At the top left is a poster for the 'SOUTH BANK EXHIBITION LONDON' with a colorful geometric design. To its right is a circular logo for 'THE GREAT WYCOMBE AND DISTRICT' with a swan and the text 'WYCOMBE MANUFACTURES 1800-1900'. Below these is a 'WELTERS' tag with a red elephant icon and the text 'WELTERS W of Wycombe'. To the right of the tag is a square graphic of concentric squares. Below the posters is a dark grey banner with 'Keith Welters' in a stylized font and 'FURNISHING' in white. Underneath this banner, the text 'welters® ORGANISATION WORLDWIDE Design and Innovation' is displayed, followed by the website 'www.welters-worldwide.com'. At the bottom right of the collage is a detailed bronze statue of an elephant.



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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.

Prime Minister unveils new opportunities for young people to re-connect with their communities

August

From: Department for Culture, Media and Sport,
Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street, The Rt
Hon Sir Keir Starmer KCB KC MP and The Rt Hon
Lisa Nandy MP

Prime Minister announces major expansion of youth services and real-world opportunities to re-connect young people with the world around them

- £88 million investment to support youth clubs and schools to offer more after-school activities, while enabling organisations like the Scouts and Guides to deliver more places in local communities
- Action delivers on Plan for Change and manifesto promise to back young people growing up in a digital-first world, with opportunities to build essential skills for life and work

Young people across the country will benefit from a major new expansion of youth services and activities outside of school, as the government takes action to re-connect young people with their communities.

Far from the default being outdoor activities, young people today are spending more and more of their time detached from the real world, either stuck in their bedrooms or behind a screen, throwing up huge challenges for them and their loved ones to overcome. Today the government takes bold action to give young people a better alternative, so they are supported rather than left behind.

Announcing a new £88 million package of support to transform opportunities for young people across the country, the Prime Minister will make clear that this government is picking this challenge up and seeing it for what it is – a worrying trend – and delivering real-life solutions for the long-term, investing in opportunities for young people.

Applying a grown-up approach to tackling a problem faced by parents and young people up and down the country, this government is investing in children's futures. From new

climbing walls and outdoor adventures to music lessons and volunteering, this package means that youth clubs and schools will now be able to offer more opportunities for young people to get active and connect with others, while building their confidence and broadening their horizons.

For far too long, young people have been locked out of their future, with youth services in England seeing a decade-long decline in investment of over 70%.

This government is turning the page. Backed by nearly £88 million, the package also delivers on the Prime Minister's promise to support parents and keep children safe – offering more opportunities in structured environments that help encourage young people off the streets.

It builds on wider action through the Plan for Change to back young people's

futures, including by extending voting rights to 16 and 17-year-olds, announcing the £500 million Better Futures Fund for young people's support services, and launching new guidance to protect young people from online harms.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer said:

“Growing up today is hard for young people. As they navigate their way through the online world, too often they find themselves isolated at home and disconnected from their communities.

As a government, we have a duty to act on this worrying trend. Today's investment is about offering a better alternative:



transformative, real-world opportunities that will have an impact in communities across the country, so young people can discover something new, find their spark and develop the confidence and life skills that no algorithm can teach.

Through our Plan for Change, we're backing parents by not only protecting our young people online, but giving them the support and opportunities they deserve so no child falls through the cracks.”

The Building Creative Futures package announced today includes:

- £22.5 million over three years to create a tailored enrichment offer in up to 400 schools. This will give pupils access to extra-curricular activities such as sport, art and music, outdoor activities, debating or volunteering that support wellbeing and essential skills around the school day.
- The launch of the Better Youth Spaces programme, a £30.5 million fund to improve youth club infrastructure in areas with the highest levels of child poverty. This will go towards smaller capital projects such as new gym equipment and climbing walls.
- The rollout of the Local Youth Transformation pilot, an £8 million programme to support local authorities to deliver a high-quality out-of-school offer.

It will provide the tools, guidance and funding, to assess, improve, and invest in impactful local youth offers.

- The third phase of the Million Hours Fund, a £19 million joint investment with The National Lottery Community Fund to deliver over a million additional hours of youth work in areas with high rates of anti-social behaviour.
- £7.5 million for the Uniformed Youth Fund, creating thousands of new places in youth organisations like The Scouts, Guides and Volunteer Police Cadets in areas of unmet demand.

Today's investment is the latest step towards the government's National Youth Strategy. Due to be published this autumn, the Strategy will be shaped by insights from over 20,000 young people engaged through the 'Deliver You' programme and will set out a long-term vision for youth policy across government.

Culture Secretary Lisa Nandy said:

“We know that strong local youth services are the bedrock of thriving communities that give our young people safe spaces to learn, grow and reach their potential.

Today's announcement is just the beginning. As we develop our National Youth Strategy ahead of its launch this autumn, we are already delivering on our Plan for Change by putting young people at the heart of our mission-led government ensuring they have the support and opportunities they deserve so that no one is left behind."

The investment today complements and builds on the work already underway to ensure every pupil has equal access to high quality extracurricular activity as well as PE and sport. This includes a new national network to build strong partnerships between schools, local clubs and National Governing Bodies to identify and break down barriers to sport and dance for children who are less active. New guidance to support schools to offer equal access to high-quality extra-curricular activities will also be published later this year.

Expanding youth provision will also have an impact in tackling child poverty and helping families access great local services. Children affected by poverty can face significant barriers to accessing after school and youth clubs. Today's announcement will help ensure that every child, no matter who they are, what their circumstances are or where they live, has the opportunity to participate in sports, arts, and other activities.

Firearms licensing guidance strengthened to protect the public

August

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

Tighter controls on firearms licensing will be introduced by the government to keep people safe and help the police apply the law consistently.

Statutory guidance for the police, published today, will strengthen how they determine who is suitable to hold a firearm or shotgun licence, better protecting the public and making streets safe, under the Plan for Change.

From today, the government will increase the number of referees required for shotgun certificate applications from 1 to 2, as well as providing new advice to referees on their responsibilities in supporting an application. This is in direct response to concerns raised by the senior coroner who held the inquests following the fatal shootings in Plymouth in August 2021. This will mean an additional person who has known the applicant well for at least 2 years will need to vouch for them, bringing shotgun referee checks in

line with wider firearms and making sure there is greater opportunity for any concerns about an applicant to be raised or identified.

Today's changes will improve the information the police have about an applicant's suitability to possess a gun.

The Home Office is also strengthening the guidance for how police should consider suspected domestic abuse or other violence, when someone is applying for a firearms licence. This includes making clear the police must speak to partners and household members to identify any signs of domestic abuse or any other factors which could indicate the applicant is not suitable to have a firearms licence.

