

# Press release: Government announces easier court entrance for legal sector

A scheme allowing practising legal professionals direct entrance to courts without the need to be searched will be piloted by HM Courts & Tribunals Service (HMCTS) in five courts, with registration beginning in August and fast-track entry from September.

The Bar Council has led the development of an app for its members to use as ID, and Law Society members will benefit from the pilot, using approved photo ID.

While tightened security procedures introduced during the last year will continue, the 'Professional Entry Scheme' intends to ease queues to get into court buildings and allow easier and swifter access for legal professionals who come to court regularly.

The scheme will recognise the trusted status of legal professionals without compromising security and is supported by the judiciary.

Justice Minister, Lucy Frazer, said:

Courts and tribunals are the daily workplace for many trusted legal professionals. This pilot will make it easier for them to simply get on with their job.

Of course, we need to do this in the right way, without compromising the security of our courts. To ensure this pilot is a success we are working closely with the legal profession.

Chair of the Bar, Andrew Walker QC, said:

The Bar Council has worked hard with HMCTS to promote a scheme that enables barristers to avoid long delays and searches.

We are delighted that this has now led to a pilot of the Professional Entry Scheme. If the pilot is a success, then the new secure, easy to use ID app that we are developing should enable practising barristers to make the most of the scheme, wherever they practise.

Law Society President, Christina Blacklaws, said:

There is no doubt that easier access will benefit our members and we welcome this sensible initiative.

We have spoken to HMCTS officials about the delays practitioners can face in clearing security and we hope the pilot will pave the way for a permanent system of easier access.

In advance of the pilot, practising legal professions will need to register with their local court, agree to conditions of entry (which continue to include a list of prohibited items) and meet secure ID authentication requirements when they attend court. This includes identifying themselves as a legal professional and showing photographic ID, which will be checked by a court security officer against a registration list.

Random searches on a proportion of the participants in the pilot will be carried out to make sure the scheme is working as intended.

Legal practitioners will be invited to register with their local court from today, with fast-track entries predicted to open in early September.

If successful, the scheme will be extended nationally and could be grown to other professional groups. It will not be implemented at courts hearing terrorist or high security cases.

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## **[Notice: Maidenhead Rowing Club Annual Regatta 2018: river restriction notice](#)**

River Thames restriction information for Saturday 11 August 2018.

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## **[News story: Global access to reliable energy: apply for funding](#)**

Innovate UK has up to £10 million to invest in innovative, market-focused energy technologies through the Energy Catalyst funding programme.

Round 6 of the Energy Catalyst will support energy innovations across all technologies, sectors and international markets to help address the global

need for reliable energy.

The Energy Catalyst is run by Innovate UK and co-funded by partners including the [Department for International Development \(DFID\)](#) and the [Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council \(EPSRC\)](#).

## **Bringing energy to poorly served regions**

Reliable sources of energy are crucial to human wellbeing but 1.1 billion people have no access to electricity. While progress has been made in both sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, [14% of the world's population is still without access, rising to 84% in rural areas](#).

The new funding is for projects that meet the needs of the people, businesses and services in these regions.

## **Tackling the 'Energy Trilemma'**

Organisations applying for funding will need to address the [World Energy Council's](#) 'Energy Trilemma' and its 3 pillars:

- cost – reducing prices to make energy accessible to everyone
- emissions – generating cleaner energy with lower emissions to protect the environment
- security of supply – putting reliable infrastructure in place to keep energy flowing without disruption or shortage

## **Funding for different stages of development**

The competition offers 3 strands for projects in different stages of development; early stage, mid-stage and late stage.

Funding for early-stage projects is designed for feasibility studies exploring the technical potential of an idea. The mid-stage strand is aimed at research and development, while the late stage strand will deal with projects that are ready to proceed with prototyping and pilot testing.

To apply for mid-stage or late-stage funding some of the research, testing or demonstration must be carried out in sub-Saharan Africa or South Asia by either a UK or international partner.

