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October - December 2025 British Edition



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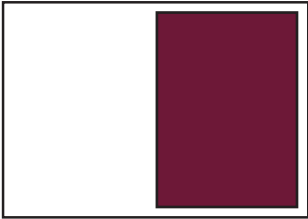
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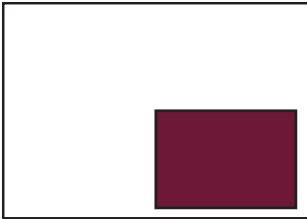
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Online GP appointment requests available everywhere from 1st October

October

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

From today, patients will be able to request appointments online throughout the day rather than calling their surgery or visiting in person.

- Phone lines unclogged as all GP practices in England now required to keep online consultation tools open from 8am to 6:30pm, Monday to Friday
- Move takes best of the NHS to rest of the NHS - with one surgery already cutting waits from 14 to 3 days and most patients seen within one week
- Comes alongside an extra £1.1 billion funding for general practice and over 2,000 more GPs hired

GP phone lines across the country will be freed up as practices are now required to keep their online consultation tools running throughout the day, in a major

step towards the government's ambition of ending the 8am scramble.

From today (1 October 2025), patients will be able to request appointments, ask questions and describe symptoms online throughout the day rather than calling their surgery or visiting in person. This will help free up practice phone lines for those who need them most, and make it more convenient to access appointments.

Online access is not consistent across the country and is especially difficult in overlooked areas. Some GP practices turn online requests off when they reach a certain number, while others only have the online function available for a few hours a day. When patients can't get through on the phone, 6.6% end up in A&E, which is worse for them and more expensive for the taxpayer. By fixing the front door of the NHS, these reforms will help to ease pressures on other parts of the health service.

Care Minister Stephen Kinnock said:

"We promised to tackle the 8am scramble and make it easier for patients to access their GP practice - and through our Plan for Change, that's exactly what we're delivering.

We are bringing our analogue health service into the digital era, giving patients greater choice and convenience. We've learned from GPs who are already offering this service and reaping the rewards.

We've invested an extra £1.1 billion in general practice - the biggest increase in over a decade - and hired an extra 2,000 GPs across England. There's more to do, but this government is fixing the front door to the NHS."

This change was agreed with the BMA back in April, as part of the reforms the government made to the GP contract.

To ensure all GPs provide this service and meet demand, the government is providing unprecedented support for general practice and shifting care and vital resources to the community. This includes investing an additional £1.1 billion in general practice - the biggest increase in over a decade - and hiring an extra 2,000 GPs since July 2024. This has led to 5

million more appointments being delivered this year compared to last, with latest ONS data showing 3 in 4 patients now find it easy to contact their practice.

The new requirement for online access represents best practice that some GP practices across England have already adopted successfully. Evidence shows that where practices have moved to this 'modern general practice' approach, both staff and patients report improved service quality.

One London GP surgery that adopted this approach to online requests reduced waits from 14 days to just 3, with 95% of patients seen within a week.

Online patient submissions have grown significantly, with almost 6 million submissions in July 2025 compared to 3.4 million in July 2024, demonstrating growing patient preference for digital access options that fit around their daily lives.

Dr Amanda Doyle, National Director for Primary Care and Community Services at NHS England, said:

"Improving access to general practice is a top priority for the NHS and while latest data shows a record 3 in 4 people found it easy to contact their GP, there is much

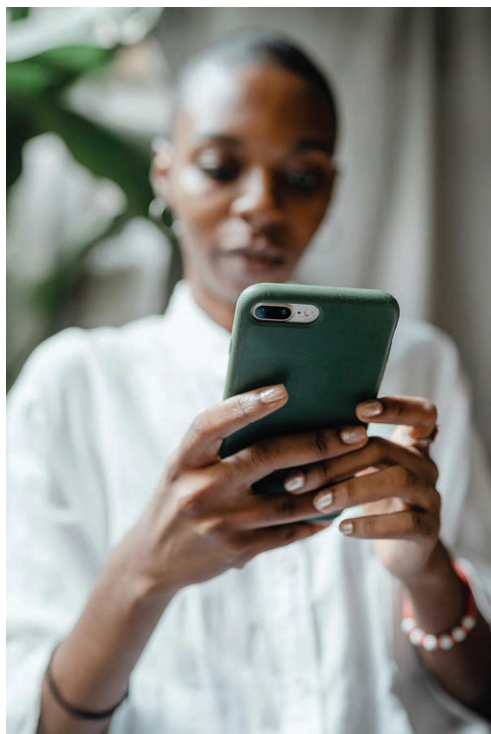
more to do - which is why requiring all practices to keep their online consultation tools open during core hours is so vital.

This step will help modernise general practice by making online access as easy as calling or walking in to your practice, ensuring the phone lines are available for those who need them most and making it easier for practices to triage patients based on clinical need."

NHS England has provided extensive support to help practices implement the changes, including a peer support programme and case studies from practices already offering online access throughout core hours.

Practices are now also required to publish a new patient charter dubbed 'You and Your GP' on their websites - informing patients what they can expect from their practice and how to give feedback or raise concerns. Practices are now required to have clear processes in place to receive patient feedback or concerns so they can be swiftly addressed.

Jacob Lant, Chief Executive of National Voices, said:



“Online booking systems are a fundamental building block of a 21st century NHS, but until now implementation has been frustratingly patchy.

The best GP practices have shown what's possible. Through this announcement the government, in keeping with the founding principles of the NHS, is rightly making this offer universal.

It is true that primary care is under immense pressure, but the answer to managing demand has to be in using these digital systems more effectively.”

Dr Duncan Gooch, GP and chair of the Primary Care Network at the NHS Confederation said:

“We know that access to GP services has consistently topped the public's priorities. The ‘8am GP scramble’ is one of the most

frustrating issues for the public when trying to book an appointment, and for practices - resulting in a strain on primary care. Providing patients with a range of routes to access their practice - such as by telephone, online or walk-in - can help ensure fair access to advice and treatment.

We also recognise that GPs may fear that this will lead to uncontrolled demand which impacts on patient safety. However, many of our members are operating in this way already and have been positive about the impact - not only on patients, but on the workforce too. Managing demand and providing better access has reduced stress on staff, conflict with patients and created a positive environment where job satisfaction is high.

This is not to take away from the fact that we still need more investment into general practice and GPs to help stem the increasing turnover and provide patients with the service they need.”

Louise Ansari, Chief Executive of Healthwatch England, said:

“Patients often tell us how frustrating they find the early-morning scramble for on-the-day GP appointments. Many people are stuck in long phone queues, only to be told all the appointment slots have

gone. People also tell us that online booking systems can be unpredictable - switched on and off at different times during the day with little notice.

Giving people the ability to contact their GP using the booking method that most suits them, at any time during their surgery's core hours, is a welcome shift. This move will help improve consistency, give patients greater choice, and mean they can fit appointment booking around work or caring responsibilities.

It's now up to NHS commissioners to ensure this change is felt nationwide so patients no longer face a postcode lottery when booking a GP appointment.”

To make sure those most in need are prioritised, GPs are now also being incentivised to identify patients who would benefit most from seeing the same GP at every appointment, so more patients see their regular doctor each appointment.

Patients will also benefit from over 8.3 million more appointments each year as over 1,000 doctors surgeries receive a bricks and mortar upgrade to modernise practices under the government's Plan for Change.



Critical UK satellites to be defended from laser threats

October

From: Ministry of Defence, UK Space Agency and Luke Pollard MP

The UK is investing in sensors that will help protect satellites crucial to our economy and security from lasers from adversaries

- New detection tech is being built to spot lasers that adversaries may use to dazzle satellites and intercept communications.
- UK Armed Forces project will help protect satellites that are used for everything from bank transfers and weather forecasts to emergency services and intelligence operations.
- One fifth of the UK economy is reliant on satellite services, with this latest innovation securing economic growth and making our country more secure as part of the Plan for Change.

British businesses, emergency services and more will be protected from drastic

disruption by new sensors that identify laser threats from adversaries to military and civilian satellites in space.

Lasers can be used by adversaries to track the location of satellites, dazzle or blind them, or to intercept and interrupt communications.

The new sensor technology under development will be able to determine



the characteristics of lasers based in space or on the ground and whether they pose a threat to the satellite, providing the military with crucial information to protect and defend UK and allied space systems and assets.

Nearly 20% of UK GDP is reliant on satellite services, which are essential for supporting daily life, including through communication, money transfers, navigation, emergency services, and weather forecasting.

Satellites are also critical to defence, providing capabilities such as intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance and providing instant communications to military platforms.

The new sensors are being developed by the UK Space Command (UKSC), which is a joint command of the British Armed Forces, and the UK Space Agency (UKSA), the Government body responsible for the country's civil

space programme.