The updated guidance will mean officers must carry out additional checks before approving a licence to make sure those who perpetrate such crimes or have a record of violence are not

permitted to access firearms.

Any evidence of dishonesty or concerns about a person's integrity will also bring into question their suitability to hold a gun. This could include lying on the application form or withholding details about relevant health conditions.

Policing Minister, Diana Johnson, said:

"Only those who meet the highest standards of safety and responsibility should be permitted to use shotguns or firearms, and it is crucial that police have full information about the suitability of all applicants for these lethal weapons.

The events in Woodmancote in 2020, Plymouth in 2021 and other cases provide a tragic reminder of what can happen when these weapons are in the hands of the wrong people, and we must do everything we can to protect the public.

That is why, as part of our Plan for Change, we are giving the police the tools and resources they need to make safe, timely and consistent decisions when it comes to firearms licensing.

This is just one part of our mission to make our streets safer. We will also launch a public consultation on the controls on shotguns and other firearms issues later

this year."

The stricter controls have been welcomed by Emma Ambler, a campaigner who has called for stricter gun laws after her twin sister Kelly Fitzgibbons, and her 2 nieces, Ava and Lexi Needham, were tragically murdered in 2020 with a legally owned weapon.

Firearms campaigner Emma Ambler said:

"I'm really pleased that the government is strengthening the current firearms licensing guidance. Although there is still some way to go, these changes are very welcome and it is pleasing to finally feel listened to after 5 years of campaigning to make the system safer.

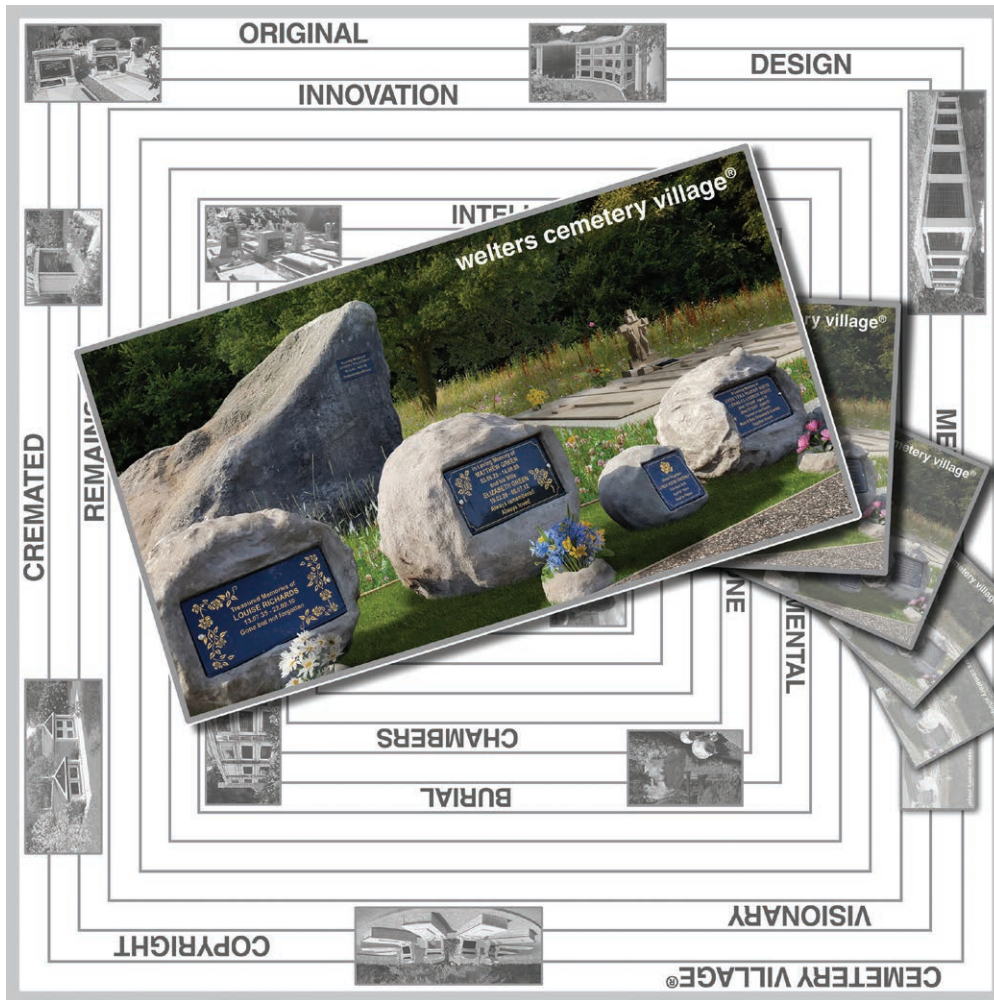
I still believe that holding a gun licence is a privilege and not a right. The priority has to be the safety of society and it's so important to stop these extremely dangerous

weapons falling into the wrong hands, which these changes will go some way to doing.

I'm pleased there is going to be a further consultation and it's really important that the general public respond to this, not just gun owners, as unfortunately these tragedies can impact anybody."

The strengthened statutory guidance is just part of the government's work to ensure firearms laws fully protect the public. In light of the weaknesses exposed by the tragic shooting of Juliana Falcon and 2 of her children, Giselle and Kyle Prosper, with a gun which was bought fraudulently by her son, the government will be consulting later this year on measures to strengthen the existing controls on shotguns, alongside seeking views on measures to improve controls on the private sales of firearms.





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Energy bills cut for communities helping electrify Britain

August

From: Department for Energy Security and Net Zero
and Miatta Fahnbulleh MP

People living near pylons to get £2,500 off electricity bills over 10 years, as smart meter plans are unveiled to give consumers better rights and compensation.

- People living near pylons set to get £2,500 off their electricity bills over 10 years
- Latest step to deliver a cleaner, cheaper energy system in addition to the government's planning reforms to drive out the blockers
- Comes as new plans for smart meters will give consumers clearer rights and better compensation

The government is teaming up with local communities to get Britain building – driving growth and delivering clean energy as part of the Plan for Change.

Electricity bills to be cut for thousands living near new pylons, as the government moves forward with plans to get Britain building and put communities at the heart of a cleaner, more affordable, homegrown energy system.

Those living near new pylons across Great Britain are set to receive up to £2,500 off their bills over 10 years, as the government tomorrow (Friday 8 August) launches a consultation on proposals included in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill. The plans could see eligible households save up to £250 off their electricity bill a year, receiving a £125 discount every 6 months.

