

[News story: New measures announced to combat forced marriage](#)

The Home Secretary Sajid Javid has today (October 2) announced a package of measures today to tackle the appalling crime of forced marriage.

As part of this a public consultation will be launched to determine whether there should be a mandatory requirement for professionals to report a forced marriage case to the authorities. This will help identify:

- which professionals the duty would apply to
- the specific circumstances where a case would have to be reported
- potential sanctions for failure to comply with the duty

Further measures announced today to crack down on forced marriage include plans to:

- consult on including an explicit reference to forced marriage in the immigration rules to demonstrate that forced marriage is unacceptable in the UK
- launch a communications campaign to raise awareness of the issue
- work with the judiciary to examine whether anonymous evidence of forced marriage can be admissible as closed evidence in the appeals process
- consult on updated multi-agency statutory guidance on forced marriage to help ensure professionals understand forced marriage and their responsibilities

This work will progress over the coming months and follows previous action taken by the government to strengthen the law including the introduction of a specific criminal offence of forced marriage, lifelong anonymity for victims, and criminalising breach of a Forced Marriage Protection Order (FMPO).

[Press release: New awards to celebrate the best in the highways sector](#)

The Highways England Awards aim to showcase individuals, teams, projects and companies.

Nominations open today, and are invited from all Highways England employees, its suppliers and their supply chain (including extended supply chain and small and medium enterprises).

To recognise the very best of its suppliers and staff, Highways England has

combined the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Awards and the Supplier Recognition Scheme.

Jim O'Sullivan, Highways England chief executive, said:

At Highways England we are constantly challenging ourselves and our supply chain to achieve more for our customers. We focus our efforts around our three imperatives – safety, customer and delivery – and seek out ways to improve and innovate in these areas.

The Highways England Awards allow us to reflect on our accomplishments, celebrate our achievements and share examples of excellence in our industry. These awards will continue the legacy of the Supplier Recognition Scheme and the Health Safety and Wellbeing Awards under a single event, which recognises the very best work of our company and its suppliers.

I encourage you to apply for these awards. I know we have committed, talented and motivated people in our company and supply chain. This is your opportunity to take pride in your achievements and allow Highways England to celebrate the contributions made by those who work with us and for us.

View a video by Jim O'Sullivan announcing the launch of the awards:

[Highways England Awards 2019 launch](#)

Judges will be looking for nominations that demonstrate clear outcomes and benefits and illustrate how these have been evaluated. The winners will reflect the very best of the business and demonstrate the highest standards for the industry.

The ten award categories are:

Safety

- Excellence in Occupational Health and Wellbeing
- Excellence in Safety for Road Users
- Championing Safety
- Leading Behaviour Change for Safety

Customer

- Excellence in Customer Service
- Improving Customers Journeys
- Improving Employee Engagement and Behavioural Change

Delivery

- Excellence in Environment and Sustainability

- Leading Efficiencies and Continuous Improvement
- Project of the Year

In addition, the Chairman's Award for Excellence in Safety, which focuses specifically on excellence in safety and getting people 'home safe and well', will also be presented at the awards.

Previous Highways England award scheme winners include SafetyCam – a mobile road worker protection system that collects hard evidence of drivers entering roadworks to improve road worker safety. On average there are nearly 300 incidents a week of incursions and abuse reported by road workers. In 2016/17, a total of 31 fatal injuries to workers were caused by being struck by a moving vehicle. SafetyCam is tackling these issues, with 13 vehicles operational and another 10 due soon.

Darren Nelson, Chief Executive, Carnell Support Service Ltd said:

Winning a Highways England Health, Safety & Wellbeing Award provided us with a powerful endorsement of SafetyCam, our road worker protection system. This has not only raised awareness of our innovation, but also the dangers that site teams face every day on the strategic road network.

Since the awards success we have seen an increase in requests for long-term deployment from clients nationwide, which has led to us doubling our fleet. We are proud to have developed and shared a solution that has led to a demonstrable improvement in driver behaviour through road works.

The entry form is available on the [awards website](#).

The closing date for entries is 5pm on Monday 3 December 2018 and a ceremony to present the awards will take place in Birmingham on 28 March 2019.

For any further information please email: HEawards@highwaysengland.co.uk.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

News story: Insolvency Service celebrates customer services excellence

Organised by the Institute of Customer Service, [National Customer Service Week \(NCSW\)](#) is running between 1 and 5 October 2018, aiming to raise awareness of customer services and the vital role it plays in successful business practice and the growth of the UK economy.

