

# Press release: HS2 begins archaeology work exploring over 10,000 years of British history

- Over 1,000 archaeologists set to explore 10,000 years of British history across more than 60 separate sites, Neolithic tools, medieval pottery and Victorian time capsules already discovered
- Four-part BBC documentary on the history of Britain exposed by HS2 to be aired 2019/20 presented by Professor Alice Roberts

As part of HS2's enabling works, over the next 2 years, more than 1,000 archaeologists, specialists, scientists and conservators from across the UK will be exploring and recording over 60 archaeological sites for the project.

Ranging from the Prehistoric and Roman Britain to the Anglo-Saxon and Medieval periods, and the Industrial Revolution and World War 2, HS2's archaeology programme is Europe's biggest dig and promises to provide a fascinating insight into the everyday lives of the people and communities who made modern Britain.

The [archaeology programme](#) is a central part of HS2's ground preparation works for Phase One of the project, London to Birmingham. HS2, its contractors and supply chain are well underway with a programme of work, clearing sites, ahead of main construction works next year. Given the historical significance of the sites, HS2 will be engaging over 1,000 archaeologists to ensure that we carry out the works to a professional standard while leaving a lasting legacy of skills and apprenticeships as well as new discoveries.

Early finds include prehistoric tools in Buckinghamshire, medieval pottery in Stoke Mandeville and 2 Victorian time capsules with more discoveries to come as archaeologists begin the exploration of our past.

## [HS2: A train through time](#)

Commenting on HS2's archaeology programme, Mark Thurston, HS2 Ltd Chief Executive, said:

How we build HS2 is as important to us as what we are building and we are committed to sharing as much of our cultural heritage as possible. Before we bore the tunnels, lay the tracks and build the stations, an unprecedented amount of archaeological research is now taking place between London and Birmingham. This is the largest archaeological exploration ever in Britain, employing a record number of skilled archaeologists and heritage specialists from across the UK and beyond.

As well as improving connectivity, generating 30,000 new jobs and

creating a network of new wildlife habitats, our archaeology programme shows that HS2 is more than a railway; it's an opportunity to tell the story of our past, create opportunities in the present and leave a lasting legacy for generations to come.

Highlights along the line of route include:

- exploring a prehistoric hunter-gatherer site on the outskirts of London;
- researching an undiscovered multi-period site (Bronze and Iron Age, Roman, Anglo-Saxon and Medieval) in Northamptonshire;
- excavating a Romano-British town in Fleet Marston, Aylesbury;
- uncovering the remains of a medieval manor in Warwickshire;
- finding out more about the Black Death and its impact on medieval villages;
- re-telling the story of a Buckinghamshire village through the careful excavation of a 1,000 year old demolished medieval church and burial ground;
- comparing and contrasting the lives of the buried population in 2 Georgian/Victorian burial grounds in London and Birmingham; and
- discovering a WW2 bombing decoy in Lichfield.

HS2 has granted BBC Two access to this pioneering project, to be documented in a new series made by Lion TV, due on air in 2019/20 presented by Prof. Alice Roberts.

HS2 will also share the finds with local communities through a series of open days and talks and will create a permanent archival legacy of artefacts and discoveries for future generations.

Helen Wass, HS2 Ltd Head of Heritage, said:

The sheer scale of possible discoveries, the geographical span and the vast range of our history to be unearthed makes HS2's archaeology programme a unique opportunity to tell the story of Britain. From Prehistoric remnants and Roman settlements to deserted medieval villages, Wars of the Roses battlefields and Victorian innovation, HS2's archaeology programme has it all.

All artefacts and human remains will be treated with dignity, care and respect and our discoveries will be shared with communities in a variety of ways through open days, expert lectures, the BBC documentary and online. This is a very exciting time for archaeology in Britain and we are committed to make sure that HS2's archaeology programme creates knowledge for further study, engages with communities and leaves behind a lasting archival and skills legacy.

The archaeological investigation is expected to last around 2 years with over 1,000 archaeologists, experts and engineering personnel beginning work on site. They are part of more than 7,000 people already employed on the

project, which is expected to support up to 30,000 jobs at the peak of construction.

Welcoming the launch of HS2's archaeology work, Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive of Historic England, said:

With the building of HS2 comes a once-in-a-generation opportunity to improve our understanding of how people have shaped England's landscapes over thousands of years, from the first prehistoric farmers through Roman and Saxon and Viking incomers to the more recent past.

