

# Press release: UK and China sign Memorandum of Understanding on Medicine and Device Regulation



CEO Ian Hudson met with Minister Bi in Beijing.

Dr Ian Hudson, Chief Executive of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the China Food and Drug Administration (CFDA) during a visit to China this week.

This new signing expands on a previous MoU signed in 2014 which focussed on the exchange of safety information on medicines and medical devices to protect patients in the UK, China, and around the world.

Dr Ian Hudson, Chief Executive Officer at MHRA said:

China is a world leader in the market for raw materials for the pharmaceutical industry and closer collaboration with MHRA will support the promotion of innovation, good practice, and protect UK patients.

We operate in a global environment and formalising our international relationships helps strengthen regulatory systems to protect public health worldwide.

The MoU was signed in Beijing's Great Hall of the People with both Prime Minister Theresa May and China's Premier Li Keqiang present.

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# News story: Professor Malcolm Morley OBE appointed as Chair of RWM

Professor Morley previously served as an Independent Non-Executive on RWM's Board, and replaces current Chair David Batters. He will oversee RWM's work to ensure that radioactive waste is safely and effectively managed, alongside the development of a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF) to permanently dispose of higher-activity radioactive waste.

Last autumn, after almost 14 years in post, Professor Morley retired as Chief Executive of Harlow Council, where he led its transformation to become an award-winning organisation. Success at Harlow led him to a range of national and regional roles supporting public sector improvement and partnership working.

Announcing the appointment, NDA's Chief Executive David Peattie said:

RWM performs a vital role in supporting the safe and effective management of radioactive waste.

Professor Malcolm Morley's leadership and experience of partnership working will be invaluable to RWM as it takes important steps on the journey to deliver a Geological Disposal Facility here in the UK, delivering a safe, secure and long term solution to managing higher-activity radioactive waste.

I would like to thank David Batters for his leadership in the role.

Commenting on his appointment, Professor Morley said:

I am honoured to be leading RWM as Chair at this critical time. RWM's mission to deliver a long-term solution for the safe disposal of higher-activity radioactive waste will protect future generations and our environment from the legacy of waste the UK has created over the past 60 years.

RWM's outstanding expertise in areas such as science and engineering, and its commitment to community engagement, will help deliver an infrastructure project like no other we've seen before in the UK and I am delighted to be a part of the team.

Professor Morley was awarded an OBE in the 2016 New Year's Honours for services to local government and is a Visiting Professor at 2 university business schools.

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## [Press release: Environment Agency completes £10 million flood storage basin on World Wetlands Day](#)

A £10 million flood scheme which will protect almost 2,000 homes and businesses, hold more than 250 Olympic-sized swimming pools of water during a flood and includes more than 5 hectares of urban wetland habitat, has been officially completed today (Friday 2 February).

The Environment Agency has marked the completion of its Salford Flood Improvement Scheme to coincide with [World Wetlands Day](#).

The Salford scheme delivers on a long-held vision to not only create a flood storage basin in Salford – to reduce the risk of flooding from the River Irwell – but also to provide a boost to local wildlife populations by including a high quality urban wetland habitat.

Wetlands provide many benefits to society and help us to be more resilient to the effects of our changing climate. They provide multiple benefits such as slowing the flow of water, reducing flood risk, filtering water and capturing carbon. Their importance is increasing as a result of climate and land use change.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency, said:

The £10 million Salford flood scheme will reduce flood risk to almost 2,000 homes and businesses. In addition, we have created more than 5 hectares of urban wetland, bringing attractive landscapes for people and wildlife.

People in the area can also enjoy a new footpath around the site and links to existing footpaths that now provide a green route to and from the centre of Manchester. This excellent partnership project is a fine example of the multiple benefits our work brings to the local community.

In its primary function the multi-million pound scheme will provide increased protection to more than 1,900 homes and businesses across Lower Broughton and Lower Kersal. Lower Broughton was affected by the devastating floods that struck the city on Boxing Day in 2015.

Floods Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

How fitting that on World Wetlands Day a new scheme in Salford is

opening that will reduce flood risk to thousands of homes and businesses and deliver a lasting legacy for wildlife in this area with five hectares of new urban wetland habitat.

I am pleased the government has been able to support this scheme as part of the £39.5 million we are investing in Greater Manchester by 2021.

The entire 28 hectare flood basin sits within a meander loop of the River Irwell and will protect surrounding properties by holding up to 650 million litres of water – the equivalent to 260 Olympic-size swimming pools – during flood conditions.

The new defence is an 'offline' storage basin that will work in tandem with the existing flood storage area at Littleton Road, completed in 2005. To create the storage capacity ground was excavated from the site and then reused to build a raised embankment around the periphery to form part of the defence system.