The project is backed by around £500,000 of funding - the first allocated as part of the UKSA's Unlocking Space for Government programme, which aims to harness space to improve UK public services and strengthen national security as part of the Government's Plan for Change.

Today's announcement follows the Strategic Defence Review identifying defence in space as central to warfighting and protecting national infrastructure, as well as identifying investment in defence as an engine for growth that will be crucial to the Government's Plan for Change.

Minister for Defence Readiness and



Industry, Luke Pollard MP, said:

"Space is a hugely important and contested frontline and satellites play a vital role in UK prosperity and security. They are crucial to our everyday lives and provide a critical capability for our Armed Forces. It is essential they are protected.

Today's announcement shows our commitment to defend British assets in orbit - which protect us on the ground, in the air and at sea. This supports our national security, delivering on the Government's Plan for Change."

Major General Paul Tedman, Commander of UK Space Command, said:

"The Strategic Defence Review raised space to parity with the traditional warfighting domains and underscored the critical importance of space to our economy, prosperity and national security and defence. It made it clear that space does not just accessorise our way of war, in many respects it is changing it fundamentally. It also made clear that threats to our national interests in space are increasing.

In this new era of threats, UK Space Command is competing against a growing arsenal of adversary counterspace systems and requires new and innovative

edge technology to protect and defend our satellites.

Therefore, I am delighted that in less than 6 months after publishing the SDR, we are investing new money into this novel technology to accelerate our space programme."

Harshbir Sangha, Director of Missions and Capabilities at UK Space Agency, said:

"Protecting the UK's satellite infrastructure is vital to our national security, economy and daily life. This joint project with UK Space Command marks an important step in developing the tools we need to detect and respond to emerging threats in space. By investing in cutting-edge sensor technology, we're helping to ensure that the UK remains resilient and ready in an increasingly contested space environment."

The aerospace and defence sectors added over £42 billion to the economy last year, an increase of 64% in the last 10 years, delivering on the Government's Plan for Change. There are now 443,000 people now directly employed across the UK, with the Government making defence is an engine for economic growth.

New police powers to protect communities from disruption caused by protests

October

From: Home Office and The Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP

Police forces will be authorised to consider the 'cumulative impact' of protests, assessing previous activity when deciding to impose limits on protesters.

Police forces will be granted new powers to put conditions on repeat protests as the Home Secretary orders a fresh look at how protests are policed and organised.



The new powers, which will be brought forward as soon as possible, will allow senior officers to consider the 'cumulative impact' of previous protest activity.

If a protest has taken place at the same site for weeks on end, and caused repeated disorder, the police will have the authority to, for example, instruct organisers to hold the event somewhere else. Anyone who breaches the conditions will risk arrest and prosecution.

The Home Secretary will also review existing legislation to ensure that powers are sufficient and being consistently applied. This will include powers to ban protests outright, and will also include provisions in the Crime and Policing Bill, which is currently going through Parliament.

Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood said:

"The right to protest is a fundamental

freedom in our country. However, this freedom must be balanced with the freedom of their neighbours to live their lives without fear.

Large, repeated protests can leave sections of our country, particularly religious communities, feeling unsafe, intimidated and scared to leave their homes. This has been particularly evident in relation to the considerable fear within the Jewish community, which has been expressed to me on many occasions in these recent difficult days.

These changes mark an important step in ensuring we protect the right to protest while ensuring all feel safe in this country."

The government will make the improvements by amending sections 12 and 14 of the Public Order Act 1986 to explicitly allow the police to take account of the cumulative impact of

frequent protests on local areas in order to impose conditions on public processions and assemblies.

Further details will be set out in due course.

Policing Minister Sarah Jones visited Lambeth police HQ yesterday to see the Metropolitan Police's response to yesterday's protests where almost 500 were arrested. Most of those arrests were made for supporting the proscribed group, Palestine Action.

The minister spoke to Metropolitan Police leaders on the challenges of the protests and how new technology like live facial recognition could help in the future.

The Home Secretary will also write to chief constables today, thanking them for their swift and professional response following Thursday's terrible attack and at protests across the country. She will encourage them to use the full range of powers available to them to prevent and respond to public disorder.

Following the Yom Kippur terrorist attack in Manchester, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government Steve Reed has written to local authorities encouraging them to use their existing resources and powers to


ensure Jewish communities are protected in the coming days and weeks, including limiting protest activity as much as possible.

All police forces in England and Wales are working with the Community Security Trust to reassure and offer additional support to the 538 different synagogues and Jewish community sites across the country.

The announcement builds on measures already in the Crime and Policing Bill going through Parliament to support the policing of protests:

- banning the possession of fireworks, flares and other pyrotechnics at protests
- criminalising the climbing of specified war memorials, making it clear that such disrespectful behaviour is unacceptable
- banning the use of face coverings to conceal a person's identity at protests designated by the police





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Migrants will be required to pass A Level standard of English

October

From: Home Office and The Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP

Migrants will be required to pass tough new English language requirements under a law introduced in Parliament today (14 October), as the government continues to replace Britain's failed immigration system with one that is controlled, selective and fair.

Immigrants applying through certain legal routes must meet an A level equivalent standard in speaking, listening, reading and writing.

The Secure English Language Test must be conducted with a Home Office-approved provider, and the results will then be verified as part of the visa application process.

Home Secretary, Shabana Mahmood, said:

"This country has always welcomed those who come to this country and contribute.

But it is unacceptable for migrants to come here without learning our language, unable to contribute to our national life.

If you come to this country, you must learn our language and play your part."

Laid in changes before Parliament this week, the measures form part of the government's flagship immigration white paper and Plan for Change to deliver on the priorities of working people for tighter control of who comes to this country while continuing to attract top global talent.

The time for international students to find a graduate-level job after completing their studies will also be cut to 18 months from the current two years.

The immigration skills charge (ISC), which is paid by employers sponsoring

skilled foreign workers and reinvested in training the domestic workforce, is being raised by 32%.

The ISC increase is the first



since 2017 and will be used to boost investment in British workers and reduce reliance on overseas recruitment. The Parliamentary process to increase the charge will begin later this week.

To ensure graduates contribute effectively to the economy, the maximum post-study stay will be reduced to 18 months from the current 2 years for most from 1 January 2027. It comes after data clearly showed that many holders had not transitioned into graduate-level employment as intended.

Finance requirements for student visas will also be increased for the 2025 to

2026 academic year, meaning foreign students will have to demonstrate they have sufficient funds to support themselves.

A series of changes to position the UK as a global leader in attracting highly skilled talent, outlined in the immigration white paper, and aligned with the UK's industrial strategy, are also being made.

Changes include:

- Expansion of the High Potential Individual (HPI) route to graduates from the top 100 international universities, with a cap of 8,000 applications per year. The number of people coming to the UK through the HPI route is expected to double from 2,000 to 4,000, giving graduates from the world's best universities the chance to base their careers in the UK.
- The world's most talented entrepreneurs studying in the UK will also be able to seamlessly establish innovative business ventures in the UK after concluding their studies, while transitioning from a student visa to the Innovator Founder route.
- Enhancements to the Global Talent route, including an expanded list of prestigious prizes and changes to expand

some of the evidential requirements of achievement and contribution for architects.

The government aims to double the number of highly skilled people coming to the UK on our high skilled routes, including the best researchers, designers, and creatives working in film and TV to ensure continued competitiveness in growth sectors. Further changes, including to the Global Talent route, will be made in 2026.

The immigration white paper forms part of the Plan for Change to reform our immigration system, with further measures on asylum and border security to be announced later this autumn.

In further changes, effective from 3pm on the 14th October, all nationals of Botswana will now be required to obtain a visa before travelling to the UK, including for short visits.

This decision comes in response to a high number of Botswana nationals arriving since 2022 as visitors and subsequently claiming asylum, which is a misuse of the UK's immigration system.



£80 million support for children's hospices over 3 years

October

From: Department of Health and Social Care and Stephen Kinnock MP

Settlement provides £26 million annually offering crucial financial certainty for services supporting seriously ill children and families.

- Children's and young people's hospices will receive £80 million over 3 years
- Multi-year settlement provides certainty for vital services providing support for seriously ill children and families
- Funding will ensure thousands of children can continue to receive compassionate care and support

Children's and young people's hospices in England will receive almost £80 million in funding over 3 years, ensuring these services can continue supporting families during the most challenging times.

The multi-year revenue funding builds on

the government's £100 million investment in hospices - the largest in a generation - and will allow compassionate care to continue to be provided for thousands of children and their loved ones across the country.

This funding will be adjusted for inflation and distributed through local integrated care boards (ICBs), on behalf of NHS England.

Around 99,000 children across the UK are living with life-limiting conditions -



such as cancer, cystic fibrosis, brain or spinal injuries - a number that has tripled in the last 20 years. Hospices provide care, support and wraparound services for children with life-limiting conditions and their families.

