

Government scheme to help universities in financial difficulties

Universities facing severe financial difficulties as a result of the coronavirus will now be able to apply for further Government support, the Education Secretary announced today (Thursday 16 July).

Gavin Williamson has announced details of a new restructuring regime, specifically for higher education providers, such as universities and colleges in England, that could be at risk of insolvency. The scheme aims to support the important role universities play in their local economies, and preserve the country's science base.

Eligible providers will be able to seek this additional support to develop cost effective restructuring plans with conditions designed to focus the sector towards the future needs of the country, such delivering high quality courses with good graduate outcomes.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

"We understand the challenges universities are facing, which is why we have already provided a range of support to ease financial pressures. This new scheme will help those who are still facing financial difficulty as a result of COVID-19.

"As the country recovers from the pandemic we must look to the future, and our world-leading higher education has an important role to play in our success.

"We need our universities to achieve great value for money – delivering the skills and a workforce that will drive our economy and nation to thrive in the years ahead. My priority is student welfare, not vice-chancellor salaries."

The plan builds on the higher education support packages announced in May and June, by the Department for Education and Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, as well as the range of business support measures the Government has put in place to support our whole economy.

This included confirming higher education providers are eligible to access the Coronavirus Job Retention scheme and business loan schemes, as well as bringing forward tuition fee and research funding. The Restructuring Regime will only provide support after all other finance options have been exhausted and when there is a case to do so.

As a condition for taking part in the scheme, universities will be required to make changes that meet wider Government objectives, depending on the individual provider's circumstances. This could include ensuring they deliver high quality courses with strong graduate outcomes, improving their offer of qualifications available, and focusing resources on the front line by

reducing administrative costs, including vice-chancellor pay.

An independently-chaired Higher Education Restructuring Regime Board will be established, which will include input from members with specialist knowledge external to Government. The Education Secretary will draw on the expertise of the Board on individual cases before making a decision on whether to intervene.

Financial support in the form of repayable loans will only be provided if there is a case to do so, and this is not a guarantee that no organisation will go into insolvency. It will only be offered as a last resort measure and with specific conditions that align with wider Government objectives. It would also require assurance that providers are fully complying with their legal duties to secure freedom of speech.

Further details on the regime, including support and conditions can be found [here](#).

[New compensation scheme for victims of terrorism](#)

- government to consult on new compensation process for victims of terror
- part of wider proposed reforms to simplify and improve criminal injuries compensation
- increased pay-outs for bereaved families

The proposals aim to better address the particular needs of victims and their families following a terrorist incident, and ensure applications are processed as rapidly as possible. The changes follow a commitment to improve the compensation process following the Manchester Arena Terror Attack, and support the government's wider review of the support available to terror victims, including families and loved ones, to ensure more victims get the support and advice they need, faster.

The plans form part of a package of reforms Ministers are pursuing through a consultation launched today (16 July 2020) which seeks to improve the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme (CICS) – making the scheme simpler and more transparent, while ensuring it keeps pace with the changing nature of crime.

The Scheme provides compensation to victims injured by violent crime as public acknowledgement of their suffering, paying out more than £130 million last year – making it one of the most generous of its kind in the world. This includes £11 million to victims who were previously barred from accessing compensation under the pre-1979 'same roof' rule after the government

scrapped the unfair rule last year.

The key proposals in the consultation include:

- Creating a standalone scheme for victims of domestic and overseas terrorism to improve awareness of the support on offer and ensure applications are processed as rapidly as possible.
- Scrapping completely the 'same roof' rule which blocks victims from receiving compensation if the attacker was a family member they were living with at the time of the incident. Ministers abolished part of the rule in 2019, which has led to £11 million being paid to victims previously denied compensation.
- Simplifying the list of injuries included in the CICS and the tariff of payments associated to them.
- Giving a single payment to bereaved families of £8,000 – an increase of £2,500 for the majority of applicants while speeding up the claims process.
- Increasing support for funeral costs to a single payment of £4,500 – from the previous basic sum of £2,500 to reflect the rise in funeral costs.
- Seeking views on whether families bereaved by homicide abroad should have access to compensation.

Justice Minister Alex Chalk said:

All too recently we've witnessed the devastating effects of terrorism, which is why this government is determined that victims get the support they need to rebuild their lives.

