

News story: Outline applications reach end of the line under rules amendments

Following [our announcement in January](#), the Land Registration (Amendment) Rules 2018 will come into effect on Friday 6 April. These update the Land Registration Rules 2003, marking a major step in how we use digital technology to build faster and simpler services for our customers.

The changes will help us to achieve our ambition of becoming the world's leading land registry for speed, simplicity and an open approach to data as outlined in [our Business Strategy](#).

Many of the changes to the rules are minor and many will not affect customers immediately. The most substantial change that may affect our customers is that outline applications (OLAs) will disappear from 6 April.

OLAs were introduced when most of the customer applications that we received to update or create title registers were on paper forms. OLAs offered customers a formal way to give us notice that they intended to send an application imminently. It allowed us to capture it in our systems before receiving the full application.

Business customers can now make full applications immediately online, so there is no longer a need for OLAs.

We will not accept any OLA applications received after 11pm today (Wednesday 28 March). This is to allow for the OLA's follow-up period (the time in which the applicant must submit the full application) before OLAs cease to exist.

The amendments to the Land Registration Rules follow a public consultation on the proposed amendments which ran from 9 February to 5 April 2017. [See the consultation outcome](#)

We will update our [practice guides](#) to take account of the changes.

Speech: Speech from the new Governor of the Cayman Islands

Thank you, Honourable Premier and Deputy Governor, for your kind words of welcome. I feel deeply humbled and honoured today to accept the responsibility of my appointment as the Governor of the Cayman Islands.

This is my first experience of working in an Overseas Territory and I know

that I will have much to learn in the months and years ahead. I hope that my long experience in the Civil Service, the private sector and the military has equipped me well to serve the people of the Cayman Islands effectively. I can assure you all that I intend to uphold and defend our constitution, laws and the prosperity of our islands to the best of my ability.

I am looking forward to working with the Premier and the members of this Legislative Assembly as we tackle the difficult and challenging issues that we will encounter in the years ahead. I know that the Cayman Islands have a strong and independent civil service ably led by the Deputy Governor, and a police force which is the envy of the other Overseas Territories. I will also defend your integrity and strive for continual progress, innovation and improvement.

I hope that my first days in Cayman will be spent getting to know these beautiful islands and meeting as many Caymanians and residents as possible. I hope to visit the people of Cayman Brac and Little Cayman on Wednesday. I am here to serve you and I want to hear your views and your ideas. I am energised by people's hopes and dreams, nothing gives me more pleasure than to serve. You will find my door open to you and I will defend your rights and prosperity with everything I have at my disposal.

Initially I intend to focus my efforts and those of my office on four areas that I see as particularly important.

I see security as my first duty. We are fortunate to have an experienced and dedicated Commissioner of Police and I know his team is committed to our safety and security. The staff in the Governor's Office and I will not compromise in this area. It is our responsibility to keep these islands safe so we can enjoy our quality of life and not lose it to crime. We see examples from around this region where a breakdown in law and order has led to serious consequences for the social and economic stability of other states. We must not let this happen here. Security needs professional staff and adequate resourcing and we need to work together with the UK and partners in the region to ensure that we are keeping pace with the criminal and external threats that seek to undermine our way of life. I know that there is already much work being undertaken in this area and I will continue to support and enhance this.

I welcome the recent statement made to this Assembly by the Honourable Premier setting out some of the important initiatives we are engaged on to create a new Border Protection Service and Coastguard. I fully agree that we need to work closely together through the National Security Council as we take strategic security decisions whilst at the same time ensuring that operational decisions are left to professional law enforcement agencies. I hope we can hold my first NSC meeting as soon as possible.

Secondly I will work to protect the interests of Cayman business and in particular our financial services industry. This territory is well served by one of the world's biggest and most professional financial centres. This underpins the economy and sustains the way of life of Caymanians and I look forward to working with the industry, where I started my career, and with

regulators in Cayman and colleagues in the UK and the EU to ensure a prosperous and stable future.

Our economy and the fabric of Cayman society is underpinned by a world renowned judiciary. Our judges, lawyers and court staff are vital to the financial success and security of the islands. It is no surprise that businesses from around the world choose to do business here when the rule of law is protected in this way.