This delivers on the government's commitment to get Britain building again, under its Plan for Change, while ensuring those supporting Britain's clean energy mission receive direct, meaningful benefits.

Around twice as much new transmission

network infrastructure will be needed by 2030 as has been built in the past decade, with the government's new planning reforms – announced earlier this year – aiming to remove barriers and back the builders.

Rural communities across Great Britain could benefit most of all from the bill discounts as government speeds up vital upgrades to the nation's outdated electricity network. Building a clean, homegrown, affordable energy system that Britain controls will protect billpayers from global fossil fuel price spikes and unlock economic growth and investment.

Minister for Energy Consumers Miatta Fahnbulleh said:

As we build the infrastructure we need to deliver homegrown, affordable energy, communities must be given a stake.

That is why we are teaming up with communities hosting new pylons to ensure they receive direct, tangible benefits.

We are on the side of those who want Britain to get back to what it does best: building for the future, driving innovation and putting communities first.

This comes alongside confirmation millions of households will be supported to take control of their energy usage and bring down their bills under new plans to transform the consumer smart meter experience.

Tough new obligations will be placed on energy suppliers to improve every stage of the smart meter process, under plans being put forward tomorrow. The reforms, set to be introduced next year, include new and improved compensation for long installation and repair wait times.

The proposals set out by Ofgem include requirements to cut waiting times for installation appointments and fix meters that have stopped working in smart mode within 90 days – or provide consumers with automatic compensation.

A new guide to smart metering will support families to gain a better understanding of their rights, by clearly setting out in one place everything households can expect

from suppliers when they get a smart meter. This will be developed into a new Consumer Charter for smart metering in due course.

This is in addition to connectivity improvements across Scotland and the north of England, including the roll out of 4G cellular communication services, which will enable millions of households to feel the benefits of getting a smart meter installed.

Charlotte Friel, Director of Retail Pricing and Systems at Ofgem, said:

Millions of consumers rely on their smart meter every day for accurate billing, cheaper tariffs, automatic meter readings and real-time data to help keep track of spending.

But we know many customers that want a smart meter wait too long to get one installed or face delays on repairs when it stops working – this needs to change.

We're working closely with suppliers to drive improvement, and have seen more than 600,000 faulty smart meters reconnected since last July after we opened compliance engagement. This is only the beginning – with automatic compensation, faster fixes, and improved installation standards well on the way,

getting a smart meter will be quicker and easier than ever.

These new rules are about setting clear expectations of suppliers, incentivising them to boost smart meter standards, and protecting consumers from poor service if things go wrong.

The measures set out will help households across the country enjoy lower bills through better management of their energy usage and access to



more flexible tariffs, ensuring consumers are put first as suppliers work to install smart meters in all remaining homes by the end of 2030.

This marks an important step towards repairing the energy retail market, building on the government's plans set out earlier this year to make sure that energy consumers can access redress more fairly, quickly and easily when things go wrong.

The consultation, launching tomorrow, on direct and meaningful benefits for communities who live close to new transmission infrastructure also marks a key step in delivering on the government's clean energy mission.

A recent study found that 77% said that new electricity network infrastructure in Great Britain would be acceptable, but acceptability dropped to 61% for infrastructure in respondents' local area. The government is putting consumers at the heart of plans to rewire Britain's outdated transmission network – ensuring those living near these works see money off their bills in return.

Stakeholder reaction
Dhara Vyas, Chief Executive Officer of Energy UK, said:

Much of the country's energy infrastructure

was built several decades ago and designed for a system very different from the one we have today - or the one we need in the future. Expanding and upgrading the delivery of energy to homes and businesses is long overdue and urgently needed.

Clean power will drive economic growth across the UK, and ensuring we get the maximum benefit from our own sources of clean energy is the best way to deliver stable, affordable bills and to increase Great Britain's energy security.

Some areas and some customers will of course be particularly and physically affected by these efforts and the energy industry will continue to work with these communities to ensure that they can reap the benefits of these investments.



The introduction of a new approach to community benefits is welcome and marks a significant step in turning the proposals in the Planning and Infrastructure Bill into reality, helping to address the cost-of-living crisis and ensuring local communities that host clean power infrastructure feel an immediate and tangible benefit.

New networks are vital to a clean power system, helping to deliver a cost-effective, secure, and economically sustainable system for the future.

Dan Brooke, Chief Executive of Smart Energy GB, said:

Progress has been made in improving the smart meter customer experience, with 9 in 10 smart meters now operating in smart mode and the latest data from Citizens Advice and Ofgem showing that people's satisfaction with smart meters has increased over the last 18 months. The latest data also shows that the vast majority of people are happy with their smart meter.

It's important that people have a positive experience of smart meters, whether they're already an owner or looking to get one installed. The range of technical reforms outlined by

government today – including expanding 4G services and allowing people to securely connect to the smart meter network using their broadband – will improve smart meter performance and mean more homes can have one installed.

These technical improvements, along with the government's new guide to smart metering, will provide reassurance to households and allow an even greater number to enjoy the benefits that smart meters bring, including more control over energy use and access to flexible tariffs that can help save money.

Chris Lovatt, Chief Executive Officer of Data Communications Company, said:

Working closely with our customers and the Department for Energy, Security and Net Zero we are proud to have designed and delivered the next generation of communication hubs, leveraging 4G technology and available nationwide. Early installations show a step change in performance and offer significant per meter saving compared to legacy technology.

We are committed to playing our part, upgrading our connectivity services and operational support to deliver the best and most cost-effective smart metering experience for our customers.

Job boost for newly qualified nurses and midwives

August

From: Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England and The Rt Hon Wes Streeting MP

Thousands of new jobs will be unlocked across the healthcare sector to make sure there are enough jobs for every newly qualified nurse and midwife in England.

- Qualified nurses and midwives given better job opportunities upon graduation with new Graduate Guarantee
- New support for both graduates and trusts to improve recruitment processes and ensure a seamless transition from training to employment
- Better staffing of the NHS, part of Plan for Change to build an NHS fit for the future and improve care for patients

Thousands of new jobs will be unlocked across the healthcare sector thanks to government action to make sure there are enough jobs for every newly qualified

nurse and midwife in England.

The government's Graduate Guarantee will ensure thousands of new posts are easier to access by removing barriers for trusts, creating a wealth of opportunities for graduates and ensuring a seamless transition from training to employment.

These new measures aim to tackle graduates' concerns about job availability, after record numbers of people chose to study nursing during the pandemic, while fewer nurses and midwives leave the profession.

While this demonstrates real progress in health professionals choosing to stay and thrive in their NHS careers, it has created barriers in the workforce - with up to 3 times as many graduates as there are vacancies in some areas.