The Insolvency Service is using NCSW as an opportunity to highlight the importance of customer services excellence, how our services have evolved and how we assist different customers – from people considering Debt Relief Orders to workers applying to the Redundancy Payment Service for financial help.

With teams based in Leeds and Edinburgh, customer services handle more than 150,000 calls a year and are assessed annually.

For the past 19 years, we have been [awarded the Customer Service Excellence standard](#), recognising our continued focus on meeting the needs of our customers and in 2016/17, the Insolvency Service was awarded 5 new compliance plus ratings. In total we now hold 17 compliance plus and 40 compliant ratings.

Comments received from assessors during our last assessment included:

There is full corporate commitment throughout the organisation to putting the customer at the heart of service delivery.

During discussions, staff were very enthusiastic about their participation in what is clearly a very well established customer-focused culture within the organisation.

And it's not just the assessors who think our customer services are of a high standard as Insolvency Service staff have provided first-hand accounts of how they have turned difficult situations into favourable results.

In one case, someone going through bankruptcy called up the Insolvency Service on a Friday concerned that their bank account had been frozen. This meant they could not access their benefits and had bills to pay.

Usually, staff would just confirm if the bank was happy for the personal bank account to be used. But the customer representative was conscious that it could be a whole weekend before the person could access their account again. Thinking quickly, the Insolvency Service called the bank to release the

funds, before reassuring the customer that the money would be there, which was gratefully received.

Jackie Stevenson-Coe, Head of Customer Service & Insight, said:

We make every effort to improve our customer services to benefit everyone who deals with the Insolvency Service and being awarded the Customer Service Excellence standard is a tremendous achievement both for our customers and staff who work extremely hard to make it happen.

Providing excellent customer services is absolutely crucial and we will continue to improve our offering in order to assist our customers and achieve our mission in delivering economic confidence.

[Press release: New measures to support workers, businesses, and entrepreneurs](#)

Updated: Updated to reflect additional announcements.

The Business Secretary Greg Clark has announced a series of new measures to back businesses and entrepreneurs, support workers and ensure every part of the country benefits from the Government's modern Industrial Strategy.

The announcements build on the Government's record of delivering right across the Industrial Strategy – from record levels of investment in research and development, the biggest transformation of technical education and retraining in a decade to the fastest growth in infrastructure in the G7.

The new measures include:

Tipping

The government has announced plans to ensure that tips left for workers will go to them in full.

While most employers act in good faith, in some sectors evidence points towards poor tipping practices, including excessive deductions being made from tips left by customers.

New legislation, to be introduced at the earliest opportunity, will set out

that tips must go to the workers providing the service.

Unemployment is at its lowest since the 1970s and wages are rising. This legislation will ensure workers get the tips they deserve and give consumers reassurance that the money they leave in good faith to reward good service is going to the staff, as they intended – ensuring that hard work is rewarded.

More protection for small businesses

A commitment to end the unfair treatment of small businesses by companies who abuse their position by paying late for products and services.

The Government will strengthen the Prompt Payment Code with a new tough and transparent compliance regime. A call for evidence will be published later this week. The call for evidence will consider the best way to ensure company boards put in place responsible payment practices throughout their supply chain, including whether all company boards should give one of their non-executive directors specific responsibilities for the company's prompt payment performance.

The Small Business Commissioner will join the Prompt Payment Code's Compliance Board to support his role in tackling late payment.

Proposals to help parents and carers in the workforce

Working flexibly helps people to balance their work and home lives and is vital in creating an inclusive economy where those with caring responsibilities can continue working. It also gives employers access to a wider pool of talent and enables better matching of applicants and jobs.

While many companies are increasingly embracing flexible working and the benefits it brings, some employees face barriers in raising this issue with their employers.

The Government will consider creating a duty for employers to consider whether a job can be done flexibly, and make that clear when advertising.

Greater transparency on parental pay

The Government will consult on requiring employers with more than 250 staff to publish their parental leave and pay policies, so job applicants can make informed decisions about whether they can combine the role with caring for their family.

Statutory entitlements to leave and pay for new parents are key to this vision for 'good work' and to the participation and progression of parents, especially mothers, in the labour market.

While many employers go further than the legal minimum for parental leave and pay, very few publish their policies openly. Applicants must ask prospective

employers what the position is which many are reluctant to do for fear of discrimination.

Progress towards a local Industrial Strategy for the West Midlands

The Industrial Strategy sets out a long-term plan to boost the productivity. Supported by our 'policy prospectus', all parts of the country are working towards developing local Industrial Strategies by early 2020.

