

# Press release: Grant to support disabled people in the workplace rises by over a third

Hundreds of disabled employees are to benefit from a £15,000 rise in Access to Work grants to assist them at work, following new measures introduced in Parliament today (20 March 2018).

From April 2018, people will be able to claim up to £57,200 annually to help pay for additional support that they may need in the workplace – approximately £15,000 more than the current cap of £42,100.

Access to Work provides financial support to ensure someone's disability or health condition doesn't hold them back at work, and can cover workplace adaptations, assistive technology, transport and interpreters.

Increasing the amount people can receive annually will ensure that more disabled people, particularly from the deaf community, are able to benefit from the grant and achieve their career aspirations.

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Esther McVey, said:

We believe that disabled people should have every opportunity to thrive in the workplace, and the tailored support of Access to Work caters to every individual's unique needs.

By extending this grant we're ensuring that many more disabled people can reach their career potential, which is a key part of our commitment to getting one million more disabled people in work by 2027.

The UK Council on Deafness said:

We are pleased to see that the Department for Work and Pensions has decided to significantly raise the Access to Work cap.

This will help deaf people whose first language is British Sign Language (BSL) to access the communication support so vital to enabling them to thrive and succeed in the workplace.

Access to Work is part of a range of support available to ensure that disabled people can enter, and thrive in, the workplace. This includes supported work experience placements, the government's [Disability Confident scheme](#) and personalised support package. These are all part of the government's ambitious plan to see a million more disabled people in work by

2027.

## More information

Read more about [Access to Work](#)

The new cap will take effect from 1 April 2018.

As we continually seek to improve Access to Work, we will introduce the following measures:

- discretion in exceptional cases of multiple disability, to consider award limits averaged over a longer period – for example, where a customer’s ongoing need for a support worker may be below the cap but when coupled with a periodic need for say a wheelchair, would exceed the cap in that year
- introduction of managed personal budgets to enable greater choice and control for customers in the way grants are spent
- taking applications 12 weeks ahead of a job start date rather than the current 6 weeks to allow more time for support to be agreed and put in place
- continuing to invest in our digital improvements such as developing the facility to submit invoices online
- allowing more flexibility in how people can use Access to Work to support short periods of work experience where there is a likelihood of a paid job in the near future

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## [News story: African leaders meet in Botswana for summit on wildlife crime](#)

UK Minister for Africa Harriett Baldwin addressed African leaders and attendees at an illegal wildlife trade summit in Botswana last week (16-17 March).

The Giants Club Summit 2018 brought together countries in Africa with large elephant populations with the aim to find ways to improve cooperation on conservation and law enforcement to tackle the illegal wildlife trade. Representatives from Botswana, Gabon, Uganda and Kenya attended the two-day conference, along with delegations from the UK, China, the European Union and the UN.

The only minister to attend from a non-African country, Minister Baldwin met with Botswana's President Ian Khama to discuss the pressing need to end the illegal wildlife trade and tackle the corruption which enables it to operate.

The summit hosted a range of talks from African leaders and key conservationists alongside live demonstrations of ground breaking new technology which is being deployed in African countries to catch poachers.

Minister Baldwin said:

The UK is taking a leading role in ending the illegal wildlife trade globally and we will continue to push for action at every opportunity.

The illegal wildlife trade is taking a devastating toll on the populations of endangered animals across the world. We will only stamp out this terrible crime by taking global action and building consensus.

The Giants Club Summit is a vital opportunity for Africa-led initiatives and conservation techniques to be shared and discussed, bringing key African countries together to work for a shared

approach to conserving their precious wildlife. Botswana is an excellent example of conservation bringing sustainable development to the people. Tourism is a thriving industry here and it pays dividends to the country and local communities.

## **Minister Baldwin reflects on her visit to Botswana**

### [Giants Club](#)

In October 2018, the UK will host the fourth international conference on the illegal wildlife trade, bringing global leaders to London to tackle the strategic challenges of the crime.

The UK recently consulted on proposals to ban UK domestic ivory sales. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs received over 70,000 responses, and will publish its response to this consultation shortly.