This commitment for the remainder of this Parliament gives children's hospices certainty so they can plan ahead and continue to deliver high-quality, compassionate care to children with life-limiting conditions and their families during some of the most challenging times in their lives.

As part of the 10 Year Health Plan, the government will shift more care out of hospitals and into the community, to ensure patients and their families receive more personalised care in the most appropriate setting. The palliative and end-of-life care sector, including hospices, will have a big role to play in that shift.

Minister Kinnock yesterday (15 October 2025) visited Noah's Ark Children's Hospice in Barnet, London where he met children, families and staff. Noah's Ark has received £882,000 from this year's (2025 to 2026) £26 million allocation for children's and young people's hospices. Individual hospice allocations for the next 3 years will be published in due course.

Minister of State for Care, Stephen Kinnock, said:

"Children's hospices provide invaluable support to children, families and loved ones facing unimaginable challenges.

Through this funding, we are making sure hospices can continue delivering invaluable, compassionate and high-quality care to children and their families - and ending the cliff edge of short-sighted, annual funding cycles - providing certainty for children's hospices, but crucially for those they care for.

Having witnessed first hand the extraordinary impact of Noah's Ark, I am determined that children receive the excellent, wraparound care they deserve."

The revenue funding will be adjusted for inflation and distributed via ICBs, on behalf of NHS England. It is intended to be

spent by hospices to provide high-quality care and support for the children and families they care for, either in the hospice or in the community, including in children's homes.

They could use this funding to provide respite care for children who have high health needs, physiotherapy or occupational therapy, or 24/7 nursing support for a child at the end of their life.

Distributing funding through ICBs will help ensure there is a more consistent national approach, helping to end the postcode lottery of funding for palliative care services and meeting the needs of local populations across the country.

Nick Carroll, Chief Executive of Together for Short Lives, said:



"I warmly welcome this news and thank ministers for listening to families of seriously ill children and those who provide them with the children's hospice services they rely on.

Children's hospices are amazing and create precious moments of joy for seriously ill children and their families. As demand for this lifeline care grows in both volume and complexity, children's hospices are providing more support than ever before.

Maintaining and increasing this funding over 3 years will help to bring some clarity and reassurance to children's hospices, helping them to plan and deliver care over a longer period. Above all, it will help ensure seriously ill children and their families can continue to access vital hospice care beyond 2025 to 2026.

I look forward to continuing to work with ministers to make sure children's hospices are in a position to play a full role in realising the shifts in healthcare set out in the government's 10 Year Health Plan. Together, it's vital that we shape a palliative care delivery plan which means seriously ill children can access high-quality, sustainable support in hospital, in the community

and in children's hospices."

Toby Porter, CEO of Hospice UK, said:

"This is a welcome and significant first step to placing the children's hospice sector on a sustainable footing. The stability provided by a multi-year settlement will have a real impact on the care children's hospices provide and the families they support.

We look forward to working with the government on long-term reforms which are essential to safeguarding all hospice services and ensuring they can play their role in the shift towards more care delivered in the community."

Sophie Andrews OBE, CEO of Noah's Ark Children's Hospice, said:

"We were delighted to welcome Minister Kinnock to Noah's Ark Children's Hospice and meet a family who receive our support and those who provide it. We welcome this announcement as a real step forward for children's palliative care funding.

This funding will allow us to support more children and families in our catchment area, providing not only moments of normality but of magic and joy."

First illegal migrants returned under new UK-France agreement

October

From: Home Office, Border Security Command and
The Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP

dismantle the criminal networks
profiting from human misery.

The first group removals of small boat migrants under the UK's landmark migration treaty with France have now taken place, marking another momentous step in the government's efforts to

The UK-France treaty grants the UK decisive new powers to detain and rapidly remove individuals who enter illegally via small boats, blocking access to the UK asylum system.



Over the past week, 2 group flights saw 19 individuals returned to France, following the successful returns of an additional 7 individuals in the last month. The second group flight arrived in France earlier today before continuing its journey to Eastern Europe as part of the government's regular schedule of returns flights.

Further flights to France under this pilot scheme are scheduled to take place over the coming days and weeks.

In addition, the UK government

continues to work with France to operate a tightly controlled legal route for an equal number of eligible migrants to come to the UK, subject to rigorous security checks. Nine arrivals entered the UK this week through this route.

This pilot scheme will continue to be ramped up, with both countries having committed to continuously improving the process of this innovative approach.

The Home Office today has released content from the first group flight last week, including footage of migrants boarding and the aircraft departing.

Home Secretary Shabana Mahmood said:

We must put an end to these dangerous crossings which put lives at risk and money in the pockets of criminal gangs.

The contrast couldn't be clearer. The last government's Rwanda scheme took years and cost hundreds of millions of pounds, and failed to forcefully remove a single person. In a matter of weeks, we've returned 26 through our historic agreement with France.

With flights to France now underway and ramping up, we are sending out a clear

message: if you come here illegally, you face being detained and removed, so think twice before making that journey.

On top of this work, enforcement activity continues to be ramped up, with the National Crime Agency carrying out over 350 disruptions against people-smuggling networks last year - a 40% increase on the previous year.

Over 35,000 individuals with no legal right to remain in the UK have been returned, with asylum-related returns up 28% year-on-year.

The Home Office is now issuing over 31,000 initial asylum decisions every quarter - triple the average under the previous government.

This co-ordinated approach - combining decisive enforcement action, international cooperation, and controlled routes - demonstrates the government's comprehensive Plan for Change to strengthen our borders while upholding our humanitarian obligations and dismantling the criminal networks that exploit vulnerable people.



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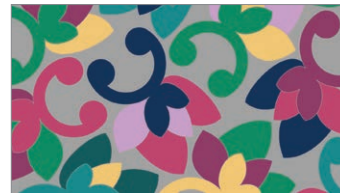


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Nearly three in five parents expect children's physical activity to drop this winter as stars back new campaign to keep kids active

November

From: Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Sport England, Stephanie Peacock MP and Ashley Dalton MP

Government launches 'Let's Move!', a new campaign supported by Sport England, to help keep families active together all year round.

- Over half of children aren't getting the recommended 60 minutes of daily activity, with levels set to drop this autumn



and winter - and around 8 in 10 parents underestimating how much movement kids need.

- The campaign is backed by Alex and Olivia Bowen, Max Whitlock, Beth Tweddle, and Joe Wicks, who has shared top tips for parents getting active with children, as research uncovers impact parents have on their children's activity levels.

Almost three in five (57%) parents say their children's physical activity levels are likely to suffer a seasonal dip during autumn and winter, with cold or wet weather (60%) and darker evenings (41%) highlighted as the key barriers in new research findings.

To tackle inactivity and help families keep children moving all year-round, the Government has launched 'Let's Move!', a new campaign supported by Sport England that aims to help parents

discover simple, fun, and pressure-free ways to build movement into daily life – which can start with just 10 minutes of activity.

NHS guidance recommends that children get at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day – including 30 minutes outside of school hours. Yet the new survey reveals that 81% of parents underestimate how much physical activity children need. Already, more than half of children in England aren't getting the recommended amount of movement and, worryingly, the research shows this will increase during the colder months.

Supported by Joe Wicks, the 'Let's Move!' campaign makes staying active easy and affordable, offering ideas from kitchen discos to local activities and playground fun. It encourages families to move together

- 80% of parents believe their habits influence their child's activity levels - and highlights how everyday routines can support healthy, active lifestyles. Regular movement boosts mood, focus, and family connections, with 78% of parents agreeing that their child is happier after being active, has more energy (71%) and has better concentration (68%).

The campaign is part of the Government's wider effort to break down barriers to physical activity for people all over the country. Already, more than £900 million has been committed to build grassroots facilities in the places that need them most and deliver a pipeline of major sports events that inspire the nation. Alongside this, the new School Sport Partnerships and

Enrichment Framework will ensure all young people have equal access to high-quality sport and extracurricular activity. Sport England evidence shows that improved health from participation in sport and physical activity relieves pressure on the NHS through £10.5 billion a year in health and social care savings.

Sports Minister Stephanie Peacock said:

"Building a more active nation is a huge

part of this Government's Plan for Change and we want to show families all over the country just how many ways there are to get involved.

Whether it's dancing, playing team sport or playing in the playground with their friends, we know that children who get at least an hour of exercise a day experience so many benefits - they're happier, healthier and focus better at school.

I am determined that every child, whatever their circumstances, should have those opportunities."

While just over half (52%) of parents say their children really enjoy traditional forms of sport, others face barriers such as low confidence (31%) or a dislike of competitiveness (30%). However, 94% of parents say their children enjoy physical play as a form of movement - with top activities including visiting the playground (56%), riding a bike (46%), dancing (44%) and playing tag or chase (43%).

