

Violence affects women and girls everywhere: UK statement to the OSCE

Thank you, Mr Convenor.

[Global estimates](#) show that 1 in 3 women will experience physical and/or sexual violence in their lifetimes. Violence affects women and girls everywhere.

Gender equality and fighting all forms of violence against women and girls are crucial to the OSCE's comprehensive concept of security and stability and the UK commends the work of the OSCE executive structures in implementing the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

I'd like to highlight the utility and value of two OSCE sponsored toolkits. Firstly, the toolkit for ["Inclusion of Women and Effective Peace Processes"](#), a valuable resource for conflict mediation in all OSCE conflicts. And, secondly, the [Gender and Security toolkit](#), which provides practical policy and programmatic guidance for governments, for regional and international organisations and for justice institutions.

I'd like to thank all those who have contributed to advancing gender equality and the Women, Peace and Security agenda at the OSCE.

We know that violence against women and girls further escalates in scale and severity in conflict and crisis, and this has been seen in the detrimental impact that Russia's invasion of Ukraine has had on women and girls.

We welcomed the publication of the OSCE's Moscow Mechanism reports, which help expose the truth of Putin's illegal war in Ukraine. We remain deeply concerned about rising reports of gender-based violence, including horrific acts of sexual violence, with most cases committed in areas controlled by Russian armed forces.

In April, the UK launched the [Murad Code](#), a code of conduct for documenting the experiences of survivors of conflict-related sexual violence in a way that upholds survivors' rights. We are now urging governments, national authorities, international organisations and civil society to commit to taking a survivor-centred approach to such documentation – in line with the standards set out in the Code.

[In November the UK are hosting an ambitious international conference](#) that marks 10 years since the launch of the Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative. We will use this to strengthen global action and deliver real change for survivors.

Mr Convenor, we know that violence against women and children is preventable. The UK remains steadfast in its commitment to working toward a future for women and children that is free from discrimination and violence.

Rigorous evaluations have shown that harmful attitudes and norms can change in less than three years – this does not have to take generations.

Thank you.

[Civil news: extension of civil contracts until 31 August 2024](#)

News story

Extension notices are being sent to all providers holding a 2018 Standard Civil Contract.



We are extending the 2018 Standard Civil Contract and notices are now being sent to relevant providers.

What does this mean?

All contract-holders will receive offers to vary their contracts. This amendment will allow providers to continue delivering contracted services until the new end date of 31 August 2024.

Why is this happening now?

This is to allow us time to consider findings from the planned Ministry of Justice Civil Legal Aid Review. We can then consider how any changes could be introduced into future civil contracts.

What do contract-holders need to do?

Offers to vary contracts are being sent to all holders of the 2018 Standard Civil Contract. Providers will need to accept these offers if they are to continue delivering contracted services until the new end date of 31 August 2024.

Supporting contract schedules and timings

Supporting contract schedules will be issued to cover the period from 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024.

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[Support service for Northern Ireland traders extended for a year](#)

News story

The Trader Support Service, which helps businesses move goods between Great Britain and Northern Ireland, has been extended.



A business support service that helps those moving goods between Great Britain and Northern Ireland has been extended until December 2023.

More than 47,000 businesses have registered with the Trader Support Service (TSS) since its launch in 2020 to help them successfully navigate changes to the way goods move under the Northern Ireland Protocol.

The free-to-use digital platform helps businesses and traders of all sizes continue to trade seamlessly between Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The comprehensive service provides end-to-end support to manage digital declarations including completing import and safety and security declarations on behalf of traders.

The TSS, which provides guidance and training to help businesses understand what the Protocol means for them, enables traders to complete declarations without the need to purchase specialist software saving traders time and money.

The government is committed to ensuring traders are supported throughout 2023 to meet the requirements of moving goods between Great Britain and Northern Ireland, including tailoring this support in response to the changes the government is seeking to make to the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Businesses moving goods between Great Britain and Northern Ireland can [sign up to the Trader Support Service](#) and [access free online courses and training materials](#).