Both the UK and the Cayman Islands are tolerant and welcoming societies and human rights will also be a priority area for me. I have spent much of my career trying to up-hold peoples' rights and striving for equality and tolerance. All Caymanians and residents of these islands have their rights protected by the constitution and by the international obligations to which we have subscribed. I know that some aspects are sensitive in Cayman but my compass on rights issues will always be the law and I will defend the rights of all groups of people here regardless of their race, colour, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation. I look forward to working closely with the Human Rights Commission on these issues.

My final priority will be to develop closer people to people links between the UK and the Cayman Islands. We have strong family, historical and constitutional bonds. I would like to see these strengthen further with more business, educational and cultural links being established and embedded.

In the UK we are talking about a new era of "Global Britain" and the Overseas Territories are part of Global Britain. I arrive in Cayman at the start of a period of change and I know that there are many challenging issues that we have to address. But as the UK leaves the European Union, risks and opportunities will be created for the Overseas Territories. I am optimistic about this and also see it is a chance for the UK and the Cayman Islands to forge closer links than ever before. I want to make sure that you really feel that your voices are heard in London and that we work together on the world stage.

The visit that the Honourable Premier and Ministers made to Hong Kong last week to take part in the Great Festival of Innovation is a good example of where we can work together to promote trade opportunities. I see the facilitation of these new opportunities as a key role for me and my team.

The Cayman Islands are blessed with amazing biodiversity and tourists flock here to enjoy your pristine environment and fantastic wildlife. Although the elected Government is directly responsible for the protection of the environment, including the use of renewable energy for which I have a real passion, I hope to work closely with you to keep the Cayman Islands as a place of beauty and a home to the diverse marine life and endemic species that are found here.

I would like to pay tribute to Governor Kilpatrick for her dedicated service to these islands. As Cayman's first female Governor I know she has left a positive legacy for me to follow. As has been reported in some sections of the media, I am Cayman's first Muslim Governor. But I do not see it that way. I

am first and foremost Her Majesty's Governor and your Governor. I am honoured to have been appointed and to have the chance to serve you.

I arrived this morning with my wife, Momina and three children, Amani, Ambreene and baby Emilia. They too are excited about coming to such a wonderful place and are looking forward to starting their new lives here. My son Umar who works in the financial industry in London may join me later. We all have a lot to learn and I am keen to get started straightaway.

Finally I would like to thank Deputy Governor Franz Manderson for the exemplary manner in which he has covered as Acting Governor over the last 3 weeks. Also my thanks to the staff of the Governor's Office and other government departments for making my arrival as smooth as possible.

I look forward to meeting and working with you all.

May God Bless the Cayman Islands.

Press release: Deposit return scheme in fight against plastic

A deposit return scheme to increase recycling rates and slash the amount of waste polluting our land and seas will be introduced subject to consultation later this year, it was confirmed today.

UK consumers go through an estimated 13 billion plastic drinks bottles a year, but more than three billion are incinerated, sent to landfill or left to pollute our streets, countryside and marine environment.

To tackle this blight, the government has confirmed it will introduce a deposit return scheme in England for single use drinks containers (whether plastic, glass or metal), subject to consultation later this year. The consultation will look at the details of how such a scheme would work, alongside other measures to increase recycling rates. We hope to talk to the devolved administrations about the scope for working together on this important issue.

Similar schemes already operate in countries such as Denmark, Sweden and Germany. A deposit return scheme sees consumers pay an up-front deposit when they buy a drink, ranging from 8p in Sweden to 22p in Germany, which is redeemed on return of the empty drink container. Possible variants of a deposit return scheme include cash rewards for returning drinks containers without an upfront deposit.

This is often done through a network of 'reverse vending machines', where you insert your plastic or glass bottle or can and the machine returns your

money. Once a bottle is returned, businesses are then responsible for making sure they are effectively recycled – a move that has led to a 97% recycling rate in Germany.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

We can be in no doubt that plastic is wreaking havoc on our marine environment – killing dolphins, choking turtles and degrading our most precious habitats. It is absolutely vital we act now to tackle this threat and curb the millions of plastic bottles a day that go unrecycled.

We have already banned harmful microbeads and cut plastic bag use, and now we want to take action on plastic bottles to help clean up our oceans.

Following receipt of the Voluntary and Economics Incentives Working Group report on single use drinks containers, Defra is now developing plans for a deposit return scheme for consultation later this year.