'Let's Move!' aims to support different ways for children to enjoy being active - from sport to play and everyday



movement. The campaign features real families from local areas having fun getting active together in ways which suit them, such as dancing or playing in the playground. Their images are featured in out-of-home and social channels in the local areas to inspire others to visit [nhs.uk/LetsMove](https://www.nhs.uk/LetsMove) for tips, local activities and inspiration.

Parents and TV personalities Alex and Olivia Bowen launched the campaign in Essex alongside inspiring local families, demonstrating that movement really can be for everyone. Olympic champions Beth Tweddle and Max Whitlock led activities at the event, including dance challenges to obstacle courses, as families shared how they've been inspired to get active

this winter.

Public Health Minister Ashley Dalton said:

“Every child deserves the chance to be active, healthy and happy – but right now, too many are missing out on the 60 minutes of daily exercise their bodies need.

“‘Let’s Move!’ is about showing families that physical activity doesn’t have to mean expensive gym memberships or organised sports. A kitchen disco, a walk to the park, or ten minutes of silly dancing – it all counts, and it all makes a real difference to children’s health, happiness and development. This builds on the work we have already done with Joe Wicks and his Activate animated series, inspiring children to move more.

This campaign is part of our Plan for Change to build an NHS fit for the future by helping families make movement a natural, joyful part of everyday life.”

Joe Wicks, who got the nation moving during ‘PE With Joe’, is backing the campaign following the success of his animated workout series Activate, which was supported by a cross-section of government departments including DCMS, DfE and DHSC. The series aims

to make fitness fun for kids with short five-minute animated workouts. He shares new top tips as part of the ‘Let’s Move!’ campaign to help families slot activity into their everyday life, including being a role model, exploring local activities and getting outside whatever the weather.

‘Let’s Move!’ is being piloted in targeted areas of Sandwell, Lancashire, Essex and Bradford where inactivity levels and inequalities are greater than other parts of the country. These areas all receive funding from Sport England via their place partnership programme, to ensure those in greatest need can be active. The campaign supports the Government’s Health Mission, which prioritises preventative health measures, including addressing physical inactivity. Sport England data also shows significant inequalities remain in activity levels, with Black (42%) and Asian (43%) children and young people, and those from the least affluent families (45%), still less likely to play sport or be physically active than the average across all ethnicities and affluence groups.

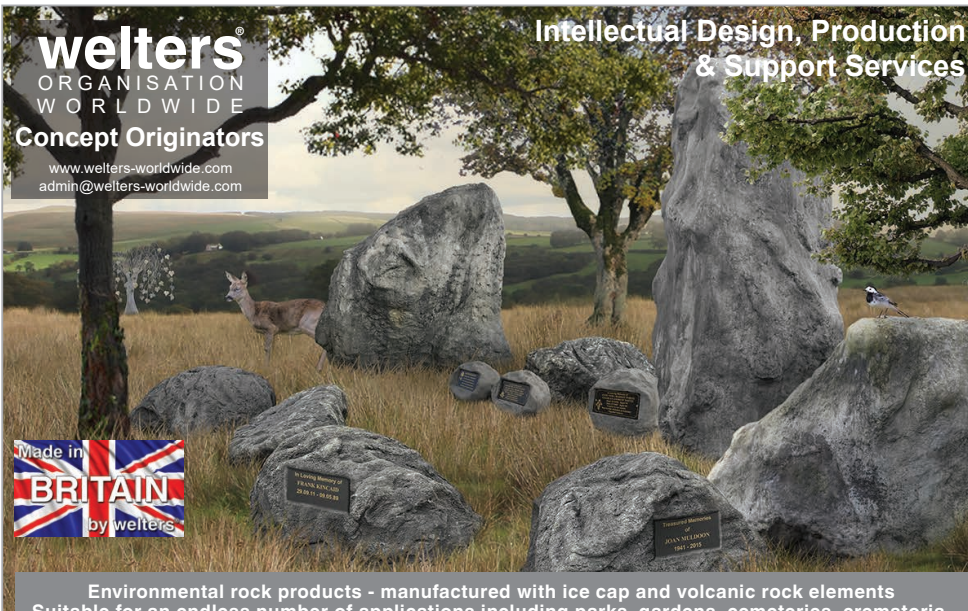
Find simple ideas to get active together at www.nhs.uk/letsmove.



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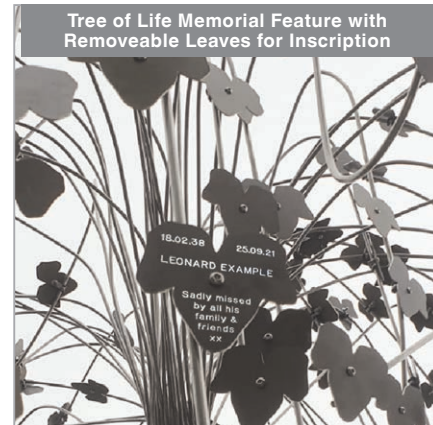
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Prime Minister arrives at COP to deliver clean energy jobs as major deals in ports and industry announced

November

From: Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street, Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, The Rt Hon Sir Keir Starmer KCB KC MP and The Rt Hon Ed Miliband MP

Industrial heartlands and coastal communities across the UK are set to benefit from skilled jobs, economic growth and greater energy security as new deals are announced to accelerate the drive for clean, homegrown power.

- Prime Minister arrives at COP30 with major vote of confidence from industry to build the UK's clean energy revolution and deliver national renewal .

- Well-paid, quality, skilled jobs secured with new deals across Greater Manchester, Great Yarmouth and Belfast to deploy and maintain offshore wind turbines and build one of the UK's biggest battery energy storage facilities.

- UK at COP as global leader of climate action - championing the interests of

working people by delivering energy security and protecting our children and grandchildren from climate change.

- Prime Minister told sixth former students earlier this week he is going to COP: "for our country, our planet, and for you". Industrial heartlands and coastal communities across the UK are set to benefit from skilled jobs, economic growth and greater energy security as new deals are announced to accelerate the drive for clean, homegrown power.



Major deals confirmed today from ScottishPower, JERA Nex bp and EnBW and Statera Energy will revitalise UK port infrastructure and develop world-leading battery storage facilities.

The deals will support an estimated 600 jobs across the North-West, Great Yarmouth, and Belfast.

In a speech at the World Leader's Summit in Belem, Brazil, the Prime Minister will set out how clean energy is the economic opportunity of the 21st century – with over £50 billion of investment into UK clean energy industries announced since last year and 800,000 jobs expected by the end of the decade.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer said:

"It's full speed ahead in our mission

to bring about the clean power revolution – delivering energy security, getting bills down for good and generating growth in communities across the UK.

Creating skilled, well-paid jobs across Great Yarmouth, Belfast and Greater Manchester, this is national renewal in action - championing the interests of working people all over the country.

I won't let down future generations. At COP30 I will continue to show UK leadership on the world stage to work with others to stand up for our values and our future."

Today at COP30 the Prime Minister will meet global leaders and businesses to reinforce the UK's commitment to providing leadership on the world stage for global climate action.

The UK has led the way with its 2035 nationally determined contribution to reduce all greenhouse gas emissions by at least 81% on 1990 levels.

He will continue to work with other countries to do more to tackle the climate crisis, to protect our planet and keep the goal to limit temperature increases to 1.5 degrees within reach.

The UK is setting the pace internationally, today's deals have been supported by the government's drive for homegrown, clean power:

JERA Nex bp and EnBW through their Mona and Morgan joint ventures, are committing over £100 million to Belfast Harbour to support the delivery of two major offshore wind farms in the Irish Sea. The joint venture partners have leased the Trust Port's offshore wind terminal as the hub for the assembly and construction of the Mona and Morgan wind farms, with government consent granted earlier this year for Mona and for Morgan Generation (Morgan Transmission Assets consent is expected in 2026). Once operational they could deliver enough clean energy to power the equivalent of around 3 million UK homes every year. The commitment has the potential to create more than 300 jobs. The landmark deal has enabled Belfast Harbour to invest £90 million in a new deepwater berth to support cruise tourism and further offshore wind projects in the future.

Investment into Port of East Anglia including £15m as part of a wider £28m upgrade to build a new operations and maintenance centre, with Scottish Power supporting the East Anglia TWO windfarm in the North Sea. This is in

addition to a £10 million investment from Scottish Power and Peel Ports Group to develop the port's Northern Terminal to work on future offshore wind projects supporting an estimated 100 jobs. This follows the Prime Minister's announcement at COP29 last year of a major £1 billion turbine contract for the Siemens Gamesa blade factory in Greenport Hull. Blades manufactured at this facility are set to be installed off the Suffolk coast powering East Anglia TWO, with the Port of East Anglia selected to carry out the pre-assembly and load-out of the turbines, demonstrating the region's significance to the UK's offshore wind supply chain.



Carrington in Greater Manchester will host one of the UK's largest battery sites, with Statera Energy confirming Final Investment Decision on a 680MW Battery Energy Storage System. The site will help balance the grid and will deliver clean power for up to 2.2 million homes, supporting an estimated 200 jobs in the region.