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UN Human Rights Council 51: UK statement following Putin's annexation of four Ukrainian regions

The Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action stressed the importance of democracy for the enjoyment of human rights. And it states, in the clearest terms, that democracy is based on the freely expressed will of the people to determine their own political, economic, social and cultural systems and their full participation in all aspects of their lives.

Yet what we have seen last week in Ukraine sought to make a mockery of these long-recognised principles. Putin's sham referenda must be seen for what they are: a desperate attempt to justify an unprovoked and illegal land grab of sovereign Ukrainian territory. A blatant continuation of the Kremlin's playbook, as seen before in Crimea in 2014. And a clear violation of international law.

This is not democracy, nor the will of the Ukrainian people. This is a farce – carried out with complete disregard for Ukraine's legal and constitutional framework, and down the barrel of a gun.

Let me be clear: the United Kingdom will never accept the regions of Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia as anything other than Ukrainian territory.

Mr President,

The principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, so central to the UN Charter, are principles which all of us have a responsibility to uphold. As the UN Secretary General said last week, Putin's decision to proceed with the annexation of these regions has no legal value and must be condemned in the strongest terms.

We call on the international community to join us in unequivocally rejecting

Russia's attempts to illegally annex Ukrainian territory, and to restore the ability of all people in Ukraine to express their will in a free and democratic society.

Thank you.

Offenders to face mandatory testing to cut drug-fuelled crime

- new enhanced tests will detect more drugs to tackle substance abuse and cut crime
- offenders who fail tests face being recalled to prison

Thousands of offenders will face compulsory drug testing after release from prison to help keep them clean and cut drug-fuelled crime.

From today (3 October 2022), offenders supervised in probation hostels, known as Approved Premises, will be randomly tested for 14 different types of drugs as part of a £1.2 million initiative to reduce reoffending.

Offenders whose drug habits are directly linked to their crimes, such as heroin addicts, will be legally required to take a urine test up to once a week to prevent their addiction from spiralling into further crimes. All other offenders will be tested at least twice whilst being supervised in Approved Premises.

New enhanced tests will also make it easier to spot a range of drugs including heroin, cocaine and synthetic substances like Spice, with around 30,000 tests being carried out each year.

Those who test positive will be required to undergo intensive drug treatment or face being recalled to prison.

These changes were first introduced as a Private Members Bill by Rob Butler MP, who recently became Prisons and Probation Minister.

Rob Butler, Prisons and Probation Minister, said:

I've seen first-hand how drug addiction is too often at the heart of criminal activity and I have campaigned to change that.

This mandatory testing will act as a deterrent to anyone tempted to abuse drugs again, help cut crime and make our communities safer.

Illegal drug use costs the taxpayer nearly £22 billion each year, including

NHS, prison and police costs. Clamping down on drug use will help break the cycle of crime which addiction causes.

This type of testing has been successfully rolled out in dozens of Approved Premises in England and will now be expanded across the whole estate by spring 2023.

'Ian', an offender currently housed in an Approved Premise, said:

Before I got clean from drugs, my life was chaotic, and I would do anything to get my next hit.

Regular testing in Approved Premises will reduce drug deaths and give people something to focus on and work towards.

At first, I was worried about being tested for fear of being recalled to prison but it was an incentive for me to stay clean, rebuild broken trust with family and loved ones and start applying for jobs so I can look for my own place.

The initiative represents one of the largest expansions of drug testing in the Probation Service and supports the government's wider 10-year Drugs Strategy which is backed by £900 million of extra investment.

As part of this, the government is investing £120 million to roll out three pilot substance misuse problem-solving courts in the community to make offenders face their addictions. The investment will help establish 18 new drug recovery wings ensuring prisoners tackle their addiction head-on or face tough consequences – including further time in jail where necessary.

Approved Premises are used by the Probation Service to closely supervise and support offenders after their release from prison.