

# News story: New UK Visa and Citizenship Application Services centres open

From today (Friday 2 November), people applying for work or study visas, settlement or citizenship from within the UK will be able to make appointments to use new, modernised and efficient service centres.

The first centre will open in Manchester on Friday 9 November 2018 and will be followed by new centres in Birmingham, Glasgow, Cardiff, Belfast and Croydon. In addition, there will be 50 enhanced service centres nationally, which will be available to customers for a charge, and a premium lounge located in London.

The modernised service will mean that most people applying in the UK will be able to submit their biometric information including photos, fingerprints, and signatures as well as their supporting evidence at a single appointment.

The current system requires an individual to make an application, send their documents to UKVI, who retain them until the application is completed, and enrol their biometrics separately.

To help improve peace of mind for customers using the centres, it will now be possible, in the majority of cases, to take digital copies of evidence meaning that people won't have to hand over important documents, such as passports, while their applications are processed.

The Immigration Minister Caroline Nokes said:

We are committed to delivering a modern, convenient and easy to use service for UKVI customers.

These new service centres located across the country are a key part of our vision for a system that supports its customers and provides peace of mind whilst they are making an application.

The majority of people will now complete their applications online via an intuitive and easy to use system before attending one of the UK Visa and Citizenship Application Services centres (UKVCAS), which will be delivered by commercial partner Sopra Steria.

Customers will be led through an online application process making it clear what they need to do, what supporting evidence they will need and where they need to go to complete their application.

Free appointments will be available for everyone, however, customers will also have the option to purchase added value services such as same day

appointments and [On Demand services](#).

In addition, there will also be 7 dedicated Service and Support Centres (SSC), which will transform the experience for people who need more support with their applications.

Experienced frontline Home Office staff will help those who need extra support to better understand their circumstances and if necessary, take the appropriate safeguarding action.

These SSCs will be in Belfast, Cardiff, Croydon, Glasgow, Liverpool, Sheffield and Solihull, and will open in January 2019.

[Further information on these services](#).

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## **News story: Statment on the Moscow Mechanism to the OSCE Permanent Council**

Mr. Chairman,

I am delivering this statement on behalf of the following delegations: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

On August 30, we informed the Permanent Council about a letter we sent to the Russian delegation to request concrete information under the OSCE Vienna (Human Dimension) Mechanism due to our concerns about credible reports of human rights violations and abuses in Chechnya. The letter of September 4 that we received in response unfortunately did not provide a substantive response to our questions.

This has only deepened our concern that the Russian Federation is unwilling or unable to address the reports of serious human rights violations and abuses, which contributes to a climate of impunity for authorities in Chechnya. We believe that the reported violations and abuses reflect a particularly serious threat to the fulfilment of the provisions of the OSCE human dimension. We therefore are invoking paragraph 12 of the 1991 Moscow Document of the Conference on the Human Dimension of the OSCE (Moscow Mechanism) to establish a mission of experts to address the concerns outlined in our August 30 letter. Those concerns centered around allegations of impunity for reported human rights violations and abuses in Chechnya from January 2017 to the present, including, but not limited to, violations and abuses against persons based on their perceived or actual sexual orientation

or gender identity, as well as against human rights defenders, lawyers, independent media, civil society organizations, and others. Among the reported human rights violations and abuses were: allegations of harassment and persecution; arbitrary or unlawful arrests or detentions; torture; enforced disappearances; and extrajudicial executions.

In addition to establishing the facts and reporting on them, we encourage the mission of experts to give advice to the Russian Federation, to the OSCE, and to the international community on possible solutions to the questions raised.

We look forward to working with ODIHR and the Russian delegation in the coming days on arrangements for the mission. An expert mission, one member of which may, in accordance with paragraph 10 of the Moscow Document, be chosen by the government of the Russian Federation, should be able to give an objective and unbiased report and recommendations on these issues.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

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## **News story: DIT support helps green company expand UK operations**

The company's product saves three times more trees than normal recycled paper, making it more affordable for British companies to go carbon neutral.