Energy Secretary Ed Miliband said:

“Clean energy is the engine of Britain's economic renewal. Today's investments will give a generation of young people well-paid skilled work in making wind turbines and developing our world-class port infrastructure.

The UK's message to the world at COP30 is simple: working together to tackle climate change is the route to good jobs, energy security and economic growth – let's get on with it.”

Earlier this week the Prime Minister told sixth formers he was going to COP because of the “obligation we undoubtedly have to safeguard the planet for generations to come, but also hundreds of thousands of jobs in this country”.

He said: “I hope we can make a real success of it, for our country, our planet, and for you”.

This follows last month's commitment to create five new clean energy Technical Excellence Colleges to train next generation of workers, as part of plans to bring 400,000 extra jobs by 2030 - with high demand for roles including plumbers, electricians and welders.

COP30 comes at a moment when the world is moving on clean energy and climate action.

Globally already twice as much is invested in clean energy (\$2trn) as fossil fuels, more is invested in solar each year than all other power sources combined. Renewables have this year overtaken coal as the biggest source of electricity globally.

Here in the UK the clean energy economy

is booming thanks to the investment decisions of this Government - with £50 billion of private investment announced, and in October the first ever national plan to recruit the clean energy workers was launched, delivering 400,000 extra jobs by 2030.

Building on our mission to deliver lower bills and good jobs for people at home, at COP30 the UK will work with others to make progress towards the goal to triple renewables globally by 2030 - strong leadership at home to deliver action abroad.

Keith Anderson, CEO of ScottishPower, said:

“This year we've announced a record £24 billion UK investment programme to deliver more power and more grid for Britain. This spans the country and has delivered transformational change for the communities we work with.

The £10m investment in the Port of East Anglia comes a decade on from our previous £5m investment, ensuring a continuous upgrading of port facilities to take advantage of the economic benefits of renewables and supporting hundreds of local jobs. This is one more important piece of



our wider multi-billion-pound programme of investment in our East Anglia offshore wind farms.

We invest for the long-term and working with our partners at Peel Ports we are helping deliver the modern port infrastructure needed for East Anglia.”

Tom Vernon, CEO of Statera Energy, said:

“Statera Energy is proud to support the UK’s clean energy ambitions. Our Carrington Storage project demonstrates how investment in flexible infrastructure can help balance a renewable-led grid, create skilled jobs, and drive industrial growth.

With a pipeline of 8GW of grid-balancing projects representing up to £7 billion of planned investment through to 2030, Statera is committed to playing its part in the delivery of a clean, secure, and affordable energy system for the UK.”

Nathalie Oosterlinck, CEO JERA Nex bp said:

“The Mona and Morgan joint venture’s planned commitment of over £100 million to Belfast Harbour is a direct contribution to the infrastructure needed to drive the

energy transition. This highlights the power of collaboration in driving energy security – the offshore wind industry can not only power millions of homes with clean, homegrown energy but also support job creation and local economic growth. It’s a clear demonstration of how strategic investments in renewable energy can make a lasting impact on both the environment and the economy.”

Dr Theresa Donaldson, Chair of Belfast Harbour Commissioners, said:

“Belfast Harbour is committed to playing our part in delivering a low carbon economy by enabling pioneering offshore wind projects. Belfast Harbour is the only port on the island of Ireland with offshore wind facilities and over the next decade we aim to expand our capacity and enhance our reputation as a key hub for the offshore wind sector.

As a trust port, accelerating to net zero and advancing regional prosperity are guiding principles for us and this deal delivers for Northern Ireland on both fronts by contributing to clean energy production, creating jobs, providing opportunities for the local supply chain and ultimately helping to grow the economy.”

Nature and Technology

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



Construction begins on new 1,700 place jail to make streets safer

November

From: Ministry of Justice and The Rt Hon David Lammy MP

Ground has been broken on a new 1,700-place prison in Leicestershire, marking the latest step in the biggest jail expansion programme in over a century.

- New Leicestershire prison to lock up dangerous criminals
- Next step in plans to build 14,000 extra prison places by 2031
- Key part of Government's Plan for Change to ensure country never runs out of places again

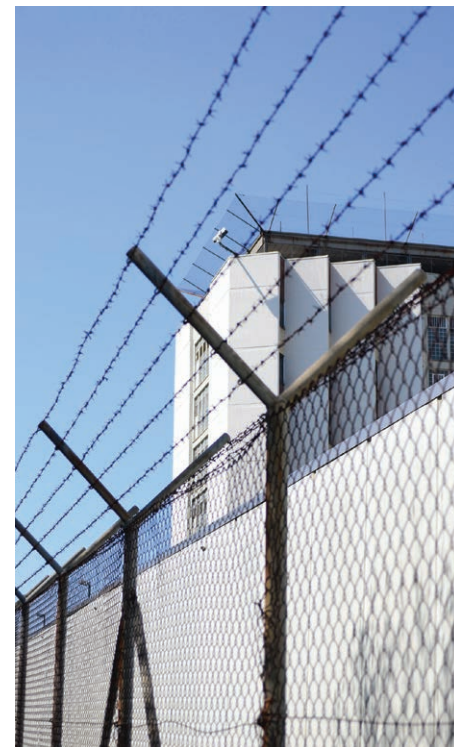
The construction of HMP Welland Oaks is a major milestone in the Government's Plan for Change to create 14,000 additional prison places by 2031. Once completed, it will add to the 2,600 places already opened since July 2024 – ensuring there are always enough spaces

to lock up offenders. The prison estate increased by less than 500 places in the fourteen years to April 2024.

The size of roughly 35 football pitches, this publicly run category B prison will be equipped top to bottom with state-of-the-art technology to cut crime and protect the public – including technology to block the use of illicit mobile phones.

HMP Welland Oaks will also provide an economic boost to the local area, with at least 100 jobs created during construction, and hundreds more permanent roles once the prison is operational. 40% of the project spend will also be within a 50-mile radius of the site, including on building materials and local contractors.

Deputy Prime Minister, David Lammy MP, said:
This Government inherited prisons on the brink collapse, with jails due to run out of



spaces in mere days.

This must never happen again. That is why as part of our Plan for Change we're pressing ahead with the biggest prison expansion since the Victorian era.

The build will be delivered by Wates Group, a leading British family-owned development, building and property maintenance company, following the signing of a £713 million contract.

Eoghan O'Lionaird, Chief Executive Officer of Wates Group, said:
We're proud to be supporting the Ministry of Justice in delivering the vital prison places the country needs and showing how construction can be a force for good – building safer, stronger communities and leaving a lasting impact.



HMP Welland Oaks is a highly advanced site built using modern methods of construction and other innovative techniques. It is designed to support rehabilitation and create opportunities for individuals to rebuild their lives. With workshops and extensive training facilities, we're helping prisoners develop skills that can lead to meaningful careers after release.

Louise Sunderland, Head of Cities & Places and London for Mace Consult, commented:
The groundbreaking at HMP Welland Oaks is our latest programme to break ground, following the completion of HMP Millsike earlier this year. Together with the MoJ and our partners, we are directly supporting the government's plan to deliver 14,000 more prison places by 2031.

Our team at Mace are experts in delivering nationally significant major programmes, contributing to robust cities and places worldwide. We bring lessons learned from delivery across a wide range of central government programmes to drive exceptional outcomes for our clients, for local people and for national economies.

The name 'Welland Oaks' draws

inspiration from the geography and history of the local area, and was chosen following extensive consultation with the local community. The prison will open in 2029 and be operated by His Majesty's Prison and Probation Service.

It is part of the £4.7 billion the Government is investing to deliver the largest expansion to the prison estate since the Victorian era, while a further £300 million will go towards vital building maintenance across prisons and the probation this financial year.

The prison building programme will work alongside the Sentencing Bill to ensure the most serious offenders can always be sent to prison to protect the public.



Tough new laws to strengthen the UK's defences against cyber attacks on NHS, transport and energy

November

From: Department for Science, Innovation and Technology and The Rt Hon Liz Kendall MP

Proposed new laws will strengthen cyber defences for essential public services like healthcare, drinking water providers, transport and energy.

- Proposed new laws will strengthen cyber defences for essential public services like healthcare, drinking water providers, transport and energy.
- UK to be better protected than ever to face down cyber criminals and state-backed actors – delivering strong foundations for the government's Plan for Change.
- Bolstered protections for the UK economy – with new research showing the annual cost of cyber attacks is almost £15 billion per year.

Hospitals, energy and water supplies and transport networks will be better protected from the threat of cyber-attacks under new laws being introduced in Parliament today

(12th November).

Supporting the Plan for Change, the Cyber Security and Resilience Bill strengthens national security and protects growth by boosting cyber protections for the services that people and businesses rely on every day.