To address this, the government

has committed to a comprehensive package of reform and support, which will see more healthcare professionals deployed across a wide variety of sectors, improving access for patients as part of our Plan for Change.

This package comes as a result of collegiate and good faith working between government, the Royal College of Midwives and the Royal College of Nursing, demonstrating that by working together, the NHS, patients and staff all benefit.

Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Wes Streeting, said:

“It is absurd that we are training thousands of nurses and midwives every year, only to leave them without a job before their career has started.

No one who dedicates themselves to a nursing or midwifery career should be left in limbo, when their skills are so urgently needed in the effort to rebuild our NHS.

I am sending a clear message to every newly qualified nurse and midwife: we're here to support you from day one so you can provide the best care for patients and cut waiting lists. This new guarantee will benefit nurses, midwives and patients,

helping to build an NHS fit for the future as part of our Plan for Change.”

NHS providers will begin recruiting newly qualified nurses and midwives before vacancies formally arise, with trusts supported to employ staff based on projected need rather than headcount, ensuring the NHS has the right number of staff to provide the best possible care to patients everywhere.

Additionally, every newly qualified nurse and midwife will receive the backing they need to succeed in their first role, which includes an online hub with important information and advice for those applying



for roles.

Vacant maternity support worker posts will be temporarily converted to Band 5 midwifery roles, backed by £8 million to create new opportunities specifically for newly qualified midwives and further ease the recruitment strain.

Chief Nursing Officer for England, Duncan Burton, said:

“Having been a student nurse, I know how important it is to feel supported, valued, and able to get on with the job you have trained so hard to do.

Every nurse and midwife deserves the guarantee of a job to apply for when they graduate, so we're unlocking more opportunities right across health and care and providing refreshed online advice and support with applications to help ensure a smooth transition into employment.

We have more nurses and midwives than ever before choosing to stay working in the NHS, which is fantastic for patients, but we must ensure our newest graduates get the same opportunity to put their skills and passion to use without frustrating

delays.”

Royal College of Nursing General Secretary and Chief Executive, Professor Nicola Ranger, said:

“Our student members have led the way in calling for ministers and healthcare leaders to provide certainty and clarity on jobs. Today’s announcement is welcome news that should provide hope to students as they come towards the end of their education and training.

When the health service urgently needs nursing staff, it was absurd to leave people in limbo. The test of this will be if students can find jobs, vacant posts are filled, and patients receive the care they deserve.

Ministers have to continue listening to nursing staff who are crying out to have their critical work valued - today’s action takes us all a little closer.”

Gill Walton, Chief Executive of the Royal College of Midwives, said:

“We’re pleased that the government has listened to the voices of student midwives who are desperate to start their career, only to find those opportunities blocked. I know today’s announcement will come as

a relief to so many of the RCM’s student midwife members.

These are people, mainly women, who have worked incredibly hard to complete their degree and are trained and ready to support our current midwifery workforce at a time when so many maternity services are under pressure. Ensuring we have the right midwifery staff, in the right places, at the right time, with the right education and training has never been so crucial as services are striving to improve safety.”

Today’s new package of support is centred on patient care and the nursing and midwifery workforce, signalling a fundamental shift towards valuing and nurturing newly qualified professionals from day one of their careers, backed by investing in training and guaranteeing employment opportunities.



For newly qualified nurses and midwives, these changes mean greater certainty and access to a wide and diverse range of roles.

For the health service, they mean better workforce planning, improved retention and enhanced capacity to deliver patient care. For patients, they mean shorter waiting times and access to a well-supported, confident workforce.

Our Plan for Change is already delivering on making the NHS fit for the future, by working with staff to improve working conditions and ultimately patients’ experience.

Paul Rees MBE, Chief Executive and Registrar of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), said:

“A guaranteed opportunity for a role after years of hard work in education is excellent news for future nursing and midwifery graduates. It means highly trained professionals can move into roles more quickly, utilising their skills and knowledge for the benefit of patients and communities.

This is critically important at a time of rising demand for health and social

care. We will continue working to place all new graduates on our register quickly and safely, so they can begin their roles at the earliest opportunity.”

Steph Lawrence MBE, Chief Executive at the Queen’s Institute of Community Nursing (QICN), said:

“The QICN welcomes this news which will ensure we retain our newly registered nurses and also give them a good start to their journey as a registered nurse. It will be essential to ensure this occurs across all sectors of the NHS and in particular in community, given the shift from hospital to community.”

Vivienne Stern MBE, Chief Executive at Universities UK, said:

“Our healthcare graduates power the NHS and this guarantee of additional support into employment is good news for students, the NHS and the country. This commitment comes at the perfect time as thousands of healthcare students prepare to start their university experience.

Our NHS is the envy of the world, and our universities stand ready to strengthen their partnerships with the NHS to deliver the workforce pipeline on which the future health sector depends.”

New report sets out technology and research needed to reach net zero

August

From: Government Office for Science

A new report identifying the research and technology needed to meet the UK’s net zero target has been released.

Developed by the Government Office for Science, the Net Zero Technology

Outlook sets out a ‘best estimate’ of the technology mix needed in key emitting sectors to reach net zero by 2050, and identifies the research and development (R&D) needed to get there.

In support of the government’s



Clean Energy Superpower Mission, this Outlook offers an independent analysis of the technologies the UK must prioritise by 2050 to deliver on its net zero commitments. It is a tool for policymakers and the research community, pinpointing where targeted R&D investment can have the greatest impact and accelerate progress. By providing clear, evidence-based insights, the report equips decision-makers with the confidence to make informed choices that will shape the UK's net zero future.

By showing the way forward on research and technology around net zero, the Outlook supports the government's mission to back homegrown energy technology to grow the economy, create jobs, boost skills, and strengthen energy independence.

Government Chief Scientific Adviser Professor Dame Angela McLean said:

"The UK faces one of the most important challenges of our time – climate change – and we need brilliant ideas and innovations to help tackle it. The Net Zero Technology Outlook is our best estimate of the future when it comes to the technology, research and development needed to reach net zero. I hope policymakers and researchers alike will

use this report as a guide for their work to help ensure the best possible outcome on our path towards that target."