The investment will help Paper Plus Europe expand their London office and presence in the UK market, creating seven new jobs, as they aim to add to the more than half a million trees they have saved in last two years.

Part of the funding will be used for the company's product development, which will tackle plastic waste caused by single-use plastic food packaging. The company's R&D operation will also benefit, helping to further develop their envOPAP food grade packaging that will be biodegradable and compostable.

Minister for Investment, Graham Stuart said:

I am delighted that the Department for International Trade, through its international network, has been able to assist Paper Plus in landing this considerable new investment from India, which will have huge long-term environmental benefits both in the UK and abroad.

As an international economic department, we are committed to helping UK companies with trailblazing green ideas to locate the investment they need to reach the next level, creating jobs and prosperity across the country, and helping to ensure we leave our

environment in a better state than we inherited it.

Director, Paper Plus, Kaushal Shah said:

We at Paper Plus believe in making sustainability the new normal for consumers in the UK and over the world.

The expertise and advice of DIT have been a significant accelerator for our business.

The professional knowledge of our DIT advisors is phenomenal and it enhances the credibility of the UK as an excellent place to do business.

The news comes as the Minister met companies and industry experts at the Advanced Engineering 2018 trade show in Birmingham.

Advanced Engineering is one of the biggest trade shows of its kind in Europe, and more than 600 suppliers and thousands of visitors were in attendance.

The Department for International Trade's UK Pavilion – which housed more than 18 companies – demonstrated expertise across the advanced engineering technical spectrum.

The announcement is one of £10 million of investment deals with global partners that have created more than 50 highly specialised jobs in the UK's advanced engineering sector in recent weeks with assistance from the Department for International Trade.

- In late September, Belgian company Solvay invested in a new specialist centre for aircraft materials in Wrexham, creating 50 jobs.
- Another Belgian company – Sioen Industries – continued their investment in Lancashire-based technical textile manufacturer James Dewhurst in 2017 with a £1.7 million investment in state-of-the-art machinery. Alongside its sister company Veranneman Technical Textiles, the company has also committed itself to creating further jobs at the site in the future.
- Gloucestershire-based engineering company Renishaw have invested £2.7 million in new premises in Mexico, enabling the company to further establish its global footprint.

## **Further information**

- Paper Plus specialise in producing carbon neutral, sustainable,

sugarcane-based paper products, and estimates that it has saved a million trees in the last two years. One pallet of its envoPAP paper saves 24 trees compared to only seven with normal recycled paper.

- There are over 100,000 advanced manufacturing companies in the UK, employing 2.7 million people, while manufacturing productivity is growing three times faster than the rest of the UK's economy as a whole. Research and development in the sector totals £13.5 billion every year.
- DIT's [Export Strategy](#) – launched in August – sets out the ambitious target of increasing exports as a measure of GDP from 30% to 35%, transforming the UK into one of the G7's most prolific exports.

[Find out more about investing in the UK](#)

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## [News story: Education Secretary appoints new Social Mobility Commissioners](#)

The new commissioners come from all walks of life and include leaders from the fields of business, education and technology. Many have their own personal stories of how they have overcome barriers to success and now work to improve social mobility in their sectors.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

Dame Martina and I share a vision for a country where we raise our ambitions for every child, whatever their background. Education is at the heart of this, giving everyone the chance to fulfil the spark of potential that exists in them.

This new team of commissioners brings together established business men and women, policy makers, academics and young people all with important perspectives to bring. The Social Mobility Commission will benefit from the expertise of this diverse mix of individuals, all of whom will bring their own unique stamp to what social mobility means in their lives.

I look forward to working with the new Commission to make our shared vision a reality.

The appointments follow approval from the Prime Minister and the Public Appointments Committee, and include the editor of a women's magazine Cosmopolitan, a university professor, a headteacher and two youth ambassadors.

Dame Martina Milburn, Chair of the Social Mobility Commission said:

I am delighted to welcome a record number of Social Mobility Commissioners who will work to make England a fairer society.

This is a group of people with real-life experiences of social mobility to help challenge government, business, and society as a whole, to create a fair system where people can thrive.