In the face of increasing cyber threats, it will prevent disruption – keeping the taps running, the lights on and the UK's transport services moving – while making sure those who supply our vital services have tougher cyber protections.

These proposed laws would cover certain digital and essential services including healthcare, transport, energy and water. Under the proposals:

medium and large companies providing services like IT management, IT help desk support and cyber security to private and public sector organisations like the NHS, will also be regulated for the first

time. Because they hold trusted access across government, critical national infrastructure and business networks, they will need to meet clear security duties. This includes reporting significant or potentially significant cyber incidents promptly to government and their customers as well as having robust plans in place to deal with the consequences regulators will be given new powers to designate critical suppliers to the UK's essential services such as those providing healthcare diagnostics to the NHS or chemicals to a water firm, where they meet the criteria. This would mean they'd have to meet minimum security requirements – shutting down gaps in supply chains criminals could exploit which could cause wider disruption enforcement will be modernised, including tougher turnover-based penalties for serious breaches so cutting corners is no longer cheaper than doing the right thing. That's because companies providing taxpayer

services should make sure they have tough protections in place to keep their systems up and running

the Technology Secretary gets new powers to instruct regulators and the organisations they oversee, like NHS trusts and Thames Water, to take specific, proportionate steps to prevent cyber attacks where there is a threat to UK national security. This includes requiring that they beef up their monitoring or isolate high-risk systems to protect and secure essential services

These are areas which could pose huge negative implications for the British economy and public services if targeted. The Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) estimates that a cyber-attack on critical national infrastructure could temporarily increase borrowing by over £30 billion – equivalent to 1.1% of GDP.

New independent research published today shows the average cost of a significant cyber-attack in the UK is now



over £190,000. This amounts to around £14.7 billion a year across the economy - equivalent to 0.5% of the UK's GDP.

Science, Innovation, and Technology Secretary Liz Kendall said:

Cyber security is national security. This legislation will enable us to confront those who would disrupt our way of life. I'm sending them a clear message: the UK is no easy target.

We all know the disruption daily cyber-attacks cause. Our new laws will make the UK more secure against those threats. It will mean fewer cancelled NHS appointments, less disruption to local services and businesses, and a faster national response when threats emerge.

National Cyber Security Centre CEO Dr Richard Horne said:

The real-world impacts of cyber attacks have never been more evident than in recent months, and at the NCSC we continue to work round the clock to empower organisations in the face of rising threats.

As a nation, we must act at pace to improve our digital defences and resilience, and the Cyber Security and Resilience Bill represents a crucial step in better protecting

our most critical services.

Cyber security is a shared responsibility and a foundation for prosperity, and so we urge all organisations – no matter how big or small – to follow the advice and guidance available at [ncsc.gov.uk](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk) and act with the urgency that the risk requires.

National Chief Information Security Officer for Health and Care at Department of Health & Social Care, Phil Huggins said:

The Bill represents a huge opportunity to strengthen cyber security and resilience to protect the safety of the people we care for.

The reforms will make fundamental updates to our approach to addressing the greatest risks and harms, such as new powers to designate critical suppliers.

Working with the healthcare sector, we can drive a step change in cyber maturity and help keep services available, protect data, and maintain trust in our systems in the face of an evolving threat landscape.

Earlier this year, the government published the Cyber Governance

Code of Practice setting out clear steps organisations should take to manage digital risks and safeguard their day-to-day operations. Whilst it is for companies to ensure they have proper protections in place, the Bill targets those that will have the maximum impact on improving cyber resilience, bringing the services that retailers, hospitals, councils and others depend on into scope - raising their baseline protects thousands of businesses in the long-term.

Recent cyber-attacks on managed service providers clearly make the case for updated laws. In 2024, hackers accessed the Ministry of Defence's payroll system via a managed service provider, while other recent attacks such as the Synnovis incident in the NHS resulted in over 11,000

disrupted medical appointments and procedures and some estimates suggesting costs of £32.7 million. This brings into sharp focus the impact cyber incidents can have on the public and our essential public services.

Organisations in scope will need to report more harmful cyber incidents to their regulator and the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) within 24 hours, with a full report within 72 hours, to ensure support can be on hand more quickly to help build a stronger national picture of cyber threats. If a data centre, or digital and managed service providers face a significant or potentially significant attack, they will have to notify customers which are likely to be impacted promptly so organisations can act fast to protect their business, people and services.

Data centres keep the UK running, from patient records and payments to email services and AI development. The Bill will bring them into scope of the regulations, ensuring they meet robust cyber security standards.

New safeguards will also cover organisations that manage the flow of electricity to smart appliances like electric vehicle charge points and electrical heating appliances in homes. This will reduce the risk of disruption to consumers using

smart-energy appliances, and the grid, bolstering the UK's energy security.

The Bill represents a step change in how the government protects people in an increasingly dangerous world, supporting the National Security Strategy.

It will help to deliver greater economic stability, protect businesses and working people from the impact of cyber attacks, and support further investment into the UK's cyber security sector, which contributed £13.2 billion to the economy in the latest financial year.

It follows a recent letter from government ministers including the Technology Secretary, Chancellor and Business Secretary to business leaders and FTSE 350 firms, urging them to strengthen their cyber defences to face down the growing range of threats targeting the UK's leading organisations.

Organisations can make use of the free guidance and tools available from the NCSC – including Cyber Essentials, Active Cyber Defence services, and the Cyber Assessment Framework for the UK's most critical organisations – to help improve their resilience.

Simon Sheeran, Head of Cyber Security



Oversight at the UK Civil Aviation Authority said:

The aviation sector contributes billions of pounds to the UK economy and provides critical national infrastructure.

This Bill will help improve cyber defences essential for maintaining the already very high safety standards in aviation.

The Civil Aviation Authority protect people and enable aerospace within a global ecosystem, and the need for aviation to defend as one is a national imperative.

Jill Popelka, CEO of Darktrace, said:

In an era where cybercriminals move faster, experiment freely, and increasingly leverage AI to their advantage, the Cyber Security and Resilience Bill is an essential piece of legislation. It will improve the UK's defences, enabling businesses and public services to securely harness the opportunities provided by technology and innovation.

We've seen cyber attackers increasingly target supply chains and managed service providers in recent years, including vital institutions like the NHS and the Ministry of Defence. It's promising to see the Bill recognise the risk across the digital ecosystem. It's also good to see the government's focus on future-proofing the

regulatory environment for cyber security and creating a stronger role for NCSC's Cyber Assessment Framework. These changes will help give organisations more confidence to adopt new technologies while staying prepared for the next evolution in threats.

Julian David OBE, CEO of techUK, said:

techUK welcomes today's introduction of the Cyber Security and Resilience Bill to Parliament which signals the government's ambition to modernise and future-proof the UK's cyber laws while fostering the resilience that will underpin our economic growth. It marks a significant step forward in prioritising the security of our nation's essential services.

techUK looks forward to continuing to engage with the government as the Bill makes its way through Parliament, to help ensure that the measures are fit for purpose, practically implementable and can deliver their intended outcomes, protecting the UK from a diverse range of threats and enabling organisations to harness the benefits that technology can offer.

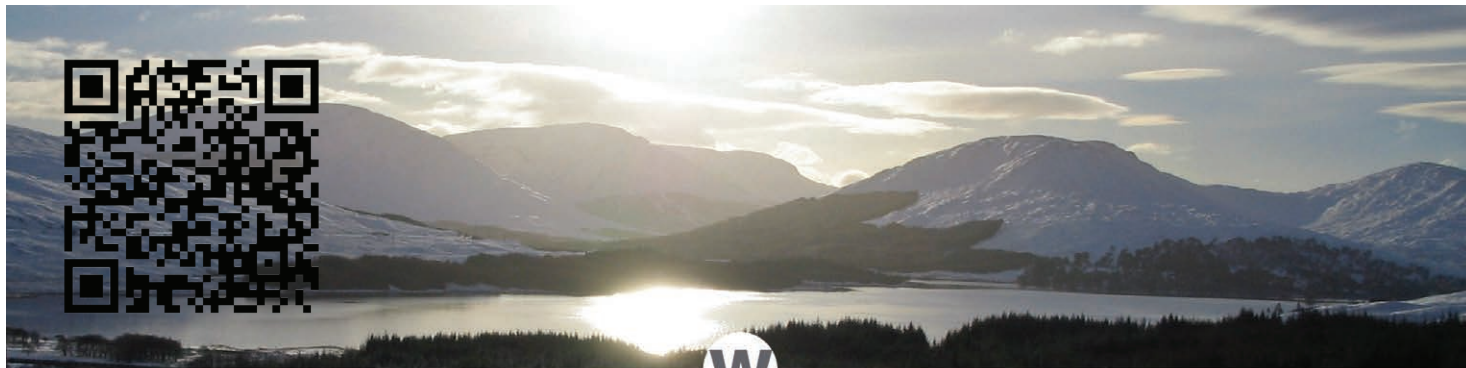
Sarah Walker, Chief Executive, Cisco UK and Ireland

We welcome the government taking action to overhaul the UK's cyber framework with

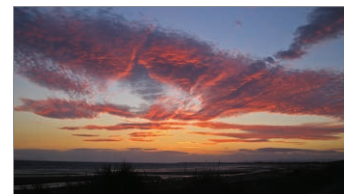
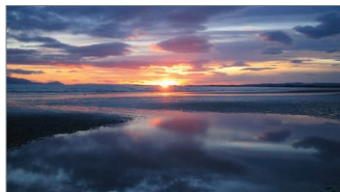
the Cyber Security and Resilience Bill. This is a significant step in securing the UK against ever-increasing cyber threats. Our latest research shows the scale of the challenge ahead; only 8% of UK organisations are classed as 'Mature' in their cybersecurity readiness. As AI reshapes both attack and defence, we need regulation that keeps pace with this changing threat landscape. We are looking forward to collaborating with the UK government and working with our international partners to continue securing the UK's digital economy.