The report covers 18 sub-sectors within 5 major emitting sectors:

- industry
- transport
- heat and buildings
- agriculture, land use and waste
- power

For each sub-sector, the uncertainty

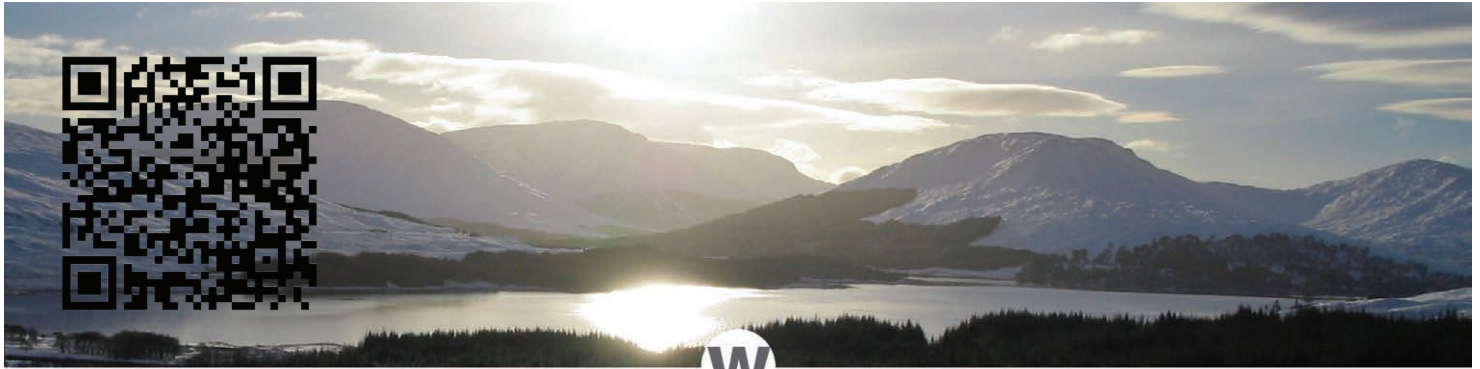


and current technology and market readiness level of technologies that might be part of the mix in 2050 have been assessed. Some sub-sectors include 'wildcard' technologies: novel and nascent technologies that are highly uncertain but potentially transformative.

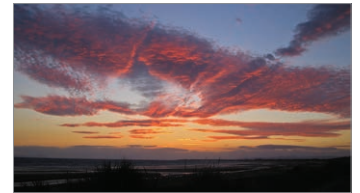
The analysis drew on more than 20 interviews and a peer review exercise with around 45 experts from the research community, as well as input from relevant government departments. Relevant information from established scenario modelling, policy documents, and industry sources was also incorporated.

The report also sets out R&D challenges for 3 cross-cutting technology strands: greenhouse gas removals and carbon capture and storage, hydrogen and biomass. R&D needs for each sector are categorised by technology development, delivery and policy support.

To learn more about the technologies and R&D that will drive the UK towards its net zero target, read the full Net Zero Technology Outlook report.



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Government to combat flu outbreaks by removing red tape

September

From: Department of Health and Social Care, UK Health Security Agency and Stephen Kinnock MP

The government will remove red tape, allowing doctors and pharmacists to prescribe flu medicines year-round to reduce winter pressures and protect the NHS.

- Rule change will allow doctors and pharmacists to better respond to flu outbreaks
- Patients will get access to vital treatment for flu whatever time of the year
- Government reducing restrictions and slashing bureaucracy to help save lives and protect the NHS

Patients will get the flu medicines they need more quickly and at any time of the year, thanks to government changes to prescribing regulations.

As part of its commitment to reduce

winter pressures and protect the NHS, the government is removing the restriction that means certain flu medications cannot begin to be prescribed outside the usual



'flu season' until an annual letter of confirmation from the Chief Medical Officer is received, which can lead to delays in treatment.

These rules are being removed so action can be taken to tackle flu all year round. This will allow patients to receive treatment sooner and ease winter pressures by allowing outbreaks to be contained.

The move is part of the government's ongoing drive to slash unnecessary bureaucracy in the health service through the red tape challenge and put power back in the hands of clinicians on the frontline.

It coincides with the NHS launching this year's improved flu vaccine programme today (1 September 2025). The autumn rollout kicks off with flu vaccines for millions of children and pregnant women. And it follows the recent introduction of the chickenpox

vaccine for thousands of children and the RSV vaccine for pregnant women and older adults across the country, as the government continues building the NHS's defences ahead of winter.

Health Minister, Stephen Kinnock, said

"Flu can strike all year round, so it doesn't make sense to restrict doctors and pharmacists from taking action to protect the most vulnerable in their communities.

That's why, as well as starting the flu vaccination programme today, we are also removing the need for clinicians to have to ask for permission to prescribe what their patients need.

It is exactly the type of change we wanted to see when we launched the red tape challenge to bulldoze bureaucracy and prioritise patients over paperwork."

While the number of flu outbreaks outside of the 'flu season' in October to March is relatively low, the potential outcomes are no less severe. Removing these barriers now will enable the NHS to respond more quickly to health challenges year-round, strengthening its preparation for winter.

Until now GPs and pharmacies had to be commissioned via a patient-specific direction to prescribe certain medicines,

which led to delays. It also meant clinicians could prescribe some medicines and not others.

The reasons for the restrictions no longer apply, and removing them means clinicians can provide the right treatment at the right time to patients. Specifically this change will allow oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) and zanamivir (Relenza®) to be prescribed and dispensed outside the flu season.

These antivirals are recommended for treatment of those at highest risk of severe disease outside of the flu season, following a confirmatory test for flu. They



are also recommended to prevent disease in specific settings such as care homes where confirmed cases of flu have occurred.

Dr Jamie Lopez Bernal, consultant epidemiologist for immunisation at the UK Health Security Agency, said:

"While the majority of influenza cases and outbreaks occur during the flu season, we do continue to see outbreaks outside the peak period.

These changes will allow primary care providers and health protection teams to respond more rapidly with effective treatment to reduce the risk of severe disease and the spread of infection at any time of year."

As the flu vaccination programme gets underway, vaccine teams are working across the country to make it as easy as possible for those eligible to get their jabs - with some school providers now offering vaccines in nursery settings for 2 to 3 year olds for the first time ever.

Expectant mums and all children aged 2 to 16 are eligible for the flu vaccine, expanding to 6 months to 18 years old for those in clinical risk groups.

New remote face scanning tech to monitor offenders and cut crime

September

From: Ministry of Justice and Lord Timpson OBE

Thousands of criminals could be kept under additional surveillance by new technology to enhance how the Probation Service monitors offenders and cuts crime.

- New monitoring software to use AI to heighten offender surveillance – preventing crimes before they happen
- Pilot to help cut crime in communities by cracking down on reoffending
- Part of £8 million tech drive to make our streets safer with our Plan for Change

The government has announced that as part of a new pilot, offenders will have to answer to remote check-in surveillance on their own mobile devices. This is in addition to their tough licence conditions, like GPS tags and in person appointments with their probation officer, to make our streets safer.