In consultation with regional partners, the local Industrial Strategy for the West Midlands will harness its distinctive strengths to unlock greater growth and earning power across the region's cities and places. With the West Midlands Local Industrial Strategy set for release by March 2019, we are publishing a progress statement showing how local leaders are working with business to maximise the potential of the region and meet national challenges.

The West Midlands Local Industrial Strategy will provide a long-term plan for alignment of local and national decision making to increase productivity and deliver an economy that works for all. This will include how the automotive and wider transport cluster, the life science cluster, and their associated supply chains and infrastructure, will drive the UK's response to the Future of Mobility Grand Challenge and the AI and Data Grand Challenge.

[News story: Government announces new housing measures](#)

The government has today announced:

- a New Homes Ombudsman to support homebuyers facing problems with their newly built home
- plans to help provide the homes the country needs through planning reform
- plans to create a lasting legacy from the 2022 Commonwealth Games
- measures to improve the safety of high-rise buildings

Measures to champion the rights of homebuyers and help ensure that when they buy a new home they get the quality of build they rightly expect. The New Homes Ombudsman will protect the interests of homebuyers and hold developers to account when things go wrong.

The government is committed to delivering 300,000 homes a year by the mid 2020s and has today (1 October 2018) announced further plans to speed up the planning system as well as make better use of land and vacant buildings to

provide the homes that communities need.

This includes more flexibility to extend upwards on existing blocks of flats, shops and offices making better use of space by increasing housing density.

Championing ambitious councils keen to make new garden communities a central part of their plans for housing and economic growth and have local support there will be clearer rules to give more certainty for communities when land is needed to make this a reality.

Local authorities will also receive additional freedom to make the most of existing brownfield land and dispose of surplus land that could instead accommodate new homes.

To support a successful Commonwealth Games in 2022 and create a legacy long after the games are over, £165 million has been announced to unlock up to 5,100 homes in Birmingham and provide the infrastructure to support these new homes.

As part of its comprehensive programme to improve building safety following the Grenfell Tower tragedy, the government has also confirmed that it will ban the use of combustible materials on external walls of high-rise residential buildings. The ban will also apply to hospitals, care homes and student accommodation over 18 metres.

Support for homebuyers facing problems with their newbuild

The government has announced that there will be a New Homes Ombudsman – a watchdog that will champion homebuyers, protect their interests and hold developers to account.

We intend to legislate to require all new developers to belong to a new homes ombudsman.

House buyers should be confident that when they purchase a new home, they get the quality of build and finish they expected.

We will work with consumers and industry to develop our proposals and publish more details in due course.

In the meantime government expects industry to continue to improve the current redress arrangements and improve the consistency of quality for new build homes.

Planning reform

The government set out a package of reforms to deliver 300,000 homes a year by the mid 2020s through planning reform and targeted investment.

As part of this the government has announced plans to consult on further measures to speed up the planning system as well as make better use of land and vacant buildings to deliver the homes that communities need.

This includes:

- introducing a new permitted development right to allow property owners to extend certain buildings upwards, while maintaining the character of residential and conservation areas and safeguarding people's privacy.
- clearer guidance to give more certainty for communities when land is needed to make a New Town a reality.
- giving local authorities more flexibility to dispose of surplus land that could instead accommodate new homes.

The government will consult on these new measures in due course.

Funding for 2022 Commonwealth Games

Funding to help deliver the 2022 Commonwealth Games Village, provide necessary transport improvements and create a legacy after the games has ended has also been announced.

The government will provide a £165 million funding boost to unlock up to 5,100 homes in Birmingham and support wider regeneration of the Perry Barr area through major infrastructure projects:

- creating a Commonwealth Games Village – providing a home-away-from-home for athletes and officials which will be converted to housing in Perry Barr following the games
- providing road and public transport improvements including upgrading the railway station, to support both new and existing communities

With construction due to begin in 2019, the government will work with the West Midlands Combined Authority and Birmingham City council to support these ambitious plans.

Birmingham 2022 is set to showcase Birmingham, the West Midlands and the entire country to the rest of the world as a destination for international trade, education, world class sport and tourism.

Building safety

Following the Grenfell Tower tragedy the government established a comprehensive building safety programme that included an [independent review on fire safety and building regulations](#). In the summer the government published its response to this review and said it would ban the use of combustible materials on external walls of high-rise buildings subject to consultation.

Following this consultation the government has today (1 October 2018) confirmed that it will take forward this ban on all high-rise buildings that contains flats, as well as hospitals, residential care premises and student accommodation above 18 metres.

This ban will be delivered through changes to building regulations guidance and will limit materials available to products achieving a European classification of Class A1 or A2.

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