Jamie MacColl, Senior Research Fellow, Cyber and Tech, Royal United Services Institute said:

The events of 2025 have proven beyond doubt that improving national cyber security and resilience is essential for the UK's economic security. The arrival of new legislation to better protect our most critical national infrastructure is an important step in improving cyber resilience in the UK. However, it is also important that organisations outside of the scope of the Bill up their game on cyber security and resilience. We urgently need to build collective resilience to inspire confidence in the face of threats from hostile states and criminals.



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Multi-million-pound investment in legal aid to boost access to justice for victims

December

From: Ministry of Justice and Sarah Sackman KC MP

Criminal legal aid solicitors will receive up to £92 million more a year to help address the ongoing challenges in the criminal justice system.

- Government confirms up to £92 million investment in criminal legal aid after years of neglect
- New funding for housing and immigration fees to help rebuild the justice system
- Part of government's Plan for Change to transform the justice system and deliver swifter justice for victims

Victims will get swifter access to justice as the Government confirms up to an additional £92m per year boost for criminal legal aid solicitors, Courts Minister Sarah Sackman announced today (Monday 1 December).

The investment will tackle years of neglect

and build a stronger and more sustainable legal aid sector that works for those who serve within it - and those victims and defendants who depend on it.

This investment lays the groundwork for longer-term reform to the justice system to get cases moving through the courts and ensure swifter justice for victims – with further updates expected later this week.

Minister for Courts and Legal Services, Sarah Sackman KC MP, said:

Our legal aid system has been left neglected. This multimillion-pound investment is crucial to keeping the wheels of justice turning – it supports the professionals keeping the system running, the victims waiting for answers, and all those who need access justice.

We know that justice delayed is justice denied. That is why we're investing in the criminal justice system. Getting the legal aid sector back on a sustainable footing is vital

to restoring the public's confidence in our justice system

Once fully implemented, criminal legal aid solicitors will have received a 24% overall uplift in funding since the 2021 Criminal Legal Aid Independent Review (CLAIR).

Criminal solicitors have been waiting years for a pay rise and now they will finally feel the fee increases which will support their vital work to keep the wheels of our criminal justice system turning.



Alongside this, the Government is also uplifting housing and immigration legal aid fees by 18 million a year - the first major civil legal aid fee increase since 1996.

An additional two million for licensed housing and immigration work will be delivered separately and as soon as possible. An injection of £20 million will support some of the most vulnerable people in society, including those at risk of losing their home and victims of modern slavery. The investment will also help to reduce the asylum backlog and end the use of asylum hotels.

The majority of these crime and civil changes will come into effect on 22 December 2025 – ensuring hardworking practitioners are properly paid for the vital work they do.

Legal aid plays a crucial role in our justice system, supporting some of the most complex cases that go through our courts. Our Plan for Change is making the justice system fair, accessible and fit for purpose.

This funding supports our wider reform of the criminal justice system. The government will soon publish its response to Part 1 of Sir Brian Leveson's independent review, which recommends bold and ambitious reforms to clear the escalating court backlog and deliver swifter justice for victims.

World's first mobile quantum brain scanner being developed to measure blast effects on troops

December

From: Cyber & Specialist Operations Command

Government provides £3.1m for transformational tech which will assess how blast exposure from weapons training affects the brain to better protect personnel.

Scientists will develop the world's first fully mobile magnetoencephalography (MEG) brain scanner capable of measuring the effects of blast exposure on military personnel in real time at training sites.

The scanner, which will be used for the first time ever by Cyber & Specialist Operations Command's Defence Medical Services, will enable researchers to see exactly what happens to brain function within minutes of blast exposure and watch how personnel recover - potentially transforming how those who serve are protected.

The Ministry of Defence has provided more than £3m to create this world

first scanner, which is based on a transformational quantum technology. Crucially, the mobile laboratory will deploy directly to military firing ranges, field hospitals and rehabilitation centres, bringing the technology where it is needed most.

This will enable evidence-based decision making to protect service personnel from any potential harmful effects.

The system will be built by University



of Nottingham spin-out company Cerca Magnetics and used by the Defence Medical Services, in collaboration with world-leading scientists from the Universities of Nottingham and Birmingham, to understand the effects of blast exposure.

Minister for Veterans and People, Louise Sandher-Jones MP said:

“The safety of our personnel is a top priority. Thanks to technologies like this, even subtle physical changes are now becoming detectable, and we will get crucial insights that simply weren’t possible before, improving decision-making and vital protections for our forces.

This funding demonstrates our commitment to renewing the nation’s contract with those who serve, but also shows how defence innovation benefits wider society, including those impacted by dementia, epilepsy and concussion.”

This physics breakthrough cements UK’s leadership in defence science and brain imaging, delivering on the Government’s Plan for Change, and has positive implications extending far beyond the military, significantly benefitting research into sports concussion, dementia, and epilepsy.

Lt Col James Mitchell, Consultant Neurologist and Chief Investigator of the UK Military Blast Study at the UK Defence Medical Services, said:

“This new system, a world first, will be transformative for research into the effects of blast exposure on our personnel.

For the first time we will be able to build a time-stamped, accurate picture of exactly what happens to the brain in the minutes and hours after blast exposure and track recovery over time. Ultimately, we expect this system to help provide robust, scientifically informed policy on safe working practices for blast exposure.”

The breakthrough addresses a critical defence challenge: repeated exposure to shock waves from high-power weapons might cause subtle changes in brain function, which, over a career, may increase the likelihood of serious brain health conditions.

Yet safe exposure levels remain unknown



because the effects are subtle and fleeting – often disappearing within 24-48 hours – making them impossible to capture with conventional laboratory-based scanners.

Professor Matthew Brookes, professor of physics at the University of Nottingham and chairman of Cerca magnetics, has pioneered OPM-MEG technology for a decade. He said:

“This new generation of MEG lifts limitations that have historically confined scanners to universities, paving the way for mobile systems that can be taken directly to those who will benefit most. The introduction of mobile systems will likely revolutionise other fields too, whether parked outside hospitals to assess neurological conditions or at sports grounds to scan players following concussion.”

The system will enable rapid scans, providing objective assessment of changes in brain function and informing decisions on safe return to duty. By investigating multiple weapon types and tracking recovery patterns, the project will deliver transformative insights into which personnel face greatest risk and establish evidence-

based exposure limits.

Professor Karen Mullinger, from the Universities of Nottingham and Birmingham, will co-lead the research programme using the new system. She said:

“OPM-MEG is a quantum technology which non-invasively measures electrical brain function with unprecedented precision and sensitivity. This makes it the perfect technology for characterising the acute effects of blast exposure on neural activity. Our unique system will enable us to understand and quantify the effect of blast from specific weaponry in the hours to days after exposure has happened.”

The technology underpinning the mobile-MEG scanner has been under development for a decade, supported by the UK National Quantum Technologies Programme – an initiative backed by the Department for Science Innovation and Technology (DSIT) and MOD.

Construction will be undertaken in collaboration with UK-based technology company Magnetic Shields Limited, US-based atomic device company QuSpin and the University of Nottingham School of Physics. The system is expected to be operational by 31 March 2026.

Government pledges to ramp up facial recognition and biometrics

December

From: Home Office

Police will be better equipped to track down dangerous criminals as the government launches a consultation on how forces should use facial recognition and biometrics, in what could be ‘the biggest breakthrough since DNA matching’.

Facial recognition is used to locate wanted suspects in public places, find vulnerable missing people and identify offenders more quickly through footage obtained from CCTV and doorbell cameras.

In the last 2 years, the Metropolitan Police made 1,300 arrests using facial recognition including rapists, domestic abusers and violent criminals and found more than 100 registered sex offenders breaching their license conditions.

The consultation will pave the way for

new laws so all police forces can use this new technology with greater confidence and more often.