The tough new measure will also require offenders to record short videos of themselves and use artificial intelligence to confirm their identity. They will also have to answer questions about their behaviour and recent activities.



Any attempts to thwart the AI ID matching or concerning answers will result in an instant red alert being sent to the Probation Service for immediate intervention, helping prevent crimes before they happen.

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

“This new pilot keeps the watchful eye of our probation officers on these offenders wherever they are, helping catapult our analogue justice system into a new digital age.

It's bold ideas like this that are helping us tackle the challenges we face. We are protecting the public, supporting our staff, and making our streets safer as part of our Plan for Change.”

The pilot is being trialled in four Probation regions across England

– the South West, North West, East of England and Kent Surrey and Sussex – before being considered for further rollout with additional tech add-ons, such as GPS location verification.

This technology is part of a new £8 million drive by the Lord Chancellor to enhance criminal surveillance and deliver safer streets for communities blighted by prolific reoffending.

It follows the launch of the department's AI Action Plan and recent meetings with top tech firms to explore the use of cutting-edge tools to toughen up punishment. Ideas pitched to Ministers included AI powered home monitoring and the use of synthetic brain cells to replicate the behaviour of a human nose to detect illegal drug use.

This announcement follows the introduction of the Sentencing Bill which set out plans to reform sentencing and end the prison crisis.

In the Spending Review, the government announced that the Probation Service will receive up to £700 million, an almost 45% increase in funding. This new funding will mean tens of thousands more offenders can be tagged and monitored in the community.

Drought expected to continue through autumn despite recent rain

September

From: Environment Agency, Natural England, Met Office and Emma Hardy MP

The National Drought Group has warned that the current drought is far from over despite the recent rain.

Even with the wet weather at the end of the month, August's rainfall was just 42% of its long-term average and the summer has been declared the hottest since records began in 1884.

Five areas remain in drought, with more areas likely to declare drought status within the next few weeks, as groundwater and reservoir levels across England continue to recede.

A lack of rainfall has impacted harvests, navigation, and seen restrictions in the form of several hosepipe bans.

It also has a significant impact on the breeding pattern of some animals, as well as peatlands drying out and at least

3,000 hectares of SSSI land (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) destroyed by wildfire.

Today's meeting of the NDG heard some key impacts:

- Approximately 20% of the Canal & River Trust network is closed because of low water levels, concentrated mainly but not exclusively across northern and central England. This compares with 15% in 2022. Around 400 miles of the network are affected.

- Some reservoirs that feed several canals run by the Canal & River Trust, including sections of the Grand Union, Leeds & Liverpool, Peak Forest, Oxford and Macclesfield are critically low. Peak Forest & Macclesfield group holdings are just 11.1% full.

- The dry weather has seen an early harvest season with generally lower and poorer quality crop yields.

- Reservoirs fell by 1.4% last week. They are now 56.1% full on average across England. The average for this time of year is 82.8%.

- The lowest reservoirs are the Pennines group (29%), Yorkshire stocks (30.3%) and Ardingly (34.1%)

- Latest dry weather information here: Dry weather and drought in England: summary reports - GOV.UK

A drought is only over when groundwater, river and reservoir levels are fully replenished, and experts have warned it will take a wet autumn and winter to reverse the impacts of seven continuous months of below average rainfall. This means flooding during a drought is possible, including flash floods as dry soils struggle to soak up intense downpours.

Alan Lovell, Chair of the Environment Agency, said:

“While we have seen some recent rain, it is nowhere near enough to reverse the impact of the last seven months, which have been the driest since 1976.

The environment bears the brunt of this lack of rainfall, and this summer we have seen widespread impacts from low river

levels, fish needing to be rescued, and wildfires.

We are calling on everyone to continue to take simple steps to reduce their water use and are grateful to people for following the restrictions imposed by water companies. By saving water, we all leave more water in the environment.”

Water is finite and there are competing demands between public use, businesses, agriculture, and the environment. During drought, water still needs to be abstracted from rivers, reservoirs, and groundwater but summer rainfall typically doesn't replenish these sources.

The NDG - which includes the Met Office, government, regulators, water companies, the National Farmers' Union, Canal & River Trust, anglers, and conservation experts - praised the public for helping to



reduce their own water use. Lowering water use means less needs to be taken from local rivers and lakes, therefore protecting the health of our waterways and wildlife.

Met Office Chief Meteorologist, Will Lang, said:

“The top five warmest UK summers on record have all occurred since 2000, with summer 2025 now officially the hottest.

High pressure dominated throughout the season, bringing persistent warmth, below-average rainfall, and drought conditions for many areas.

Looking ahead, while the longer-range forecast suggests a trend towards wetter-than-average conditions, rainfall is expected to vary significantly across regions, with more rain expected to western and northern parts of the UK, while eastern and southern areas may remain drier.

Importantly, even with the overall signal for wetter weather, and the chance for flooding in some places, this does not guarantee that current drought conditions will ease consistently across the country.

Drought conditions and the potential for flooding can occur at the same time in different parts of the UK, such is the nature of our climate.”

The current water shortfall situation in England has been defined as a ‘nationally significant incident’ based on the number of areas affected and the impacts being seen in the environment.

Natural England addressed today’s group, noting:

- Eighty-three SSSI sites have reported fires so far, including Dartmoor and the North Yorkshire Moors that saw more than 500 hectares burnt.
- Lower water levels, and a lack of rainfall to top up spawning pools, are significantly impacting the breeding success of species



such as natterjack toads and Atlantic salmon.

- As well as dehydration, garden animals - including hedgehogs and birds - are struggling with a lack of insects to eat because of the dry soils.
- Wetland birds, such as shoveler duck and curlew, are facing decline because of a loss of wetland and open water habitat in drought.

Dr Tony Juniper, Chair of Natural England, said:

“Drought conditions are having a catastrophic effect on our flora and fauna, which lasts long after rain returns.

Some Atlantic salmon streams have dried up and there are declining populations of wetland birds and amphibians. Garden animals such as hedgehogs are dying because their insect-based food sources disappear during drought.”

Many farmers have really suffered this year because of drought, following a year when they were hit by extremely wet weather. As the impacts of climate change ramp up we will experience more of these kinds of extremes.

We need to take action now to make our

landscapes more resilient, including through the creation of more wetlands to help cope with the effects of both drought and flood.

The Environment Agency continues to work with Government, including Defra and the Cabinet Office, on the drought response.

It is also conducting more compliance checks on businesses who abstract water from the environment, has increased monitoring of water levels, and continues to work with farmers on water conservation.

