

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.

[Crime news: welcome pack and resources for 2022 crime contract](#)

We are making resources available on GOV.UK to help providers when delivering work under the new 2022 Standard Crime Contract.

These include a welcome pack which explains the contents of the 2022 Standard Crime Contract and gives support for new providers.

What resources can providers access?

- 2022 crime contract specification and standard terms
- provider welcome pack
- new versions of guidance

Where can I view contract changes?

The 2022 crime contract includes changes and updates in a range of areas. These are detailed in the Standard Crime Contract 2022 available for download on GOV.UK. The specification changes include:

- duty solicitor engagement requirements – section 6

- pre-charge engagement – section 9.113-9.137
- gang injunctions and associated civil work – section 13.47-13.53
- committal proceedings in civil court venues – section 10.193 – 10.199

Length of contract

The new 2022 contract governing the provision of criminal legal aid services takes effect from 1 October 2022 for a period of one year. It is subject to extensions of up to 2 years.

Amended forms and guidance

Minor amendments have been made to the following forms and guidance documents to include relevant 2022 Standard Crime Contract references:

1. Criminal Bills Assessment Manual
2. Criminal Legal Aid Manual
3. CWA codes guidance (guidance for reporting crime lower work)
4. Crown Court fee guidance
5. CRM2 application for advice and assistance form
6. CRM7 non-standard fee contract work assessment form

Further information

[Standard Crime Contract 2022 welcome pack](#)

[Standard Crime Contract 2022 specification](#)

[Standard Crime Contract 2022 standard terms](#)

[Criminal Bills Assessment Manual](#)

[Criminal Legal Aid Manual](#)

[CWA codes guidance \(guidance for reporting crime lower work\)](#)

[Crown Court fee guidance](#)

[CRM2 application for advice and assistance form](#)

[CRM7 non-standard fee contract work assessment form](#)

[Criminal Legal Aid Review](#) – MOJ consultation hub

[Attorney General's Guidelines on Disclosure 2020](#)

Samir Parkash appointed interim CEO of UK Export Finance

Press release

Samir is set to lead the UK's award-winning export credit agency and help British exporters access the finance they need to grow overseas and create jobs in the UK.



UK Export Finance (UKEF) has today announced Samir Parkash has been appointed as interim Chief Executive Officer (CEO). He takes over from Louis Taylor who has joined the British Business Bank.

Samir has served as UKEF's Chief Risk Officer since 2018 and has over 30 years of experience in the banking and financial services sector. He will serve as interim CEO while the appointment process for a permanent CEO is underway.

Samir Parkash, interim CEO at UKEF said:

I'm honoured and delighted to take on the role as interim CEO and lead a department that grows the economy, supports jobs, and strengthens international trade. UKEF has had an excellent performance in recent years. Our guarantees, insurance and lending make more exports possible. I look forward to continuing to put UKEF at the forefront of the government's plan to boost businesses and the economy.

The range of support available to exporters from UK Export Finance ensures that access to finance and insurance is available to UK exporters with ambitions to grow overseas.

In the last financial year, UKEF issued £7.4 billion in support of UK exports. This put money into people's pockets and provided job security for British workers, growing the UK economy by £4.3 billion (GVA) and supporting an estimated 72,000 UK jobs.

James Bowler, Permanent Secretary at the Department for International Trade said:

Samir will provide both incredible expertise and continuity in this interim period. I am grateful he has stepped up to ensure UKEF remains focused on delivering the world-class service it is internationally renowned for.

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