While no amount of compensation can ever make up for the suffering they've endured, our reforms will ensure the system for claiming awards better reflects the needs of victims, and that applications are processed as rapidly as possible.

But this is only one part of our plans to boost the support available for people injured by violent crime. We are simplifying the Scheme making it easier to understand, as well as increasing pay-outs for bereaved families.

Today's announcement follows a comprehensive review which found that for the vast majority of applicants the Scheme is working well, with the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) which operates the Scheme reporting a 95% customer satisfaction rating.

The review concluded that the principles underpinning the Scheme must be maintained – that it exists to support all eligible victims of violent crime who have suffered the most serious injuries, and that compensation is an important and public recognition of their ordeal. It carefully considered the Scheme's scope and eligibility criteria, and while it recognised concerns around application time limits and the unspent conviction rule, it found that any change would undermine the Scheme's ethos of treating all victims in a

fair and consistent manner.

However, the review revealed some areas where improvements could be made, including to reduce the complexity of the process – which can deter some from applying – as well as enhancing the support offered to victims. Ministers are therefore consulting on package of changes which would inform the detail of a new and improved Scheme.

The move builds on commitments to improve the support on offer at every stage of the justice system outlined in the first-ever cross-government Victims Strategy as well as a raft of reforms to protect victims and pursue perpetrators. This includes:

- a 50 per cent increase in funding for victims of sexual violence.
- abolishing the pre-1979 ‘same roof rule’ which has paid out £11 million to new and past applicants.
- consulting on a new Victims Code setting out what support victims should expect from the justice system.
- Improving court environments, with new victim-friendly waiting areas and an emphasis on accessibility for the most vulnerable.
- Extending the Unduly Lenient Sentence so more victims and the public can have sentences reconsidered by the Court of Appeal.

Notes to editors

- The Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme (the Scheme) is a statutory scheme that exists to compensate victims of violent crime in Great Britain where no other option of financial redress is available.
- A [consultation will run from 16 July to 9 October 2020](#).
- The Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) deals with over 30,000 applications a year, and has a high satisfaction rating of 95% from applicants who had been in contact in 2018/19.
- In 2018/19 the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) paid out more than £130 million to victims.
- The review examined whether the Scheme remains fit for purpose, reflects the changing nature of violent crime and effectively supports victims in their recovery.
- It considered:
 - The scope of the Scheme, including the definition of violent crime for the purposes of compensation for injury, and the type of injuries that are covered by the Scheme.
 - The eligibility rules including, among other things, concerns about time limits for making applications, unspent convictions, and consent in sexual offences cases.
 - The requirements of the Scheme in relation to decision-making, including issues such as the level of evidence required for compensation claims, and the timeframes for accepting or rejecting awards.
 - The value and composition of awards available through the Scheme, including the balance struck between serious and less serious physical and mental injuries.
 - The impact of the Scheme on particular groups, including victims of

- child sexual abuse and victims of terrorism.
- Opportunities to simplify the Scheme.
- The affordability and financial sustainability of the Scheme.
- The Scheme operates a tariff-based system for determining injury awards which describes the qualifying injuries and the associated awards. Our proposals will simplify this list of injuries and awards to achieve more transparency and consistency for victims.
- 'Same roof' rule
 - The rule was intended to ensure perpetrators would not benefit from compensation paid to victims they lived with.
 - In 2019 the pre-1979 'same roof' rule was abolished. This meant victims of violent crimes which took place before 1979 were blocked from receiving compensation if the attacker was someone they were living with at the time of the incident.
 - However, the post 1979 'same roof' rule remained intact. The changes recommend abolishing this rule completely, so that familial relationships will not prevent victims from accessing compensation to which they would otherwise be entitled, provided that there is no possibility of the assailant benefitting.
 - An amended Scheme coming into force on 13 June 2019. The changes allow victims previously denied criminal injuries compensation under the rule, or who have never applied, to make fresh applications; applications must be received by the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) within two years, by 13 June 2021.
- Victims of domestic terrorism can already claim from CICS and Victims of FCO-designated terrorist attacks abroad can claim compensation from the Victims of Overseas Terrorism Compensation Scheme.
- A standalone scheme for victims of terrorism would require primary legislation.
- The consultation also explains rationales for not changing certain aspects of the Scheme. This includes:
 - The scope of the Scheme and whether it could be extended to include crimes of grooming, online exploitation and grooming.
 - The review found that expanding to such crimes could present operational difficulties given the wide range of other offences that may also have similar harmful impacts and operational difficulties in establishing evidence.
- The government is also reviewing the wider support available to victims of terrorism, including families and loved ones, and investing £500,000 to increase the support provided, to ensure more victims get the support and advice they need, faster.
- The Home Secretary made an announcement on the 26 March regarding a competed grant, available to organisations who want to provide support to victims of terrorism. Organisations were able to bid for up to £500,000, to provide advice and support to individuals and their families affected by terrorist attacks. The outcome will be announced shortly.
- The government has committed to an internal review of the wider support package available to victims of terrorism. The review is currently being scoped and we will take forward its recommendations in due course.