The embankment's south-west corner features an inlet to allow the controlled spill of water into the basin when river levels are high. Water is then stored in the basin during a flood and released by two outlet pipes back into the river once the water level has dropped.

Making the most of every design aspect, the flood embankments have been planted with 10ha of wildflower habitat, to attract pollinating species such as lady birds, moths, butterflies and bees – whose population has dramatically declined across the county in recent years.

The scheme not only brings flood risk and wildlife benefits, but also leisure and amenity benefits to the local community.

With exactly 2.5km of new footpath skirting the periphery, runners and cyclists can enjoy the improved scenery and the links to existing footpaths that now provide a green route to and from the centre of Manchester.

Within the basin area, a number of multi-use sports pitches have been given improved playing surfaces and better drainage systems, making them more resilient to flooding than the pitches that were in place before the scheme.

The two kiosks on site were decorated by renowned Manchester graffiti artist, kELz0, who observed the wildlife on site to create the vibrant designs.

As a longer term, economic benefit, the scheme will help Salford Council's regeneration plans by enabling development in areas previously not viable. More than 90 hectares of development land has been protected as a direct result of the scheme which will allow increased opportunities to develop land within the river corridor.

Throughout the 3-year construction term, the Environment Agency worked closely with Salford City Council, the local community steering group, the Broughton Trust, Salford Friendly Anglers, Kersal Vale Allotment &

Horticultural Society and the University of Salford.

Funding for the scheme came from a number of sources. £5m came from Government Grant-in-Aid, £4.1m came from a Government growth fund and the remaining £1.2m came from Salford City Council.

Councillor Derek Antrobus, lead member for planning and sustainable development at Salford City Council said:

The new flood basin realises a long-term ambition of the city council to reduce the risk for local communities.

The council is delighted that it will also provide an excellent amenity and we have invested in the bridge from Kersal Dale so the site is integrated into the walking and cycling route along the Irwell Valley.

The scheme's completion will officially be marked with the unveiling of a plaque by the Environment Agency's Chair, Emma Howard-Boyd and the city's Mayor Paul Dennett.

The government is investing £2.6 billion to better protect over 300,000 properties from flooding by 2021.

The flood basin will be opened to the public once essential work to the path network has been completed. Dependent on dry weather conditions, this is scheduled for early Spring. The flood basin is already fully operational and will be used during a flooding event as required.

Take a tour of the scheme from above by viewing our drone footage of Salford on [YouTube](#).

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## **[Press release: New overdraft alerts as CMA banking rules come into force](#)**

In a rule change required by the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) as part of its [Retail Banking Investigation](#), banks must now set up an alert system which will help their customers avoid unnecessary charges.

During its investigation, the CMA found that banks receive around £1.2 billion a year from unarranged overdraft charges. This new overdraft measure, combined with the CMA's recent order to require banks to publicly announce their maximum monthly charges, could create significant savings for many bank customers.

A number of banks already have alert systems in place, but the new rules require all banks to send these alerts – through texts or a mobile banking app – and to implement other measures, such as a grace period in which people can transfer money into their account to avoid being charged.

The system will apply to new customers from today and will roll out to all existing bank customers over the coming month.

Adam Land, Senior Director at the CMA, said:

People will now be told when they are about to slip into overdraft, which could help them avoid potentially costly charges. And the changes we are requiring from today make it easier for small firms to switch to another bank for their current account or to obtain a loan.

These new rules, which are a result of our recent retail banking investigation, are part of a wider package that will help people to get the most out of their banks and force them to work harder for their customers' money. The overdraft alert system is one of 4 new measures that are being implemented today to improve the service people receive and make it easier to switch between different banks.

At the moment, only 3% of personal and 4% of business customers switch to a different bank in any year, even though personal customers in Great Britain could typically save £92 per year by switching. Small firms, which benefit from 3 of the new measures being introduced, could realise savings of around £80 a year on average.

## **Opening Business Current Accounts**

In its investigation, the CMA found each bank is asking for different information from businesses applying to open current accounts. This has encouraged many small businesses to use their existing Personal Current Account (PCA) provider for their business account and has discouraged them from switching between banks. The CMA is therefore insisting that Business Current Account (BCA) opening procedures are standardised, so all banks will now ask for the same information from applicants.

## **Loan price and eligibility tool**

Small and medium sized businesses will also now find it easier to take out a business loan thanks to a new loan price and eligibility tool to be launched by four banks: RBS Group, Lloyds Banking Group, HSBC Group and Barclays. This tool will help SMEs to understand the costs of taking out a loan and find the best deal for them.

