First set of changes from Charities Act 2022 come into force

Press release

The first set of provisions from the Charities Act 2022 are now in force.

Today (Monday 31st October 2022), the first set of changes being introduced by the Charities Act 2022 come into force, introducing a range of provisions including new powers for trustees.

These provisions include:

- An extended power for charities to pay trustees for providing goods to the charity under certain circumstances (in addition to services, and goods connected to services)
- A reduction in the administrative complexities surrounding fundraising appeals that do not reach, or exceed, fundraising targets (often known as 'failed appeals').
- A new statutory power for Royal Charter charities to change sections of their Royal Charter which they could not previously change, with the approval of the Privy Council.

Aarti Thakor, Director of Legal & Accounting Services at the Charity Commission said:

> The Charities Act 2022 is designed to make a positive, practical difference to charities and where possible, to make things easier for trustees.
>
> Today, a number of changes have come into effect, with more to follow next year. We have updated our guidance to reflect the first set of changes so that trustees can understand what this means for them and the charities they serve.

Since the Charites Act gained Royal Assent earlier this year, the Commission

has been working towards making necessary changes to support the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's implementation plan, which has been put in place to gradually introduce provisions of the Act. This work includes reviewing and updating guidance for trustees and providing training to staff. The Commission is also amending some key digital services on its website.

Other provisions of the Act now in force:

- confirm that the Commission's scheme-making powers include making schemes for charitable companies
- confer trust corporation status automatically to existing and future corporate charities in respect of any charitable trust of which the corporation is (or, in the future, becomes) a trustee
- update provisions relating to giving public notice to written consents and orders of the Charity Commission under various sections of the Charities Act 2011
- mean that when a charity changes its governing document by parliamentary scheme, under section 73 of the Charities Act 2011, the scheme will by default always be under a lighter touch parliamentary process (known as the negative parliamentary procedure)

The next set of provisions are expected to come into force in Spring 2023.

Notes to editors:

1. The Charities Act 2022 gained Royal Assent on 24th February 2022.
2. The full Charities Act 2022 can be found here
3. Explanation of the Charities Act 2022 implementation plan is available on gov.uk
4. The Charity Commission has an information page on phase 1 changes
5. The Charity Commission is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales.

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Government to take no further action under the National Security and Investment Act (2021) on Royal Mail share acquisition

News story

The government has today (Monday 31 October) decided to take no further

action under its national security powers on the proposed increase in shareholdings by Vesa Equity Investment in Royal Mail.

The proposed acquisition of increased shareholdings in Royal Mail by Vesa Equity Investment was called in for a full national security assessment by the previous Business Secretary on 25 August 2022.

The government has powers under the National Security and Investment Act (2021) to scrutinise and, if necessary, intervene in qualifying acquisitions on national security grounds.

Following careful consideration, the government will take no further action on the acquisition of increased shareholdings by Vesa Equity Investment in Royal Mail and a Final Notification has been issued to parties.

The government will not hesitate to act to prevent risks to the UK's national security where we judge action is necessary. Under the National Security and Investment Act (2021) acquisitions are assessed on a case-by-case basis, so any future acquisition could be subject to a separate assessment under the Act if deemed necessary.

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NDA invests £7million into the Industrial Solutions Hub at Cleator Moor

Industrial Solutions Hub (iSH), based at Cleator Moor, in West Cumbria, is a new initiative developed by Copeland Borough Council with support from the NDA and Sellafield Ltd.

The NDA are committed to investing in those communities where it is progressing its nuclear decommissioning mission and this funding, which will

be used to develop the new iSH campus, aims to unlock millions more from government as part of the £22.5million Cleator Moor Town Deal.

The campus will create around 700 new job opportunities and is set to generate an additional £40million per year of revenue for local businesses.

Sellafield Limited have also provided crucial funding from the inception of the project through the social impact multiplied programme. Funding of £4.2million has been invested to date with further financial support through the Cleator Moor Town Deal.

The campus will create a place where businesses and industry can come together to collaborate, problem solve and develop innovative solutions that bring benefits, both locally and across the UK.

