

Press release: EU Expert Panel meets in Cardiff

The UK Government will continue its engagement on EU Exit in Wales, when the Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns convenes the latest meeting of his Expert Panel in Cardiff today (Thursday 5 July).

Alun Cairns will gather representatives from the business, local authorities, agriculture and third sectors in Wales at Caspian Point to discuss their priorities for Brexit and to update them on negotiations following the completion of the European Union (Withdrawal) Act's passage through Parliament.

The meeting comes in the week that the UK Government introduced its Fisheries Bill which, when combined with our withdrawal from the London Fisheries Convention, will allow us to control access to UK waters and the allocation of fishing opportunities. This will help provide prosperity for a new generation of fishermen in Wales, as well as preserve and increase the fish stocks in UK waters.

Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

It is vital that we have open and honest conversations about what Wales – and the UK as a whole – should look like after our exit from the European Union. This includes discussing the challenges that we may face along the way, and the opportunities that await us at the finish line.

Since the Expert Panel last convened, we have seen the EU Withdrawal Act complete its Parliamentary journey, paving the way to ensuring the UK exits the EU with certainty, continuity and control. We have also hosted the first joint EU Exit meeting with the Welsh Government where representatives of the fishing, farming and business industry gathered to examine issues including how returning powers should be exercised in future.

As we move through the various stages of negotiations, we will go on hearing from these important partners, to ensure that our discussions are informed by the views of every region of the UK, and each sector of our economy.

The Secretary of State for Wales established the Expert Panel to work with him to deliver a smooth and orderly exit from the EU in Wales. The meeting today builds on the constructive conversations they have already had, helping to contribute to the UK's negotiating position.

[Press release: HS2 Ltd to undertake development works for electrification of the Midland Main Line](#)

Following the government's announcement last summer that the preferred HS2 route would include a spur into Sheffield via Chesterfield, the Secretary of State has asked that electrification of this section of the Midland Main Line be included within the next hybrid Bill for HS2.

HS2 Ltd will begin its preparatory works with a series of land surveys to further inform the work programme. A public consultation on the works required for electrification will be undertaken at a later date, prior to any hybrid Bill being brought to Parliament.

An HS2 spokesperson said:

The benefits that HS2 will deliver are significant and should not be underestimated. The new railway will play a crucial role in rebalancing Britain's economy; driving business growth, creating jobs and securing investment right across the country.

Ensuring the Midland Main Line is electrified between Clay Cross and Sheffield Midland Station will enable Chesterfield and the wider Sheffield City Region to benefit from direct services on the new high speed trains.

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

[News story: PHE statement on incident in Amesbury](#)

Last night (3 July 2018) Wiltshire Police and partners declared a major incident in connection with 2 people who fell ill in Amesbury.

Public Health England is working closely with both national government and local services to respond to this incident.

Dr Mike Wade, Deputy Director of Health Protection in the South-West, said:

Our current advice, based on the number of casualties affected, is that it is not believed that there is a significant health risk to the wider public. We will keep this assessment under constant review as further information becomes known.

[News story: Bona Vacantia experiencing phone problems](#)

A connectivity issue is affecting phone calls into Bona Vacantia. So far today (Wednesday 4 July), we have had a high volume of calls, but a number of these have been cut off. We would like to apologise to customers for this and to assure callers into BV that telephone engineers are working to identify the root cause of the problem. We will update the website once we have more information.

In the meantime, individual Bona Vacantia teams can be contacted by email:

Companies' restoration team – bvwaiver@governmentlegal.gov.uk

Cash balance team – bvcbt@governmentlegal.gov.uk

Estates – bvestates@governmentlegal.gov.uk

Companies – bvcompanies@governmentlegal.gov.uk

General enquiries – bvinfo@governmentlegal.gov.uk

Statement to Parliament: Courts update by Lucy Fraser QC MP

Today, I am laying before Parliament legislation reducing court fees for certain proceedings in the civil courts and the Court of Protection in England and Wales. As a result, claimants bringing these proceedings will pay less to access the courts.

The reduction to these fees follows a thorough and detailed review undertaken by officials in the Ministry of Justice into the cost of these proceedings. Our review has identified a number of cases where the fees charged were above full cost recovery levels. We are therefore taking action to reduce those fees. We will also be establishing a refund scheme to reimburse people the amounts they have been over-charged. We are also taking action to refund those who have been overcharged fees to commence certain low value personal injury claims, known as "stage 3" claims. Officials are working on the detailed arrangements and full details of the scheme, including the types of case affected, and how to apply, will be announced in due course.

These changes affect the fees charged for certain proceedings in the Court of Protection; a number of civil proceedings in the magistrates' courts; fees for general applications in insolvency proceedings; and the fees charged for High Court judges sitting as arbitrators. The intention when these fees were prescribed was that they should be set at, or below, full cost recovery levels and it was on that basis that they were approved by Parliament.

As part of our ongoing improvements we are making to the justice system, including the Government's £1bn investment in Court Reform, we will continue our review of court fees, including the methodology for setting those fees, to minimise the risk of this issue re-occurring in future. The vision of the reform is to modernise and upgrade the court and tribunal system so that it works even better for everyone, from the victims of crime, witnesses and litigants to judges and legal professionals.