The regulator is actively engaging with water companies on requests for drought permits and drought orders – meaning water is diverted from the environment to secure public supplies.

The EA expects all water companies to follow their statutory drought plans, which can include Temporary Use Bans (TUBs) aka hosepipe bans. Yorkshire Water has a Temporary Use Ban (TUB aka hosepipe ban) in place for all its customers. Thames, South East Water, and Southern Water have postcode-specific bans.

eNGO Waterwise used the meeting to reveal new joint research into public

attitudes towards hosepipe bans – noting more than two-thirds of the public (70%) are in favour when it's hot, dry, and sunny, with just 11 percent against.

The meeting also heard updates from the water companies and steps they are taking to conserve supplies.

Water Minister Emma Hardy said:

“This year's weather has been severe for our environment, and we are working with the National Drought Group to mitigate the impacts of this.

Water companies must continue to follow their drought plans to secure water supplies - I will hold them to account if they don't.

We face a growing water shortage in the next decade and are pushing ahead with urgent reforms under our Plan for Change, including nine new reservoirs to help secure supplies.”

NDG PARTNER QUOTES:

Mark Owen, Head of Fisheries at the Angling Trust, said:

“Since we started feeling the impacts of drought at the beginning of March, we have seen a range of impacts on fish in

rivers and still waters.

Elevated temperatures and reduced oxygen have caused fish kills in still waters, while low flows on rivers have impacted migratory fish - such as salmon and sea trout - because they have not been able to move into their spawning areas. This has made them vulnerable both from predation and the impacts of low dissolved oxygen.

Whilst it's too early to say, we are concerned that this will have an adverse impact on reproduction this year and, given the endangered status of salmon, this is a concern for further fish stocks.

There have been wider impacts on wildlife with the increase in wildfires impacting on habitats, decrease in capacity to store water and degradation of soils particularly in upland areas. Dried out wetlands have

adversely impacted on wading birds during the nesting season.”

Dr Mark Roberts, Water Management Specialist at the National Trust, said:

“This year's drought has left a clear mark on nature. Dried-up springs in the Lake District have impacted water supplies and depleted water bodies have caused the death of fish.

Both our newly planted and ancient trees have struggled since early spring, with usually lush flower borders in our gardens showing real signs of stress, hampering their ability to provide food and shelter for a variety of insects including bees and amphibians such as frogs.

Using our new internal app to monitor the impact of weather on National Trust



places, we've already recorded over 40 environmental impacts since May. This is helping to give us vital data to understand where and how nature is struggling so we can begin to act earlier in the drought cycle to protect wildlife and habitats.

However, with long periods of low rainfall likely to become the new 'norm', we desperately need more tools such as early warning systems that enable the wider public to help protect nature by making informed decisions about saving water at home."

Nicci Russell, CEO of Waterwise, said:

"We surveyed more than 2,000 people across the UK at the end of August and found more than two-thirds of the public agree that during hot dry and sunny conditions it's right to ask people not to use a hosepipe. Just 11 percent disagreed, showing that most people are supportive of restrictions when necessary.

The majority of people (70 percent) are taking action to save water and there is a growing recognition that, without action, we could run out.

Nothing happens without water, and we all have a part to play to help beat the current drought."

Support for adults facing staggering waits for gender services

September

From: Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England and The Rt Hon Wes Streeting MP

Adults waiting for gender services will receive clinical and emotional support from a new wellbeing pilot.



- Thousands of adults waiting for gender services to receive clinical and emotional support from new wellbeing pilot

- Patients in the south-west of England are waiting over 8 years for a first appointment, as evidence shows unacceptable waits cause higher rates of mental health issues

- NHS England is improving gender dysphoria services, with top medical director conducting major review into ways to improve adult services

Thousands of adults waiting for adult gender services will receive more clinical and wellbeing support, after the government inherited a situation where waiting times have soared.

The NHS has doubled investment in these services and opened 5 new clinics over the past 5 years but waiting times at an adult gender dysphoria clinic in the south-west are around 8

years, with over 5,000 people in the region waiting for a first appointment.

Evidence shows transgender people have higher rates of mental health conditions, including depression, which longer waiting times risk exacerbating.

A new pilot, backed by £125,000, will provide those on waiting lists with access to support and information before appointments, including digital mental health support and community-based services.

The Health and Social Care Secretary announced the launch of the pilot scheme at the NHS England LGBT+ Health Annual Conference in London - which brought together clinicians, policymakers, healthcare providers and representatives from the LGBT+ voluntary sector to drive improvements in LGBT+ health and care.

Health and Social Care Secretary Wes Streeting said:

It is fundamentally wrong that so many LGBT+ people still face challenges when accessing healthcare - including barriers such as discrimination, misunderstanding, and miseducation.

The result is that LGBT+ patients face longer waits, have poorer experiences of

healthcare and suffer from high rates of mental ill health.

This pilot marks a major step - acknowledging the unacceptable waits endured by thousands of transgender patients and starting to tackle it head on. As we build an NHS fit for the future, we will ensure that it is there for everyone equally and stamp out systemic health inequalities that the LGBT+ community face.

Professor James Palmer, NHS national medical director for specialised services, said:

We know there are unacceptably long waits for many of these services.

This is why we have commissioned an independently led review into the operation and delivery of the adult gender dysphoria clinics, alongside work we have already undertaken to introduce new care models that are making significant progress in helping to bring down these very long waits.

Patients on waiting lists for adult gender services will also be able to access online cognitive behavioural therapy through the NHS's Silvercloud service. NHS England is conducting a review of the operation and delivery of the adult gender

dysphoria clinics, following concerns raised by Dr Hilary Cass, who led the Cass Review into gender services, about adult services.

Dr David Levy is leading this review, supported by an expert panel of patients, clinicians, independent regulators and members of relevant professional bodies.

This review is examining how services operate, how they work for patients, areas of concern, and action being taken to improve them. It will look at best practice that can be shared with other clinics, and any further support that should be made available.



Hundreds of thousands of children benefit from major dental health drive

September

From: Department of Health and Social Care,
Department for Education, Olivia Bailey MP and
Stephen Kinnock MP

Hundreds of thousands of 3 to 5-year-olds in deprived areas of England have received over 2 million toothbrushes and toothpastes in major dental health drive.

- Groundbreaking government collaboration with Colgate-Palmolive will deliver more than 23 million toothbrushing products to support the NHS and help protect children from tooth decay
- National supervised toothbrushing programme is tackling health inequalities and raising the healthiest generation of children, as part of the government's Plan for Change

Over 2 million free toothbrushes and tubes of toothpaste have been delivered to children in the most deprived areas of England, thanks to a groundbreaking partnership between the government and

Colgate-Palmolive.