## **Who can apply?**

To be eligible for funding for any of the 3 strands you must:

- be a business, academic organisation, charity, public sector organisation or research and technology organisation (RTO)
- apply as part of a collaboration with a UK organisation if you're based in sub-Saharan Africa or South Asia
- plan to use the results to help deliver clean energy access in these regions

- involve at least one micro, small or medium-sized enterprise

## **Competition information**

- the competition opens on 20 August 2018 and the deadline for applications is midday on 14 November 2018
- successful applicants will be contacted on 25 January 2019
- early stage projects can have total costs of £50,000 to £300,000 and last from 6 to 12 months
- for mid-stage projects costs can be £50,000 to £1.5 million lasting 12 to 24 months
- for late stage projects costs can be £50,000 to £3 million lasting 12 to 30 months
- projects must start by 1 April 2019 and end by 30 Sept 2021

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## **Press release: Illegal booze sees bans for East London convenience store bosses**

Mohammad Akbar (61) and Sheraz Ahmad (29) now of Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, together ran Shiraz Food & Wine, a convenience store incorporated in August 2012 and located on the Hackney Road close to Hoxton in East London.

In December 2014 Shiraz Food & Wine was raided by Trading Standards, HMRC and the police, who found 351 bottles of illegal alcohol.

This was the largest seizure of illegal booze in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets for many years and led to the store's licence being revoked by the local authority. However, this caused a significant reduction in Shiraz Food & Wine's turnover, eventually leading to the convenience store's closure in 2016.

After the company went into liquidation, an investigation by the Insolvency Service discovered that Mohammad Akbar was the sole director of the company before the raids took place and failed to prevent Sheraz Ahmad from purchasing the illegal wine and spirits from a van driver before selling them in the store.

As a result, the Secretary of State accepted disqualification undertakings from both Mohammad Akbar and Sheraz Ahmad.

In his undertaking, Mohammad Akbar did not dispute that his inaction facilitated Sheraz Ahmad, who was not a shareholder or a formally appointed director, to cause Shiraz Food & Wine to trade with a lack of commercial probity.

And Sheraz Ahmad did not dispute in his undertaking that he caused Shiraz Food & Wine to trade with a lack of commercial probity.

Effective from 6 August, Mohammad Akbar is disqualified for 7 years and Sheraz Ahmad is banned for 11 years, and the pair cannot directly or indirectly be involved, without the permission of the court, in the promotion, formation or management of a company.

A spokesperson from Tower Hamlets Council said:

Whilst the potential health risks of fake alcohol are well known, businesses who sell cheap smuggled goods also create unfair competition for the majority of law abiding businesses in the borough.

Tower Hamlets Environmental Health and Trading Standards team works closely with our partners in HMRC and the Metropolitan Police to seize illegal product from the market place and take action against those who flout the law. This latest action by the Insolvency Service follows one such successful joint operation against shops that were found to be trading illegally and shows our ongoing commitment to protect residents and honest traders alike.

Anthony Hannon, Official Receiver at Public Interest Unit, said:

Sheraz Ahmad thought he could cut a few corners when he bought the illegal booze and Mohammad Akbar did nothing to stop him. But this could have led to serious consequences as there was no guarantee the alcohol was safe to sell to the public.

Thanks to the joint working with our colleagues from the various agencies involved, we have secured substantial bans for the two bosses, preventing them from setting up another business and possibly doing the same again.

Shiraz Food & Wine Ltd (08171650) traded from 178 Hackney Road, London, E2 7QL.

Sheraz Ahmad is of Mansfield, Nottinghamshire. At the time of the company's trading he was of London E2. His date of birth is October 1988. He was appointed a director of Shiraz Food & Wine in October 2015 but when he bought the illegal alcohol he was not a shareholder or formally appointed director.

Mohammad Akbar is of Mansfield, Nottinghamshire. At the time of the company's trading he was of London E2. His date of birth is February 1957.

A disqualification order has the effect that without specific permission of a court, a person with a disqualification cannot:

- act as a director of a company
- take part, directly or indirectly, in the promotion, formation or management of a company or limited liability partnership
- be a receiver of a company's property

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings.

Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of other restrictions](#).

The Insolvency Service administers the insolvency regime, investigating all compulsory liquidations and individual insolvencies (bankruptcies) through the Official Receiver to establish why they became insolvent. It may also use powers under the Companies Act 1985 to conduct confidential fact-finding investigations into the activities of live limited companies in the UK. In addition, the agency authorises and regulates the insolvency profession, deals with disqualification of directors in corporate failures, assesses and pays statutory entitlement to redundancy payments when an employer cannot or will not pay employees, provides banking and investment services for bankruptcy and liquidation estate funds and advises ministers and other government departments on insolvency law and practice.

Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is [available](#).

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 7674 6910 or 020 7596 6187

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

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## [National Statistics: Renewables obligation: certificates and generation, April 2018](#)

Monthly data for April 2018 on the number of certificates issued for generation under the Renewables Obligation (table ET 6.3).