Many of our new Commissioners had modest starts in life and know the barriers that young people must overcome to become successful. They are also individuals with the skills, resources, and energy to drive real change around the country, united by a passion for fairness and an ability to make a real difference to people's lives.

The Social Mobility Commissioners will take up their new roles next month with an event planned to mark the Commission's relaunch on 11 December.

Their appointments build on Dame Martina's vision to bring greater ethnic, gender and age diversity to Commission by tapping into a diverse range of backgrounds.

Younger commissioners, as well as members based outside London and the south east will make sure its work is better represented regionally, helping to raise its profile and influence young people directly.

Joining Dame Martina as commissioners will be:

- Alastair da Costa, Chair of Capital City College Group
- Liz Williams, Group Director of Digital Society at BT
- Farrah Storr, Editor-in-chief of Cosmopolitan
- Harvey Matthewson, Volunteer, and part-time Sales Assistant at Marks & Spencer
- Jessica Oghenegweke, Project co-ordinator at the Diana Award
- Jody Walker, Senior Vice President at TJX Europe (TK Maxx and Home Sense in the UK)
- Pippa Dunn, Founder of Broody, helping entrepreneurs and start ups
- Saeed Atcha, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Xplode magazine
- Sam Friedman, Associate Professor in Sociology at London School of Economics
- Sammy Wright, Vice Principal of Southmoor Academy, Sunderland
- Sandra Wallace, Managing Partner UK and Joint Managing Director Europe at DLA Piper
- Steven Cooper, Outgoing Chief Executive Officer of Barclaycard Business

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## News story: Industry and education join forces to inspire future engineers in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland's engineering innovation was in the spotlight as HM Government Envoy for the Year of Engineering Stephen Metcalfe MP visited the country to see first-hand how the industry is inspiring budding engineers.

During the trip last week Stephen Metcalfe visited a pioneering garden which prevents local flooding while acting as a resource to teach schoolchildren how engineering can help communities. He also met engineering apprentices and launched a new competition that will give thousands of schoolchildren the chance to discover what they could achieve as engineers.

Throughout 2018, the [Year of Engineering](#) has seen government join forces with more than 1,400 industry, education and charity partners to transform perceptions of engineering among children, their parents and teachers – with a target of giving young people a million direct experiences of engineering by the end of the year.

As well as visiting the Clondeboy Rainwater Garden, a collaboration between Northern Ireland Water, the Department for Infrastructure and Aecom, Stephen Metcalfe saw first-hand some of the country's groundbreaking engineering at Bombardier, Thales and Ulster University – covering sectors from aerospace to nanotechnology.

He also helped launch the Northern Ireland Primary Engineer and Secondary Engineer Leader's Award, a competition which will bring thousands of schoolchildren face to face with real engineering role models and experiences. The competition is supported by Ulster University, Thales and the Royal Navy. Already running in England and Scotland, last year it saw 37,000 young people come up with their own inventions to solve real engineering challenges.

Stephen Metcalfe said:

Northern Ireland has a rich engineering heritage and it's been fantastic to see first-hand the creativity and innovation of the industry, and the vital work being done to inspire young people throughout the country to consider careers in engineering.

Bringing young people from all backgrounds face to face with engineering experiences and role models is at the heart of the campaign, so it's fantastic to see this in action with collaborative projects like the Clondeboy Rainwater Garden and the

launch of the Northern Ireland Primary and Secondary Engineer Leaders Award.

I have no doubt that the combined enthusiasm and expertise of the industry here in Northern Ireland will inspire schoolchildren across the country and bring about a positive change in the number of young people realising what they could achieve as engineers.

Engineering makes a major contribution to the UK economy, but the sector faces a major skills gap and lack of diversity – there is annual shortage of 20,000 engineering graduates each year, only 12% of the engineering workforce is female, and less than 8% comes from a black, Asian or ethnic minority background.

To find out about the Year of Engineering, including activities, events, videos and school resources, visit [www.yearofengineering.gov.uk](http://www.yearofengineering.gov.uk).

## **Year of Engineering enquiries**

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