### **Further information**

- Follow Foreign Office Minister Harriett Baldwin on Twitter [@hbaldwin](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on Twitter [@foreignoffice](#) and [Facebook](#)
- Follow the Foreign Office on [Instagram](#), [YouTube](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

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**[Press release: UK joins world-leading research programme to help develop](#)**

# medicines of the future

- UK signs agreement to work with other countries to create new medical treatments using a powerful laser
- super-strength laser acts like a microscope to help understand deadly viruses
- the UK joins existing member countries including, France, Germany, Italy and Switzerland

The UK will be at the forefront of the fight against life-threatening diseases after confirming that it has signed the European X-Ray Free-Electron Laser (XFEL) convention in Berlin, Germany today (19 March). The XFEL programme uses a super-strength laser to help understand life-threatening viruses.

The UK's membership of XFEL reinforces the government's modern [Industrial Strategy](#), and through the [Ageing Society Grand Challenge](#), the government is committed to harnessing the power of innovation to create the treatments of the future and maintain our position of being a world-leader in science, research and innovation.

The XFEL, one of the most powerful X-ray machines ever built, acts like a huge microscope, using intensely bright and short duration X-ray flashes which will enable scientists to map the atomic details of viruses. The laser also allows scientists to look in greater detail to the composition of cells, take 3D images of atoms and molecules and study processes such as those occurring deep inside planets.

Science Minister Sam Gyimah said:

The incredible XFEL will help us better understand life threatening diseases by using one of the world's most powerful X-ray machines. Working with our international partners, the super-strength laser will help develop new medical treatments and therapies, potentially saving thousands of lives across the world.

Through our modern Industrial Strategy we are investing an extra £4.7 billion into research and development. I am determined that we continue to secure our position as being a world-leader in science, research and innovation and I can't wait to see the results that come from our participation in this extraordinary project.



STFC designed and built LPD detector. Credit: European XFEL

British engineers from the Science and Technology Facilities Council (STFC) have already built the advanced camera for XFEL, called the Large Pixel Detector (LPD). The camera operates at a frame rate of 4.5MHz – 4.5 million pictures per second.

The UK has been involved with XFEL since 2008, contributing £30 million towards the construction of the facility, and every following year we will contribute £2.5 million towards operations costs.

STFC have also contributed a number of UK researchers who are currently working at the facility. The UK has also developed a training facility at the Diamond Light Source on the Harwell campus in Oxfordshire for British scientists. The UK XFEL life sciences hub will enable users to fully prepare for their experiments with XFELs.

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## **[News story: Coal Authority Public Board Meeting – 23 March 2018](#)**

Our next public board meeting will take place at the Coal Authority offices at 200 Lichfield Lane, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, NG18 4RG, starting at

09.45 on Friday 23 March 2018.

The board continues to conduct its business in public, as part of its ongoing commitment to giving stakeholders greater access to information on the activities undertaken by the Coal Authority.

[View the board meeting agenda for 23 March 2018](#)

Exceptional items of a commercially confidential nature will continue to be dealt with by the board in closed session.

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## **Press release: Humane trapping standards: Consultation starts**

The Government has today (19 March) launched a public consultation on the introduction of new and improved international humane trapping standards.

Views are being sought on the implementation proposals for the Agreement on International Humane Trapping Standards and to gather information on the supply, use and marking of traps to better inform impact assessment.

These measures will ensure gamekeepers, country estates and pest control companies are trapping certain species of animals in a humane fashion. Depending on the responses to the consultation, Government wants to implement the new standards on 1 January 2019.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

We are committed to supporting a strong rural economy and upholding countryside traditions and we want to do this in a way that respects wildlife and the environment.

I would therefore encourage people with an interest in this area to contribute their views.

Today's consultation is asking for views from the gamekeeping sector, trap retailers, manufacturers and importers, pest control companies, country estates/farms, and importers of products derived from trapped animals.

People can respond using the [Citizen Space survey](#).

The Government will respond to the consultation shortly after the six-week consultation ends.