

[Press release: UKEF supports Angolan healthcare and power infrastructure development](#)

Baroness Fairhead announces €450 million in UK Export Finance (UKEF) support for UK firms to build three new hospitals and upgrade two power stations, improving healthcare and power provision in Angola.

Baroness Fairhead, Minister of State for Trade and Export Promotion, said:

I'm delighted that the UK Government, through UK Export Finance, is supporting these two projects. It enables a Scottish exporter to enter a global marketplace and deliver reliable power to millions of people in Angola. It also showcases how British expertise can assist the development of vital healthcare services.

This is a great example of how our ambition to grow exports, as set out in the Export Strategy, is helping British businesses break into overseas markets through support such as that provided through UKEF, our award-winning export credit agency, our teams led by HM Trade Commissioners in market and our GREAT.gov.uk website.

Opportunities for UK healthcare and construction suppliers

This is the first time UKEF, the UK's export credit agency, has supported projects in Angola.

€380 million will go to support a contract between Angola's Ministry of Health and ASGC UK, the UK branch of international construction firm ASGC, to build three new hospitals. The company will lead on the design, construction and equipping of the Mother and Child Hospital and Paediatric Haematology Institute, both based in Luanda, and the Cabinda General Hospital. The projects will create significant opportunities for UK healthcare and construction suppliers.

Once complete, the Mother and Child Hospital will have over 300 beds available, and the Cabinda General Hospital over 200, providing much-needed healthcare services to major population centres in Angola. The haematology unit will provide a range of specialist services including radiology, intensive care and a paediatric ward.

IQA Group, headquartered in Paisley, will upgrade two power substations in Viana and Gabela over the course of two years, significantly reducing North

West Angola's dependence on oil-generated power. UKEF will provide a guarantee to support a €70 million loan issued to the Angolan Ministry of Finance for the project.

This is the first international contract for IQA Group, which was established in 2002 and is now the UK arm of Spanish multinational Elecnor, and which is leading a consortium to deliver the work for the Ministry of Energy and Water in Angola.

Supporting economic growth and development

The project will have a transformative effect on the region's power network, giving thousands of Luanda's residents, as well as industry in the region, improved access to electricity to support economic growth and development.

Baroness Northover, the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy for Angola and Zambia, said:

I have visited Angola regularly in the last two years in support of UK- Angola business co-operation, and am acutely aware of the growing opportunities there. It is wonderful that these important projects have come to fruition and I look forward to seeing more in the future.

Gregory Smyth, Managing Director, IQA Group, said:

IQA Group has ambitious plans for international growth, building on our success in the UK, and we're pleased that UKEF, along with the DIT team at the British Embassy in Luanda, is supporting us as we enter new markets. Support from UK Export Finance is a central part of our international offer, and is supporting our operations and jobs in Scotland.

Paul Woodman, Managing Director, ASGC, said:

UKEF's support forms a crucial component of our strategy, enabling us to grow revenues and deliver value for clients such as the Angolan government. The government's commitment to the growth of UK exports is continuing to help us build confidence with overseas customers and with UK suppliers.

Background

[UK Export Finance](#) is the UK's export credit agency and a government department, working alongside the Department for International Trade as an integral part of its strategy and operations.

Our mission is to ensure that no viable UK export should fail for want of finance or insurance from the private market. We provide finance and insurance to help exporters win, fulfil and ensure they get paid for export contracts.

Sectors in which UKEF has supported exports include: aerospace, healthcare, infrastructure, telecommunications and transport.

UKEF has a [national regional network of 24 export finance managers](#) supporting export businesses.

Our range of products includes:

- Bond insurance policy
- Bond support scheme
- Buyer & supplier credit financing facility
- Direct lending facility
- Export insurance policy
- Export refinancing facility
- Export working capital scheme
- Letter of credit guarantee scheme

Our [country cover positions](#) outline our current cover policy and risk appetite for each country.

