

# Research: Emerging infections: monthly summaries

Monthly updates on new or emerging infectious disease events that could affect UK public health.

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## Financial Remedy: digital process

Financial remedy service has delivered a national end-to-end service for individuals and/or their legal representatives to make an application to legally end a marriage or civil partnership and resolve associated financial issues.

Personal applicants can [apply for a divorce online](#) through GOV.UK and legal representatives must now submit [applications for divorce on behalf of their clients](#) using MyHMCTS.

A further element of a fully digital divorce process is a digital process for financial remedy.

### **Background**

The financial remedy project started in 2017 to move the process online to allow divorcing couples to resolve their associated financial matters. The aim was to create a more efficient service and enable the parties to view their cases and progress online. Consented Financial Remedy cases were taking 77 days on average from issue to final order in the year to April 2018. We involved stakeholders from the beginning, starting with an inception event with the judiciary and operational teams. It was important to ensure our stakeholders were involved with the conception and planned enhancements to move the process online. The Department for Work and Pensions and pension companies also signed up to the service.

Stage 1 of the pilot, 'Apply for a consent order (Form A, form D81)', began testing in the South West Regional Divorce Centre (RDC) in August 2018 with 5 members of the judiciary and 5 firms of solicitors.

The system was very much a basic Minimum Viable Product (MVP) to start with, with much of the manual work being completed by operations staff at the RDC; feedback from this was that it was time consuming and a more efficient service was needed.

We worked quickly to improve this and enabled the orders to be reviewed and completed digitally by both judges and case administration personnel.

With the system working well, we increased the number of solicitors using the system gradually and with that, increased the number of judges completing the work. We also moved the administration of the work to the Courts and Tribunals Service Centre (CTSC) in Stoke.

During the implementation process, we held a weekly call with solicitors to gather feedback and ideas on improvements for the system, this helped us to tweak and improve the system. The weekly calls were minuted. With the improvements to the system, the service is now mandated and being used by solicitors nationally with over 300 judges trained.

To ensure we were gathering feedback on the system, we had a monthly call with the divorce and financial remedy stakeholders. The calls were minuted.

We also held a weekly call with the CTSC to ensure their workload was manageable and to inform them of any enhancement rollouts to the system. These calls were also minuted.

With the process starting with an MVP, there were no real problems with implementing the new process.

## **Impact of the actions**

Through moving the consent order application online and listening to feedback we have greatly improved the timeliness. It now takes an average of 35 days from issue to final order. However, this includes cases which are referred to a judge more than once. The average time from issue to final order is now on average 7 days.

Financial Remedy Centres (FRCs) were rolled out nationally, they deal with mainly contested applications and any consent order hearings.

Examples of positive feedback from service users and tweets received from solicitors using the system:

Love a competition but can anyone beat my record? Order submitted via online @HMCTsgovuk financial remedy portal on 19 August. Approved 11 days later. thank you @ResFamilyLaw thank you HMCTS

I just want to take a moment to recognise and congratulate @HMCTsgovuk for their online divorce and financial remedy procedure – decree absolute in less than 4 months from issue of petition and 9 days to approve a FRO by consent. Truly impressive, well done!

Principal Lawyer at Slater & Gordon Lawyers, divorce lawyer and collaborative lawyer.

## Further information

[HMCTS Reform projects explained](#)

[HMCTS engagement groups](#)

[Engaging with HMCTS external stakeholders](#)

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## [UK tech firms and investors brought together for landmark Treasury Conference](#)

- Chancellor Rishi Sunak convenes landmark Treasury Connect conference in London today to bring together CEOs of the UK's biggest tech firms and investors
- New data shows government support during the pandemic lands taxpayers with stakes in high performing, high-growth firms including education platforms, healthcare companies and an energy tech company
- More than one fifth of people in the UK's biggest cities are employed in the tech sector which saw a record-breaking £11.2 billion invested last year despite the pandemic

At the first-ever Treasury Connect conference in East London, Rishi Sunak will bring together the CEOs of the UK's biggest investors and tech firms, including Funding Circle and Monzo, and lead four sessions on access to finance, Fintech, talent and life sciences.