Historic England is working closely with HS2 archaeologists so we can make sure that this opportunity is seized and we are advising on how we can get the best possible results from the discoveries.

### **Press and media enquiries**

For enquiries during office working hours, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm  
020 7944 6149

For enquiries outside of these hours and at the weekend  
020 7944 0550

The press and media enquiries line is for accredited journalists only

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## **[Press release: PM call with Prime Minister Mehdi of Iraq: 26 October 2018](#)**

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

The Prime Minister held a telephone call with the new Prime Minister of Iraq, Adil Abdul Mehdi, this afternoon to congratulate him on taking office.

They agreed to continue to work together as Prime Minister Mehdi aimed to build a successful future for the people of Iraq.

They agreed the UK and Iraq were significant security partners, particularly in the ongoing fight against Daesh.

They noted that Iraq had an important role to play in the region.

They looked forward to meeting in the future.

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## [Press release: Greater protection for renters thanks to plans to tighten tenant safety](#)

- Minister announces plans to tighten health and safety standards for rental accommodation – ensuring all tenants have a safe place to call home.
- Move to clampdown on small minority of rogue landlords who turn a blind-eye to dangerous conditions – including the possibility of minimum health and safety standards.
- Action to ensure carbon monoxide rules are fit for purpose – protecting people from the threat of carbon monoxide poisoning.

Renters are to receive greater protection thanks to plans announced by Housing Minister Heather Wheeler MP which will overhaul health and safety standards for rental accommodation – helping to keep safe the minority of private tenants who currently live in unsatisfactory conditions.

While the vast majority of landlords are responsible owners who take great pride in the properties they lease to their tenants, some private renters live in sub-standard homes with problems such as inadequate heating and damp.

Under current rules, councils are required to ensure rental properties in their area meet important safety standards using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System and are able to force criminal landlords to take action where tenants are languishing in unsafe accommodation.

Yet the system hasn't been updated in over 12 years, and a new review of the system will consider whether it should be updated and if so, to what extent. The review will also look at whether to introduce minimum standards for common health and safety problems in rental accommodation in order to keep renters safe.

Today's measures build on government action to drive up standards in the rental sector – making sure tenants are living in safe and secure properties; cracking down on the small minority of landlords that are renting out unsafe and substandard accommodation; and ensuring the housing market works for everyone.

Housing Minister Heather Wheeler MP said:

Everyone has a right to feel safe and secure in their own home.

These reviews will allow us to revisit the current systems for health and safety ratings and carbon monoxide alarms to ensure that both are fit for purpose and meeting the needs of tenants.

By looking again at these rules, we can make sure that they are working as they should to keep people safe and give them peace of mind in their homes.

Ministers have also outlined further detail of the [review into carbon monoxide alarm requirements in the home](#), to help ensure people remain safe from this silent killer.

There are currently around 8 million carbon monoxide alarms in homes across England, with current rules stating that alarms must be fitted in privately rented homes with solid fuel appliances and when solid fuel stoves and boilers are installed.

The review will judge whether legislation goes far enough in keeping people safe from the risks of carbon monoxide in their homes, and whether there should be a blanket requirement to install alarms for other methods of heating, including gas and oil, and to social housing.

Ministers will also consider new research including technological improvements and the falling costs of carbon monoxide alarms and whether this supports a case to extend requirements.

The news demonstrates ongoing government work to support people to feel safe and secure in their home.

Ministers have also introduced tough new powers for councils to tackle the small minority of rogue landlords who rent out overcrowded properties, including fines of up to £30,000 for those landlords who do not comply.

The [Tenant Fees Bill](#), currently making its way through Parliament, will also bring an end to unnecessary, costly fees imposed by landlords or property

agents – stopping tenants being charged hundreds of pounds for minor fixes to their homes and putting cash back in their pockets.

Together, the measures will make sure the housing market works for everyone by making renting fair and more transparent for all.

## **Further information**

The [Housing health and safety rating system](#) is used by local authorities to assess health and safety in residential properties – this includes both private rental properties and council/housing association properties.