NDA Chief Executive, David Peattie, said: “We work with our communities to invest in projects that deliver a positive and long-lasting legacy, providing significant social and economic benefits.

“The iSH will create jobs and opportunities for generations to come and provide a space for organisations to collaborate and come up with solutions to global industry challenges.

“Working with Sellafield Ltd and Copeland Borough Council, our investment aims to leverage in millions more than we could provide alone, helping to maximise the benefit of our mission to the West Cumbrian community.”

John Maddison, Managing Director of iSH, said: “We thank those in the NDA, along with those in Copeland Borough Council and Sellafield, who have given our programme their support and this vital financial backing.

“iSH is an initiative of regional, national and international significance which will create jobs, enable collaboration, enhance skills, provide access to business support, and bring a range of economic, environmental and social benefits to the community.

“We will build on the industry excellence of the NDA, Sellafield and its supply chain and through collaboration will turn that into opportunities for businesses and organisations to grow and create more skills, training and employment, making a positive difference to people’s lives, the community and the environment.”

Working with and through its operating companies, the NDA has invested over £70million in socio-economic initiatives in communities around its sites over the last five years, leveraging millions more of funding in the process.

The NDA socio-economic programme co-creates effective economic interventions with community stakeholders using independently produced economic assessments which guide where investments can achieve the greatest impact.

To date, this has seen the delivery of new schools, jobs, skills, and training facilities in the communities in which we operate.

Reading should be explicitly taught even in secondary schools

Press release

Today Ofsted has published a research report looking at how high-performing secondary schools provide targeted support for struggling readers.

Reading is essential to every subject and children who cannot read well will find it difficult to keep up with the demands of secondary school.

Each year around one quarter of 11-year-olds do not meet the expected standard in reading at the end of primary school. Fewer than 1 in 5 of these pupils can expect to get a GCSE grade 4 in English. Being unable to read well can often also lead to poor behaviour. The consequences of poor reading extend beyond school, as evidence shows that adults with low literacy are likely to have fewer job opportunities and a lower income.

The aim of our study was to explore how schools make sure that pupils who leave primary school unable to read age-appropriate books fluently can become proficient readers and keep up with all their other curriculum subjects.

The 6 schools we visited for the research were chosen because a higher-than-expected proportion of their initially poor readers achieved a pass in English language at GCSE.

In these schools, we found that:

- Senior leaders prioritised reading by investing in additional, bespoke help for struggling readers and training for staff who taught reading
- Teachers accurately identified gaps in pupils' reading knowledge
- Staff who taught reading had expertise in teaching weaker readers
- Clear procedures were in place to monitor this teaching and its impact on struggling readers
- As pupils' reading improved, they gained confidence and became more

motivated to engage with reading in class

Ofsted’s Chief Inspector Amanda Spielman said:

> The ability to read is a fundamental life skill. However, secondary school leaders and teaching staff should be aware that a significant number of their pupils are lacking the basics.
>
> All children, with very few exceptions, should leave school proficient readers. That’s why it’s essential that children who leave primary school unable to read well get the additional teaching they need to participate both academically and in wider society.

The research visits to the 6 secondary schools took place in March 2022.

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Genetic Technology Bill to take on most pressing environmental problems of our time

Legislation to unlock new technologies to boost food production and support farmers to grow more productive crops will return to Parliament today – paving the way for Britain to become the best place in the world to invest in agri-food research and innovation

Third Reading of the Bill is scheduled for today (Monday 31 October) and is expected to be introduced in the House of Lords the following day.

By introducing a more proportionate and science-based regulatory system for precision-bred plants and animals, it will unlock opportunities to develop crops that are more resilient against disease and the effects of climate change such as drought and flooding, and less reliant on pesticides.

Farming Minister Mark Spencer said:

> We are already seeing how new genetic technologies can increase yields, make our food more nutritious and result in crops that are more resistant to disease and weather extremes.
>
> British scientists are leading the world in precision breeding and

> this Bill will put Britain at the forefront of agri-research and innovation – opening the door for more investment and continuing our work to provide farmers with the tools they need to innovate and use new, smart technologies.