Today's announcement is the latest move in the government crackdown on plastic, following the plastic [microbeads ban](#) hailed as one of the world's strongest bans and the 5p plastic bag charge – which has [led to 9 billion fewer bags distributed](#). It sits alongside the [25 Year Environment Plan](#) commitment to eliminate avoidable plastic waste.

The consultation will follow the recent [call for evidence](#) by HM Treasury on taxes and charges to reduce waste from single-use plastics, so that all relevant findings can be fed into the proposals.

Plastic bottles and drinks containers have a significant impact on the environment, with discarded food and drink containers making up at least a fifth of rubbish on beaches. There are over 150 million tonnes of plastic in the world's oceans and every year one million birds and over 100,000 sea mammals die from eating and getting tangled in plastic waste.

Author Bill Bryson, a former president of Campaign to Protect Rural England, said:

Future generations will look back on this decision as a piece of supremely enlightened policymaking, and one that raises the prospect of the world's most beautiful country becoming free from drinks container litter at last.

The consultation will take into account views from producers, suppliers and consumers to ensure that any system introduced works across the country. The consultation will sit alongside a package of wider reforms of the current packaging waste system, which will incentivise producers to take greater responsibility for the environmental impacts of their products and to

increase the amount of packaging they recycle.

Today's announcement comes ahead of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in April, where member states will gather in London and agree measures to protect our oceans.

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Press release: Countdown to high speed broadband for all begins

High speed broadband connectivity for the entire UK moved one step closer today, following the laying of legislation setting the design of the broadband Universal Service Obligation (USO).

Ofcom now has up to 2 years to implement the scheme, meaning that by 2020, everyone in the UK will have a legal right to an affordable connection of at least 10 Mbps, from a designated provider, no matter where they live or work, up to a reasonable cost threshold.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

Ensuring access to reliable, high speed broadband is one of the most important things we can do to support our rural communities and businesses in Wales.

The digital sector has become an integral part of the Welsh economy and the rapid growth of many digital businesses means that reliable and fast access to broadband is vital in all communities in Wales. This new commitment means that no matter where you live in Wales, residents will have the right to at least 10 Mbps.

Improving connectivity for homes and businesses is a central pillar of this Government's efforts to strengthen the Welsh economy, and today's announcement means that everyone can legally expect a minimum level of service from their providers, wherever they are.

Digital minister Margot James said:

In the 21st century, accessing the internet is a necessity not a luxury. We are building a Britain that is fit for the future, and we're now putting high speed broadband on a similar footing as other essential services like water and phone lines.

The Government believes that only a regulatory USO offers sufficient certainty and the legal enforceability that is required to ensure high speed broadband access for the whole of the UK by 2020. 95% of the UK already has access to superfast broadband, and the USO will provide a "digital safety net" for those in the most remote and hardest to reach places.

The specification for the USO design includes:

- A download speed of at least 10Mbps, with quality requirements for upload speeds, responsiveness of connections, and data cap; this could

be delivered by a range of fixed line and wireless technologies;

- A per premises cost threshold of £3,400, enabling coverage to around 99.8% of premises. Consumers outside this threshold will be able to get a satellite connection, or would have the option to cover the excess themselves (in the same way the universal service right to a landline telephone works);
- A requirement for demand aggregation, so that people within an area can combine their per premise cost thresholds, to ensure that as many people who want to get connected do get connected;
- For it to be funded by industry rather than public funding; and
- Uniform pricing so that those connected under the USO do not have to pay more for similar services to consumers served commercially.

Although the USO minimum speed will initially be set at at least 10Mbps, this will be kept under review and we expect it to be increased over time. Ofcom advise that 10Mbps is the speed required for a typical household's use of internet access to services such as web browsing, email and video services.

Government and Ofcom are now working to put in place a number of processes to implement the USO as quickly as possible. This includes the running of a process to designate the universal service provider(s) who will be required to offer the service, giving both small and large providers a chance to put their names forward for consideration. Ofcom will also be responsible for establishing an industry fund that will support delivery of connections made under the USO.

Following the creation of new powers when the Government passed the Digital Economy Act 2017, the Government consulted on the design of the USO. The detailed response to this consultation has also been published today.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

1. Ofcom's Connected Nations 2017 report shows that the number of premises without 10Mbps broadband download and 1Mbps upload speeds is 1.1 million, or 4% of premises, compared with 1.6 million or 6% of premises in 2016
2. The designated provider will be under statutory obligation to connect people up to the cost threshold, and to connect them if they are willing to pay excess costs above the threshold.