Media enquiries: Claire Lynch, Media Relations Officer

Email

claire.lynch@ukexportfinance.gov.uk

Telephone

+44 (0)20 7271 8100

Mobile

+44 (0)7791 795992

Out of hours

+44 (0)207 215 2000

[Press release: New gritters take to the road](#)

The first delivery of the new gritters took place in October and will improve safety for drivers and workers due to the vehicles improved technology, ergonomics and enhanced visibility.

Despite weighing 26 tonnes and measuring a maximum of 2.5 meters wide, there have been a number of incidents where gritters have been struck by other vehicles.

Research carried out by Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) shows that vehicles stand out more if painted in one block colour and are solid in shape, which is where the new design has come from.

The new vehicles also contain innovative technology which includes being able to pre-programme them with information specific to each gritting route. This enables salt to be spread onto the road automatically, taking into account any specific requirements for bridges, landscape and other road features, allowing drivers to give their full attention to driving at all times.



Our winter fleet manager Jane Wilkins said:

Safety is our top priority and we are always looking at ways we can improve our winter resilience. Using the research carried out by TRL and our own data, we have looked carefully at the number of incidents involving gritters to see what more can be done to improve safety and the service we provide.

The roll out of this £30 million programme started this year with 34 new vehicles in East Anglia. The remainder of the 157 vehicles, will be replaced over the next two years.

We're working closely with gritter manufacturer Romaquip on the roll-out of the new fleet.

Romaquip technical director Stephen McKeown said:

We are excited to be working with Highways England, manufacturing a new generation of winter vehicles with numerous safety and technical advances. It is a pleasure to work with an organisation that strives to develop and improve their service, actively partnering with us to achieve these goals.

It is clear to see that the specification of these vehicles has been derived from consciously deciding to improve safety for both operators and other road users, and that the innovation to improve efficiency and functionality has also been thoroughly considered.

Romaquip is committed to delivering the best quality machines to all of our customers, we welcome this improvement and look forward to working with Highways England over the years to come.



Romaquip technical director Stephen McKeown hands over the keys to Nick Harris, Highways England's executive director of operations

We currently have 535 winter vehicles patrolling the 4,400 miles of motorways and major A roads across the country.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

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[News story: Quantum leap: prototype devices will be ready in 2 years' time](#)

Advancements in quantum technologies are predicted to have a big impact on our lives – from creating navigation systems that can operate without GPS to new cameras that can see around corners.

To help accelerate progress in this field, the government is funding 4 projects that will use the latest quantum technology to develop prototype devices. Projects will receive a share of £20 million from the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund, delivered by [UK Research and Innovation](#).

It follows the Chancellor's announcement of [up to £235 million of further support](#) to develop the next generation of transformative quantum technologies in the [Budget 2018](#).

This includes a new national quantum computing centre, additional investment in the next wave of the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund, and a training and skills package.

[Find out more about the quantum technologies challenge.](#)

Leading the development of quantum technologies

Projects will receive funding to develop quantum prototypes in 4 fields.

Surveying underground before you start digging

[RSK](#) will lead a project with a consortium of businesses and universities to use quantum sensors to detect objects underground. Initially, the technology will be used by road-working companies, but it could also be used in the rail network.

Precise timing

Manufacturer [Teledyne e2V \(UK\)](#) will lead a project to develop a pre-production prototype of a miniature atomic clock.

It will enable services such as energy supply, transport and mobile communications to function in the event of disruption to the current standard timing service, Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS).

Secure encryption

[Toshiba Research Europe](#) will lead a project to develop the UK supply of low-cost integrated chips, which will enable more secure transmission of data using new encryption technologies.

Keeping data safe

Another encryption project will be led by [ArQit](#). It will create advanced receivers to pick up quantum key signals. These keys are used to keep data safe by using quantum technology to let companies know if the data they are transmitting has been accessed.

Making the impossible possible

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

There is a huge future for cutting-edge science in the UK, which is why we are investing in ambitious technologies like quantum in our modern Industrial Strategy.

The projects announced today will benefit ordinary people around the country, from easing traffic congestion to offering more data security for online transactions.

