

News story: Campaign launched for more diverse fire and rescue services

Only 5.2% of firefighters in England are women, and 3.9% are from an ethnic minority background (BME).

Join the Team: Become a Firefighter will combine a fitness guide encouraging more women to serve, as well as mythbusters and real stories of serving firefighters, all to shift the perception of what the role involves.

The [fitness guide, Community, Protection, Prevention, Teamwork](#), makes it clear that the role is accessible to people from all backgrounds, with examples of the tests applicants need to pass.

The Police and Fire Minister, Nick Hurd, said:

Forget what you see on TV – being a firefighter is not always about carrying people out of burning buildings. As fires have become less common, the role is becoming more about engaging with communities and doing work to prevent fires from happening in the first place.

So if you care about your community and enjoy connecting with people, then give a taster day a go.

I am always impressed by the bravery and dedication of firefighters. But it's time for the workforce to fully reflect the public it serves.

Mythbusters will also be published later in the year to clear up common misunderstandings around the role.

These will be directed to those in all sectors of the community that have not previously considered a career in the fire and rescue services. For example, they will challenge the idea that only men can do the job, making clear that women have worked as part of fire and rescue services for decades and have risen to the very top of the profession, with 6 female fire chiefs now across the country.

With bespoke taster sessions for women, simultaneously providing insight into the role and tackling myths about the career; as well as fitness sessions, targeted adverts on social media, and pre-recruitment courses, West Midlands Fire Service (WMFS) has shown what a future firefighting workforce can look like.

Of all of its successful candidates since changing its approach in January 2018, 33% were women and 32% were BME candidates. For 2020 to 2021, WMFS is aiming for 60% of its new starters to be women, and for 35% of entrants to be BME.

But the government is clear that more progress needs to be made across England.

Join the Team: Become a Firefighter, which has been developed with support from the National Fire Chiefs Council, Local Government Council and Inclusive Fire Service Group, is designed to support fire and rescue services to attract a more diverse range applicants in their upcoming recruitment drives.

Ann Millington, National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) Workforce Committee Chair said:

I am delighted to see this new campaign from the Home Office encouraging a more diverse fire service, which the NFCC has helped to develop. Real life case studies of women, BME firefighters and their experiences will help to bust the myths of what the role of a modern firefighter is.

We have a number of highly inspirational female staff and we want to encourage more women to join the fire service; to do to this we need to get away from the image of a male-dominated sector, with traditional masculine roles.

The fire service is accessible to everyone, regardless of gender, background and ethnicity; this new campaign will hopefully encourage more people to apply to become firefighters. It also gives important information on the fitness standards – which can often be perceived as a barrier – and showcase what a varied role it can be. While we are seeing the number of women in the fire service increasing, we want to ensure we are continuously building on this and developing a fire service that is representative of the communities we serve.

[News story: Call for evidence: An inspection of how the Home Office is tackling illegal working](#)

The Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI) has begun work on an inspection of how the Home Office is tackling illegal working. The ICIBI last reported on [illegal working in December 2015](#) . This latest inspection will examine Home Office's current policies, strategy, planning, guidance and operational practice in relation to illegal working.

The evidence gathering process for this inspection has started and the

Inspectorate's established stakeholders will shortly be asked for their input. However, to inform the scope of the inspection, the ICIBI is keen to receive written evidence from employers and others with relevant knowledge, expertise or first-hand experience of this subject.

Please submit your evidence by close of business on 20 September 2018.

Please email the Chief Inspector: chiefinspector@icinspector.gsi.gov.uk

or write to:

ICIBI
5th Floor
Globe House
89 Eccleston Square
London SW1V 1PN

[News story: International Trade Secretary signs major deal allowing export of UK seed potatoes to China](#)

China's developing taste for chips and crisps will soon be fuelled by British produce, as International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox MP secures a deal which enables the UK to export seed potatoes to China.

The deal is expected to bring major benefits to Scotland, with around 70% of the 100,000 tonnes of seed potatoes exported annually from the UK coming from Scottish farms. The seed potato export market is already worth an annual £90 million to the UK, with some varieties fetching up to £900 per tonne.

China is the largest global consumer of potatoes in the world. As the country's demand for potato-based foods increases, the humble spud is now China's fourth staple crop after rice, corn and wheat – with demand increasing at a rapid rate.

It follows news that the [UK dairy sector is set to receive a multi-million pound export boost](#), with Dr Fox meeting with the Chinese government to reach an agreement to allow the import of UK dairy products made with milk from third countries into China.

The agreement was signed by the International Trade Secretary during his visit to China. Dr Fox is also meeting businesses and senior Chinese government ministers to discuss further trading opportunities between the 2 countries.

International Trade Secretary Dr Liam Fox MP said:

The rapidly-growing Chinese market offers huge potential for UK farmers. According to research by Barclays, around 60% of people in China would actually pay more for a product, just because they knew it was British.

With China expected to have 220 cities with a population of more than a million by 2030, that is a huge market that UK potato farmers will now be able to make the most of.