## Transaction history

Banks will now also have to provide personal and business customers who are closing their account with five years of transaction history, free of charge, unless they choose to opt out. This move aims to encourage switching, as the CMA has found that the fear of losing your transaction history can be a reason people don't switch. It also means people will have easy access to their financial records for things like mortgage applications.

### Notes for Editors

1. In its [final report](#) on the retail banking market, published in 2016, the CMA announced a package of reforms to make banks work harder for their customers and help people take control of their banking using innovative new services. For more information, visit the retail banking investigation [case page](#).
2. The overdraft alert, which will be sent by text message or via a mobile banking app, applies to all banks with more than 150,000 active current accounts. RBS has indicated that, on occasion, alerts may be provided up to a day late to a limited number of its customers up until September 2018. In the event that the alert is sent late, the CMA has [required the bank](#) to either prevent a fee being charged or reimburse customers for any fee that is charged within this period.
3. The FCA has found that signing up to text alerts alongside using mobile banking reduced monthly unarranged overdraft charges by 24% on average (around £11 per year for each customer). The regulator has been undertaking its own analysis into overdraft charges and is due to present its conclusions and any potential remedies later this year.
4. The provision of transaction history remedy applies to all PCA providers with more than 150,000 active PCAs and all BCA providers with more than 20,000 active BCAs. Banks can decide whether to provide customers their transaction history in paper or electronic format. Clydesdale Bank indicated it would not be able to provide this service on the 2 February 2018 and the CMA therefore [issued Directions](#) to ensure it would be fully compliant from the 2 March 2018.
5. The Business Current Account procedure requires all BCA providers with more than 20,000 active BCAs to adopt a Standard Information Set, which is the standard information required by banks when deciding whether to approve an application to open a BCA. The banks have worked with UK Finance to develop and agree the Standard Information Set, which will be made available on the [UK Finance website](#).
6. The new loan price and eligibility tools cover all unsecured loans and standard tariff unsecured overdrafts up to £25,000. They complement the CMA's requirement – from August 2017 – for all providers to SMEs of unsecured loans and standard tariff unsecured overdrafts to publish the cost of these products, showing a representative annual percentage rate (APR) for loans and effective annual rate (EAR) for overdrafts.
7. Media queries should be sent to: [press@cma.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:press@cma.gsi.gov.uk) or journalists can call 020 3738 6191.

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## Statement to Parliament: Support for maritime training

I am proud that the United Kingdom has one of the most vibrant and competitive maritime sectors in the world. We are an outward-looking, global trading maritime nation proud of our maritime history but forward looking and ambitious for our future.

Our success though relies above all else on our workforce. The United Kingdom is recognised all over the world for its leading maritime education and training and for the very best seafarers that are produced. Our well-trained and skilled cadets are responsible for many of our vital needs bringing them efficiently and safely to our shores.

I am therefore pleased to announce that we will be [doubling government's financial support for maritime training](#), the so-called [SMarT fund](#), from £15 million to £30 million to introduce a new SMarT Plus option. I am committed to continue building capacity and diversity within our maritime workforce so it can capitalise on every opportunity the market provides. I recognise the importance of transferable skills and the essential role seafarers play in supporting the wider maritime sector when they return from sea to shore based careers. Increasing our support for maritime training is essential in order for our great maritime nation to maintain its global position as a market leader. This is never more important than it is today as we prepare to leave the EU and take an even more global outlook.

Seafarers are highly skilled professionals entering STEM related careers. SMarT Plus funding will be available from April 2018 and will also support the [Year of Engineering](#) though stimulating the availability of training opportunities for deck, engine and electro-technical cadets. The 2018/19 cohort of SMarT Plus cadets will begin their on-ship training in the months before we leave the EU.

A key strength of the UK's maritime sector is our strong relationship with industry. I value the work of the UK Chamber of Shipping, Nautilus International and the Merchant Navy Training Board in developing and refining the SMarT Plus proposal in conjunction with my department's officials. An opportunity was clearly identified to create a resurgence in maritime training and increase the competitiveness of SMarT. There is no shortage of people applying for cadetships and it is only right that we capitalise on this momentum and create the conditions for more UK training and employment opportunities within the maritime sector. I am delighted to be working with the maritime industry and trade unions and together we will build a stronger UK maritime workforce.

SMarT Plus is a package that will see SMarT funding doubled, over a 7 year period, from £15 million to £30 million per year.



This will enable the cadet intake to increase from 750 to 1,200 each year.

In return, shipping companies will create additional UK training positions and commit to employ newly qualified SMarT Plus officers.

This will enable SMarT Plus officers to gain the 12 months sea time experience that is required to enable them to progress to their second Certificate of Competency.

UK officers holding a second Certificate of Competency are particularly valued throughout industry. Their quality, leadership and training makes them highly employable