The milestone this month is part of the government's Plan for Change to give children the best start in life. It marks the beginning of a 5-year collaboration between the government and Colgate-Palmolive to help children develop positive toothbrushing habits and set them on a path to better oral health.

Up to 600,000 3 to 5-year-olds in early years settings will benefit from the pioneering scheme which will help to develop good toothbrushing habits this school year.

Health Minister Stephen Kinnock was in Sheffield yesterday visiting Tinsley Primary School to see how the rollout was progressing in the city, where nearly 9,500 children will receive brushing products this year.

Health Minister Stephen Kinnock said:

"It is Dickensian that a third of 5-year-olds in the most deprived areas of this country have suffered tooth decay, and that children are most commonly admitted to hospital to get their teeth removed.

Our Plan for Change is tackling the country's shameful health inequalities and rooting out these health issues that can have a lifelong impact on children as we drive forward a major shift in care from treatment to prevention.

Our partnership with Colgate-Palmolive will help give children the best start in life by reinforcing good toothbrushing habits, vastly improving dental and oral health."

Education Minister and Minister for Equalities Olivia Bailey said:

"Giving children the best start in life means giving them the skills and

habits that set them up for the future, and that includes something as simple but vital as daily toothbrushing.

Through our Plan for Change, we are working across government to make sure tens of thousands more children - a record share - are school-ready at age 5, so they reach the school gate healthy, confident and ready to learn.

Alongside delivering important schemes like this one, we have increased access to high-quality early years care for hundreds of thousands of families through the rollout of 30 hours' government-funded childcare, and through our Best Start in Life strategy we're going even further to rebuild early years services, recruit more early years teachers and open Best Start Family Hubs in every local authority."

The scheme will reduce the number of decayed teeth in children, which remains the most common reason for a 5 to 9-year-old child to be admitted to hospital in England, with 70 a day having teeth extracted due to decay.

Through its Plan for Change, the government is tackling health inequalities, like tooth decay in children, as part of its major shift from sickness to prevention. The government is also driving forward action to improve oral health across the

country and fundamentally reform the NHS dental sector.

Alongside investment in Best Start Family Hubs - which will act as a one-stop shop for parents seeking support on everything from breastfeeding difficulties and housing issues to children's early development and language - the government is also taking action to raise the healthiest generation of children and tackle health inequalities by cracking down on junk food advertising, introducing new healthier baby food standards and banning the sales of high-caffeine drinks to under-16s.

Supervised toothbrushing is the government's first step to improving children's oral health. There has also been a consultation to expand community water fluoridation to the North East, which will help improve dental health and tackle long-standing inequalities in the region.

Through an innovative collaboration with Colgate-Palmolive, 2 million toothbrushes and toothpastes have been delivered, with a total of over 23 million toothbrushes and toothpastes committed over the next 5 years to support the programme.

Designed to reduce inequalities in oral health and to make sure every child living in a deprived area has access to evidence-based oral health interventions

across the country, the programme is expected to return £3 for every £1 the government invested, with a potential of over £34 million generated for the investment committed this year over the next 5 years.

This initiative complements action



already underway through the Plan for Change to make family life easier and ease the burden on parents, including the expansion of free school meals to households on Universal Credit, a cap on school uniform costs, and the biggest ever increase in funded childcare.

Colgate-Palmolive's representative, Jimena Rodriguez, VP, Consumer Experience said:

"At Colgate-Palmolive, our purpose is to reimagine a healthier future for all. We believe every child deserves a healthier smile - and a brighter future.

That's why we were excited to see the launch of the Supervised Brushing Programme and to have already delivered more than 2 million fluoride toothpaste and toothbrush products directly to children who need them most, and an additional 3 million products by the end of December.

This achievement marks a significant step forward in tackling oral health inequalities and making meaningful, lasting impact where it's needed most.

The strides we are making today aren't just about brighter smiles - they are about building a solid foundation for better health and brighter opportunities for generations to come."

Dr Oosh Devalia, President of the British Society of Paediatric Dentistry (BSPD), said:

"The news of the progress being made in rolling out the supervised toothbrushing initiatives targeting areas of highest need is welcomed by the British Society of Paediatric Dentistry. We have been pushing for this for over a decade and had included it in our BSPD Blueprint to policymakers on the steps needed to turn around children's oral health.

It is an evidence-based intervention that gives children a better oral health start in life, as well as saving money for the NHS in the long-term - and it is simple to carry



it out in early years settings. This is a great start, but there is still much to do to reach all the children who need this support."

Cllr Dr Wendy Taylor, Chair of the Local Government Association's Health and Wellbeing Committee, said:

"Supporting children, particularly in the most deprived areas, to develop positive brushing habits and prevent tooth decay is vital to improving overall health outcomes, reducing health inequalities and easing pressure on other areas of the health and care system.

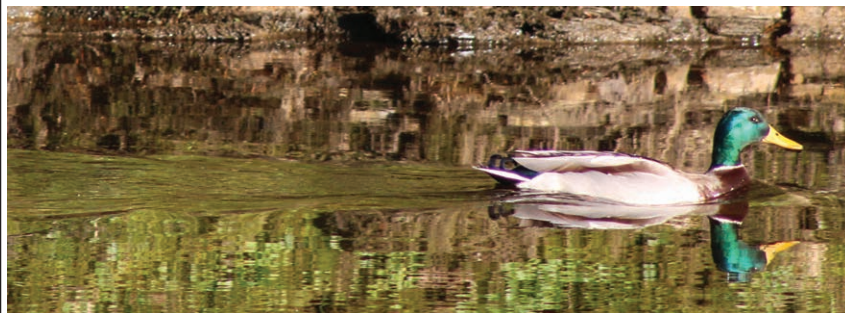
We know that right from a young age, good oral health can impact the speech, sleep, eating and overall health of a child. Councils up and down the country have been working hard with local early years providers and schools to improve the oral health of children.

The national supervised toothbrushing programme is supporting councils at all stages, whether expanding existing efforts or beginning new ones, to improve children's oral health and help give every child the best start in life."

Forthcoming articles under consideration

- COP30 - due to take place 10th-21st November. What will be discussed and what agreements will be made?
- How is AI being introduced to our everyday lives? Are we confident that the benefits outweigh the risks?
- What will be included in the Autumn 2025 budget and how will it effect you?
- As the weather changes going into Winter, what can we all do to make sure we keep ourselves and others around us safe?

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edition of Welters World



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