My international economic department is in 108 markets across the world, helping UK businesses to export whilst liberalising international trade by removing barriers to commerce. I'm delighted that this latest deal is set to boost our £67.5 billion trading relationship with China even further.

UK Government Minister Lord Duncan said:

Scotland is known for high-quality food and drink exports, and our seed potatoes are renowned for their excellence and breeding through scientific institutions such as the James Hutton Institute in Dundee.

Leaving the European Union means we can pursue an independent trade policy, and the quality of our exports will drive new trading opportunities like this one. Linking the world's largest consumer of potatoes, China, with Scotland's exceptional potato seed is a welcome next step for the UK on a global stage.

Rob Burns, Head of Crops Export Trade Development at the Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB), said:

It's a real coup to be one of the first western countries able to export seed to China and it's been achieved through a lot of hard work and the great reputation of UK seed potatoes which are rightly renowned around the world for their high health status and high quality.

I expect the Chinese market will be particularly interested in processing varieties used for chips and crisps as there is a big demand for those products. AHDB's role now will be to develop this new trading relationship through events such as large-scale trade shows where exporters can showcase their varieties and start building business in China.

Rural Economy Secretary, Scotland Fergus Ewing said:

I am delighted that Scottish seed potatoes will now be enjoyed by the biggest producers in the world, the People's Republic of China. This is welcome news for the Scottish seed potato sector and further recognition of its global renown for producing high quality seed potatoes.

The signing of this trade agreement has the potential to lead to its expansion to the rest of the UK, opening up the possibility of market diversification and contributing towards further sustainable growth in the sector.

Our food and drink exporters have had great success in recent years in opening and developing new and existing market opportunities, and I am utterly determined to continue to maximise these opportunities by delivering on agreements such as this.

In a further move to open-up its agri-food market, China also lifted its 2 decades long BSE ban on the exports of beef from the UK earlier this year – a landmark move for beef producers worth an estimated £250 million in the first 5 years alone.

The Department for International Trade (DIT) helps businesses export, drives inward and outward investment, negotiates market access and trade deals, and champions free trade.

We are an international economic department, responsible for:

- supporting and encouraging UK businesses to drive sustainable international growth
 - ensuring the UK remains a leading destination for international investment and maintains its number one position for international investment stock in Europe
 - opening markets, building a trade framework with new and existing partners which is free and fair
 - using trade and investment to underpin the government's agenda for a Global Britain and its ambitions for prosperity, stability and security worldwide.
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[Corporate report: Radioactive waste management approaches in the non nuclear industry](#)

An information resource produced by LLWR and RWM for owners of problematic waste.

[Press release: Commission announces class investigation into independent school charities](#)

The Charity Commission, the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales, has opened a class statutory inquiry into The Martin Foundation (registered charity number [1110184](#)), and The Collegiate Charitable Foundation (registered charity number [1012924](#)). The inquiry was opened on 22 January 2018.

The charities provide bursaries to enable students to attend independent primary and secondary schools; provide advertising, facilities and equipment for the schools, and assist the local community, however The Martin Foundation is not currently carrying out any activity.

After receiving a complaint from the public and information from other regulators the Commission engaged with the charities in respect of a number of regulatory concerns. Our engagement established that there were clear and ongoing serious regulatory issues relating to the administration of the charities by the trustees. These included the management of conflicts of interest, protecting and properly accounting for the charities' assets, and potential unauthorised trustee benefit.

The inquiry is examining:

- The extent to which potential conflicts of interest and connected party transactions have been properly managed
- The extent to which there has been any unauthorised trustee benefit
- Whether the charities operated for exclusively charitable purposes

In order to protect the assets of the charities, the Commission has issued orders to the trustees and the charities' bank under section 76(3) of the Charities Act 2011. These are temporary orders and will be reviewed on a regular basis in line with normal procedures.

Due to the seriousness of its regulatory concerns the Commission also appointed Geoff Carton-Kelly and Tom McLennan of FRP Advisory as joint interim managers of the charities on 13 August 2018.

The interim managers are appointed with all the powers and duties of trustees and will act to the exclusion of the current charity trustees. These are temporary appointments and will be reviewed on a regular basis in line with normal procedures.

It is the Commission's policy, after it has concluded an inquiry, to publish a report detailing what issues the inquiry looked at, what actions were undertaken as part of the inquiry and what the outcomes were. Reports of previous inquiries by the Commission are available on [GOV.UK](#).

Notes to Editors

1. The Charity Commission is the regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work see the [about us](#) page on GOV.UK.
2. Search for charities on our [check charity](#) tool.
3. Section 46 of the Charities Act 2011 gives the Commission the power to institute inquiries. The opening of an inquiry gives the Commission access to a range of investigative, protective and remedial legal powers.
4. The Interim Manager appointment is a temporary and protective power that will be reviewed at regular intervals. It will continue until the Commission makes a further Order for its variation or discharge.