## **Office address and general enquiries**

2 Marsham Street

London  
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## **Media enquiries**

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# Press release: Further environmental checks for Grenfell site

- Additional environmental checks to reassure survivors and local residents following Grenfell Tower fire
- Past land-use assessment underway and soil testing programme proposed
- Air quality testing to date indicates that the risk to public health is very low
- Up to £50 million already committed by the NHS to fund long-term health services for survivors and local residents

Additional environmental checks are to be carried out in and around the Grenfell Tower site to provide extra reassurance to survivors and local residents.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, NHS England, Public Health England and the Environment Agency have joined forces to ensure the bereaved, survivors and wider North Kensington community receive health assurances and support.

In addition to up to £50 million committed by NHS England to carry out a 5-year health monitoring programme, as well as ongoing air quality monitoring at the site, the plans involve:

- further environmental sampling of the site, including comprehensive soil analysis to check for any signs of contamination
- water analysis will take place if required
- wider health monitoring and treatment options to reassure those affected

Secretary of State for Communities, the Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

We take the wellbeing of Grenfell Tower survivors and local residents extremely seriously and it's essential they have peace of mind regarding their health.

The government is asking leading experts from the Environment Agency to make sure soil surveying around the tower is comprehensive and that analysis will be provided to the public.

We recognise the concerns the community have raised with us, and we are clear that we will do whatever it takes to give them the reassurance they need and deserve.

Government Chief Scientific Adviser, Dr Patrick Vallance added:

I fully support the decision of the Secretary of State to commission further environmental analysis and stand ready to offer

scientific advice on the process.

Public Health England's Regional Director for London, Dr Yvonne Doyle, said:

Since the Grenfell Tower tragedy we have been working very closely with local health partners and the Grenfell community to ensure that they have access to best available public health evidence and advice.

It is not unusual to find areas of contamination in cities which is often associated with historic land use or heavy traffic. It is generally considered to be very low risk to health because people would need to be exposed to the soil over long periods of time.

We will continue to speak to local people and community groups to ensure they have all of the information they need about health.

The immediate risk to health in the aftermath of the fire was from potentially contaminated air and independent air quality monitoring was commissioned by Public Health England, which has shown the risk to public health to be consistently low.

Soil testing will determine whether there are contaminants identified beyond those which we would expect to be present in cities like London.

Many parts of the land that will be investigated are known to be former industrial sites where contamination can already exist, but the examinations that will be carried out will determine if remediation is required.

Contaminated land is generally considered to be very low risk to health, as any impact would be the result of exposure over a long period.

## **Further information**

Since the Grenfell Tower tragedy, health services have specifically targeted survivors, bereaved, neighbouring residents and the wider North Kensington community. This has included extended appointments and health checks, including physical and mental health, and enhanced case management. NHS England has also delivered ongoing respiratory fast track provision and community engagement on health and wellbeing to identify any unmet needs.

Advice to the public remains unchanged. Local residents who are concerned about their health should contact their GP. Further information is available on the [North Kensington Health Response website](#).

The air quality around the Grenfell Tower will continue to be monitored daily and the findings published weekly by Public Health England. See [results and general health advice](#).



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## [Press release: Lord Chancellor announces 2% pay increase for judges](#)

- Government responds to annual pay review
- Biggest pay rise for judges in 10 years
- Separate major review of judges' pay also published

The rise is in line with that of other public-sector workers, including doctors and police officers, and follows the annual pay review for 2018/19 by the Senior Salaries Review Body (SSRB). It will come into effect immediately and be backdated to April 2018.

The Government has also today published the recommendations of a separate major review of judges' pay by the SSRB. This was commissioned by the

Government in October 2016 to take account of wider issues facing the judiciary, including recruitment and retention.

The SSRB's recommendations, which have been published today, will now be considered and responded to in full at a later date.

Lord Chancellor David Gauke said:

Our independent judiciary is the cornerstone of the rule of law, and effective remuneration is critical to the continued attraction and retention of high calibre judges.

I am pleased to announce today a 2% pay increase across the judiciary – the highest in 10 years.

Alongside this, the SSRB has published its findings following a major review of judges' pay. We will carefully consider the recommendations and respond in due course.

The Lord Chancellor has also announced that the recruitment and retention allowance for High Court Judges will remain in place until the Government has responded to the major review.

The quality and dependability of the judiciary is a critical part of maintaining the UK's reputation as the leading centre for international dispute resolution, and English law as a pre-eminent choice for contracts.

**Notes to Editors:**

- Further comment from the Lord Chancellor can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/judges-annual-pay-review-201819-david-gauke-blog>
- The SSRB's major review of judicial pay can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supplement-to-the-40th-annual-report-on-senior-salaries-2018>