He will also announce that government support during the pandemic through the Future Fund, which enabled UK-based firms to apply for convertible loans to support continued growth and innovation, has landed taxpayers with stakes in more than 150 high-growth firms.

These include Vaccitech PLC, which co-invented the COVID-19 vaccine with the University of Oxford and that has been supplied by AstraZeneca to 170 countries worldwide, and Century Tech, an innovative education platform that uses AI to personalise learning for children.

**Speaking ahead of the Treasury Connect conference, the Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak said:**

I am delighted to bring some of our biggest tech firms and

investors together today to celebrate UK technology and expertise at Treasury Connect. These firms have huge economic potential and will play a critical role in our future prosperity – all while creating high-skilled jobs and boosting the economy as part of our Plan for Jobs.

The Future Fund was set up to ensure that investment keeps flowing to our most innovative businesses, and it's fantastic that taxpayers now have equity in these top-performing start-ups.

Investing in these companies has the potential to accelerate innovations that will transform UK industry, develop new medicines and strengthen our position as a science superpower.

**Digital Secretary Oliver Dowden said:**

It's fantastic to see firms and investors from around the country coming together to celebrate this golden age in UK tech.

The tech sector has played a crucial role throughout the pandemic and these innovative firms are key to driving growth through our recovery.

We've been working tirelessly to back digital businesses with pro-innovation policies such as the Future Fund and the National Data Strategy so we can create jobs, wealth and boost people's digital skills right across the UK.

The UK's world-leading tech sector employs more than one fifth of people in the UK's biggest cities, accounting for 9% of the UK workforce. Despite the disruption caused by Covid-19, last year a record-breaking £11.2 billion was invested in the UK's tech companies.

The Government stood behind the sector during the pandemic by launching the Future Fund, in May 2020, which has supported nearly 1,200 firms, in sectors such as digital tech and life sciences, with £1 billion of investment. The scheme also helped these start-ups and innovative firms to secure funding from third party investors who had to at least match the government funding on each loan.

Latest data, released today by the British Business Bank shows some of these early investments have now turned into stakes in these high-growth firms, showing the scheme is working.

This includes healthcare company Cipher Surgical Limited which has developed products to maintain a clear view of the laparoscope used by surgeons when carrying out abdominal keyhole surgery, making operating time quicker and cost less.

Other companies that have Government stakes include Ripple Energy, a firm

that allows customers to own shares of a wind farm.

**Catherine Lewis La Torre, CEO, British Business Bank said:**

The Future Fund helped keep investment flowing to high-growth UK businesses during the pandemic. Designed to create a bridge to an innovative company's next funding round, over £1 billion of convertible loans were issued to more than 1,000 firms. Over 150 companies have already seen this funding convert to equity as they have gone on to successfully raise further private sector capital.

The continued success of companies such as those supported by the Future Fund, will be essential in ensuring the UK retains its world leading position in science, innovation and technology.

Today's news follows the £375 million Future Fund: Breakthrough which opened for applications in July to help high-growth, R&D intensive companies bring game-changing technologies to market. In the short period of time the programme has been open for applications, there has been strong interest, with the scheme open for applications on a rolling basis to R&D intensive companies with well-established UK operations.

The Government's existing programmes to support innovative firms looking to scale up, include the Life Sciences Investment Programme and British Patient Capital's £2.5 billion 'patient capital'.

**Further information**

Further stakeholder reaction:

**Samir Desai, CEO and Founder of Funding Circle:**

The Treasury Connect conference highlights the Chancellor's ongoing commitment to the UK's world-leading tech sector, and we applaud the way HM Treasury and the British Business Bank worked with Fintechs and Banks to support small businesses during the pandemic.

We're proud of the role our technology and distribution platform played in delivering this vital support, and look forward to continuing to work with the Government to help SMEs access growth finance.

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## **Campaign launched to help public get healthy this summer**

PHE has launched the latest Better Health campaign to encourage adults across the nation to lose excess weight, eat more healthily and get active this summer.

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## **Prime Minister to set out autumn and winter plan for covid**

Prime Minister Boris Johnson will set out the government's autumn and winter plan for managing covid at a press conference this afternoon.