The Genetic Technology (Precision Breeding) Bill covers precision-bred plants and animals developed through techniques such as gene editing, where the genetic changes could have occurred naturally or through traditional breeding methods. This is different to genetic modification (GM), which produces organisms containing additional genes.

While there is great potential for increasing innovation, the government recognises that there is a need to safeguard animal welfare in the new regulatory framework. That is why we are taking a step-by-step approach, enabling use of precision breeding technologies with plants first followed by animals later.

Defra's Chief Scientific Adviser Gideon Henderson said:

> This is an important time for agricultural science. The ability to use gene editing to make precise, targeted changes to the genetic code of organisms, in a way that can mimic traditional breeding, enables development of new crop varieties that are more resistant to pests, healthier to eat, and more resilient to drought and heat as climate changes.
>
> For centuries, traditional breeders have made use of our understanding of genetics to breed plant varieties with desirable characteristics. Gene editing allows precision breeding to make the same type of genetic changes in a far more efficient and precise way, significantly reducing the time needed to create new varieties. Precision breeding is a powerful and important tool to help us tackle the challenges of biodiversity and climate change, while feeding a still growing global population.

Professor Nigel Halford, Crop Scientist at Rothamsted Research, said:

> It is tremendously exciting to see this Bill progress to the House of Lords because it will pave the way for this powerful technology to be used in crop improvement rather than just research.
>
> We are already behind much of the world in the application of precision breeding techniques and we are keen to see the Bill become law as soon as possible.

Further information:

The Bill will:

- Remove plants and animals produced through precision breeding technologies from regulatory requirements applicable to the environmental release and marketing of GMOs (Genetically Modified Organisms).
- Introduce two notification systems; one for precision bred organisms used for research purposes and the other for marketing purposes. The information collected will be published on a public register on GOV.UK.
- Establish a proportionate regulatory system for precision bred animals to ensure animal welfare is safeguarded. We will not be introducing changes to the regulations for animals until this system is in place.
- Establish a new science-based authorisation process for food and feed products developed using precision bred plants and animals.

Opportunities brought by the new legislation:

Climate resilient wheat

- Developing wheat that is resilient to climate change will help to increase food production from a crop that 2.5 billion people are dependent on globally.
- Researchers at the John Innes Centre in Norwich have used gene editing techniques to identify a key gene in wheat that can be used to introduce traits such as heat resilience whilst maintaining high yield.
- This discovery presents an exciting opportunity to identify variations of the gene that can give wheat varieties resilience to climate change.

Non-browning banana

- Bananas are a key food crop globally – but there is significant wastage with over 50% not consumed and 10% – 15% lost due to fruit bruising post-harvest.
- Tropic, a leading agricultural biotechnology company in the UK, has recently developed a non-browning banana using precision breeding techniques.
- Given the fruit’s high perishability, this innovation has the potential to reduce the amount of bananas that are wasted, reduce carbon emissions and provide higher farmer revenues.

Disease resistant chickens

- Bird flu is a major threat to farmed chickens worldwide, with some strains killing up to 100 per cent of birds in a flock. In some cases, variants of the virus can infect people and cause serious illness.
- In a collaboration between Imperial College London, the Pirbright Institute and the Roslin Institute, a research study has shown potential in using gene-editing to produce chickens that are resistant to the disease. The virus was no longer able to grow inside cells with the genetic change.
- The use of gene editing could help to control the spread of the disease which is urgently needed to protect chickens and to reduce the risk to

human health.

On Rothamsted Research:

Rothamsted Research is a world-leading, non-profit research centre that focuses on strategic agricultural science to the benefit of farmers and society worldwide.

It is also the longest-running agricultural research institution in the world dating back to 1843.

Its key aims include:

- Deliver know-how, data, better practices and new technologies to improve performance, resilience and value.
- Raise the productivity of crop and livestock systems.
- Tackle weed, disease and insect resistance to agrochemicals and improve soil health.
- Enhance natural capital and reduce agriculture’s carbon and nutrient footprint.
- Add novel nutritional, health and bioeconomical value to crops and other products.