Quantum technology has already developed sensors that can see around corners, and make the impossible, possible. We are backing world-leading innovators to continue this important work.

Working across industry, academia and government

Roger McKinlay, Challenge Director for Quantum Technologies at UK Research and Innovation, said:

The rise of quantum technologies will bring a huge impact on all our lives. In order to secure the UK lead in this area, and make sure that companies based here and UK jobs take a significant share of this opportunity, we must continue to work across industry, academia and government to achieve innovation.

This is why the government's investment of £20 million through these 4 successful, pioneer challenge-funded projects will put prototype quantum-enabled devices into the hands of users.

[Find out more about the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund.](#)

[Search and apply for funding opportunities.](#)

News story: Government sets out plans to support underperforming schools

Underperforming schools in England are set to receive extra support under Government plans to raise standards in classrooms across the country.

Following a pledge by the Secretary of State to simplify the school accountability system, giving teachers freedom to get on with their job without interference, Schools Minister Lord Agnew has today (9 November) set out how the department will support schools that are underperforming and how they will be identified.

From today, the following measures will be used to identify schools that need additional support. They include:

- the floor and coasting standards being used as ways to identify schools that need help, rather than as triggers for intervention ahead of an academy conversion;
- where a school is struggling it will receive support from a high-performing school leader, as well as access to up to £16,000 for the small number of schools judged as 'Requires Improvement' in their last two Ofsted inspections; and
- the 'coasting' measure will no longer be used as the starting point of a formal intervention – this was a key pledge by the Education Secretary during a speech to school leaders earlier this year.

Regional Schools Commissioners will no longer issue warning notices to schools on educational grounds unless they have been rated inadequate by Ofsted.

Today's changes come ahead of a formal consultation in the New Year looking at whether the floor and coasting standards used to judge school performance should be replaced by a single measure.

Minister for the School System, Lord Agnew, said:

Standards in our schools have risen, with the proportion of pupils in good or outstanding schools up from 66% in 2010 to 86% in 2018.

Today's changes will simplify the school accountability system so teachers and school leaders know where they stand and simplify a system that we know can be a concern amongst the profession.

Where a school is struggling, we will aim to take swift action, providing practical hands on support and, where necessary, more formal steps.

The support that we are offering will be focused around delivering support that can be embedded into a school's teaching programme for

the long term.

The changes confirmed today will make the school system easier for school leaders and parents to understand.

Schools that meet the criteria for extra support will be able to do so in two ways:

- Up to three days' support from a designated National Leader of Education (NLE) who will work with the senior leadership of the school or trust to identify their specific needs and ways these can be addressed through DfE funded programmes; and
- For those also judged as 'Requires Improvement' in their last two Ofsted inspections, an additional offer of up to £16,000 that can be put towards the costs of implementing the activity agreed between the NLE and school.

Paul Whiteman, General Secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT), said:

Today's announcement is a welcome clarification of the promises made by the Secretary of State at our annual conference in May this year. It also marks a significant point in the ongoing work between NAHT and the DfE to address some of the big concerns of school leaders.

Accountability is obviously a key concern, and today's announcement clears up some of the confusion regarding the roles of Ofsted and RSCs, as well as providing much needed reassurance that schools seeking to improve will receive support rather than sanction. This is an important step forward, and consistent with the findings of our Improving School Accountability report which was published in September.

Richard Gill, National Leader of Education and Member of the Teaching Schools Council, said:

This programme of support, coordinated by the Teaching Schools Council, will ensure that there is greater collaboration across our regions with the aim of providing bespoke support where needed, ensuring that more children and young people can attend a great school.

This will also support the self-improving system which relies on effective leaders working beyond their own schools to make improvements to the wider school landscape.

Today's announcements follow the Education Secretary's commitment with

teaching unions and Ofsted to strip away unnecessary workload for teachers, and are part of a drive led by the Education Secretary to trust the best school leaders to make decisions in their staff and pupils' best interest.