Crime and Policing Minister, Sarah Jones, said:

“Facial recognition is the biggest breakthrough for catching criminals since DNA matching.

It has already helped take thousands of dangerous criminals off our streets and has huge potential to strengthen how the police keep us safe.

We will expand its use so that forces can put more criminals behind bars and tackle crime in their communities.”

Police currently use 3 different types of facial recognition technology:

- retrospective facial recognition: used as part of a criminal investigation to

search images from crime scenes (for example, CCTV, mobile phone or video doorbell footage) against images of people taken on arrest

- live facial recognition: using live video footage of people passing cameras and comparing their images to a specific list of people wanted by the police
- operator-initiated facial recognition: a mobile app that allows officers to check

someone's identity without having to arrest them and take them into custody

Expanding the use of facial recognition technology across forces will help them to catch more perpetrators through this advanced technology.

The 10-week consultation will encourage an open discussion among the public, Parliament and police, looking at the benefits of facial recognition and asking what safeguards are needed to ensure they are confident in its use, and in similar technologies which are likely to follow. It will explore when and how the technologies should be used, how to protect people's privacy, and whether using these technologies is proportionate to the level of harm being addressed.

It also proposes creating a single body to oversee and regulate police use of biometrics, facial recognition and similar technologies, and seeks views on what responsibilities it should have.

Research published today by the Home Office shows that retrospective facial recognition is seen as the most acceptable type of facial recognition by the public, with 97 per cent of people saying that it is at least sometimes acceptable for police to use it. Eighty-

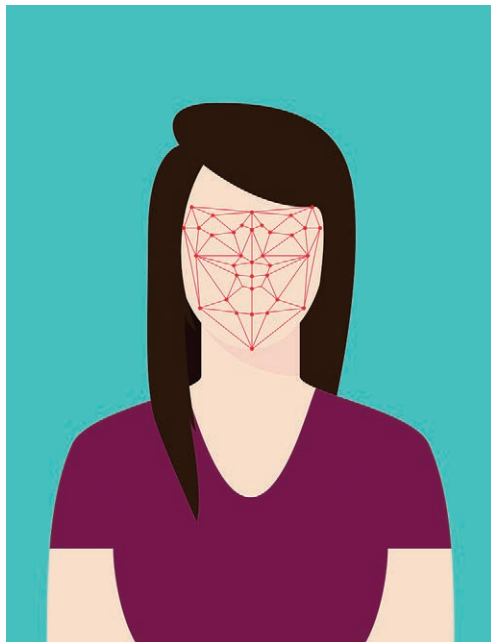
eight per cent of people think it is at least sometimes acceptable for the police to use live facial recognition to locate suspects.

The Home Office invested £12.6 million in facial recognition last year, with £2.8 million spent on national live facial recognition capabilities, including mobile vans and fixed-location pilots. This year, £6.6 million is supporting the adoption, evaluation, and responsible rollout of facial recognition technology, including £3.9 million for the development of a new, national facial matching service.

Lindsey Chiswick, National Police Chiefs' Council lead for facial recognition, said:

"Live facial recognition helps police locate wanted offenders, including those missing for years, and monitor individuals subject to court imposed conditions, such as registered sex offenders. This technology makes officers more effective and delivers more arrests than would otherwise be possible. Live facial recognition is making a real difference in keeping communities safe.

Live facial recognition is already



subject to strong safeguards and rigorous oversight, and policing remains committed to using it proportionately and responsibly.

Public trust is vital, and we want to build on that by listening to people's views. This consultation is an opportunity for the public to help shape how live facial recognition continues to be deployed, what protections matter most, and how policing can continue to use it in a way that reinforces confidence."

Neil Basu QPM, former head of Counter Terrorism Policing, said:

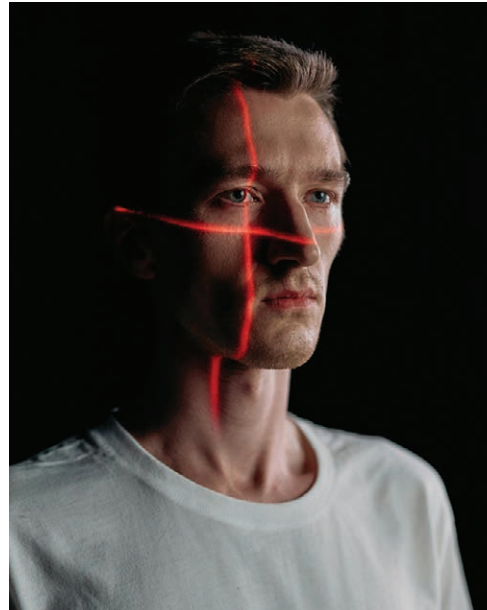
"Live facial recognition is a massive step forward for law enforcement – a digital 21st century step change in the tradition of fingerprint and DNA technology. Most crimes are committed by a few, often habitual criminals but they can't avoid shops, malls, stadiums and transport hubs, all places where live facial recognition can be deployed to spot them and allow them to be brought to justice. The live facial recognition system was, but no longer is, discriminatory but it will still require proper legal safeguards and oversight by the surveillance commissioner.

Every use has a police officer safety

net, there to check that the identification is correct and prevent miscarriages of justice. This consultation is a necessary and welcome step by the government which I hope will expedite its use by policing, lead them to catch more criminals, and keep us much safer."

Sue Daley OBE, Director of Tech and Innovation at techUK, said:

"Facial recognition technology can deliver real benefits for law enforcement



and help create safer communities. This powerful technology offers opportunities but raises concerns that must be properly understood and addressed.

We welcome the Home Office consultation; regulation clarity, certainty and consistency on how this technology will be used will be paramount to establish trust and long-term public support. We stand ready to support the consultation process to ensure that we get this right."

Susannah Drury, Director of Policy and Development at Missing People, said:

"Facial recognition technology could help to ensure more missing people are found, protecting people from serious harm. However, we need to better understand the ethical implications and what safeguards must be put in place for this technology to be used safely.

We welcome this consultation as an opportunity to explore these issues, and to make sure that people with lived experience of going missing or having a loved one missing get their say."

UK among first countries to recognise cryptocurrency as personal property

December

From: Ministry of Justice and Sarah Sackman KC MP

Owners of Bitcoin and other digital assets will benefit from greater legal protection thanks to an important clarification to the law.

- New law confirms digital assets like crypto tokens can be recognised as personal property
- Victims of digital theft and fraud gain stronger protections as legislation passes through the final stages of Parliament
- Part of Government's Plan for Change for growth to boost the UK's reputation as a global leader in legal innovation

Millions of crypto owners have gained stronger legal protection as the Property (Digital Assets etc) Act received Royal Assent this week, in a boost to the UK legal



services industry.

England, Wales and Northern Ireland are among the first countries in the world to confirm in law that digital assets - such as cryptocurrency or non-fungible tokens - can now be recognised as personal property. This will provide greater protections and ensure they are treated like traditional assets.

The new legislation ensures that the legal system is equipped to tackle tomorrow's digital challenges today, cementing the UK's reputation as a world leader in the legal services industry.

It means that fintech companies – from ambitious start-ups to global enterprises – are more likely to choose England, Wales, or Northern Ireland as places to do business - boosting growth in a sector already

worth billions to the economy.

Minister for Courts and Legal Services,
Sarah Sackman KC MP, said:

“This new law will keep Britain at the heart of the international legal industry. By clarifying the status of digital assets, we remove uncertainty, simplify disputes, and cement the UK’s position as the centre for fintech innovation.

This government doesn’t adapt to change but leads it. Through our Plan for Change we will continue to boost growth across the £42.6 billion legal services sector.”

Historically, the law in this country has recognised two categories of property: “things in possession” such as gold, cars, mobile phones and “things in action”, which are legal rights, for example, debts and shares. This new law allows for the

development of a further category to allow for certain digital assets to have personal property while recognising their unique characteristics.

This means that as well as providing greater protection against scams, digital assets like cryptocurrency can be passed down through inheritance and recovered by creditors during bankruptcy, just like traditional assets.

With cryptocurrency fraud rising, owners also have clearer legal rights if their assets are stolen.

The reforms also reduce costly disputes by giving businesses legal certainty over the status of their crypto, bringing them into the same framework as jewellery and other goods.

The new law will attract further business and investment to the legal services industry which is already worth £42.6 billion a year to the economy with a highly skilled workforce of 384,000.

Keeping the law up to date is vital to ensuring that our law remains the law of choice for international businesses.



Forthcoming articles under consideration

- How have the recent government budgets actually affected household bills?
- The aging populous - how prepared is the system for elder care in all communities?
- Why is planning permission so hard to get and who benefits?
- Cyber security in public services - how safe is your data?
- The role of government in closing the skills gap
- Minimum wage policies - do they keep up with inflation?

Check out the October - December
2025 edition of Welters World



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

COVER OPTIONS

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