[GCA welcomes findings of second statutory review](#)



Christine Tacon, the Groceries Code Adjudicator, has warmly welcomed the [findings of the Government's Statutory Review](#) of the GCA's work between April 2016 and March 2019.

She said: "This is a highly positive report that recognises the importance of the GCA in creating a more level playing field for the groceries sector.

"I am grateful for the acknowledgement that my pro-active approach as well as the knowledge and experience I brought to the role have led to fairer practices across all the regulated retailers. This was the mission I set myself when I became GCA 2013 and it good to see that recognised by those individuals and organisations that responded to this statutory review.

I am particularly grateful for the comments that my team and I have been approachable, professional and influential in driving the culture change that has achieved progress. We all take great pride in being able to have made a difference."

The government report concludes that:

- the GCA continues to be highly effective in enforcing the Code and in exercising its powers
- the government will not amend or replace the Groceries Code Adjudicator (Permitted Maximum Financial Penalty) Order 2015 which provides the maximum financial penalty the GCA may impose
- no order will be made to restrict the information the GCA may consider in deciding whether to carry out an investigation

The overall evidence from the review also suggested there is still a need for the GCA to ensure retailers comply with the requirements of the Groceries Code. Some responses to the review indicated that some suppliers are still reluctant to raise issues with the GCA. The government report recognises the steps the current GCA has taken to encourage suppliers to raise issues. It makes a commitment to work with the next GCA to help suppliers feel empowered

to raise issues with the GCA and their retailers directly.

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Additional information added – extract from government report

2. 16 July 2020

First published.

[Support frontline workers to engage parents struggling with safer sleeping advice](#)

The government needs to develop new tools to help prevent the [sudden unexpected death of infants \(SUDI\)](#), says a new review by the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.

The independent panel of experts reviews serious child safeguarding incidents, when children have died or suffered serious harm, to learn how to improve the safeguarding system.

While the overall numbers of babies dying from SUDI are decreasing, a worrying number of deaths have been notified to the panel as serious child safeguarding incidents. Between June 2018 and August 2019, the deaths of 40 babies from SUDI were reported to the panel. Most of whom died after co-sleeping in bed or on a chair or sofa, often with parents who had consumed drugs or alcohol.

The review reveals families with babies at risk of dying in this way are often struggling with several issues, such as domestic violence, poor mental health or unsuitable housing. It found that these deaths often occur when families experience disruption to their normal routines and so are unable to engage effectively with safer sleeping advice.

Due to coronavirus (COVID-19) and the associated anxieties about money, social isolation and mental health issues, disruptions that led to the deaths of these infants may be more prominent at present.

To address this, the panel is calling for local areas to reduce the risk of SUDI by incorporating it into wider strategies for responding to social and economic deprivation, domestic violence and parental mental health concerns.

This should be backed up by new government tools and processes to support frontline practitioners and local safeguarding partners to make these changes.

Interim Chair of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel, Karen Manners QPM said:

The unexpected death of an infant is a tragedy and although it's not always predictable, some babies appear to be more at risk.

Families with children at higher risk of SUDI are often struggling with several issues, such as domestic violence, poor mental health or unsuitable housing, and infants may die after co-sleeping on a sofa or with parents who have consumed drugs or alcohol.

Therefore, it's vital that practitioners work together to help parents understand how to make sure that every sleep is a safe one for their baby.

Leading SUDI expert and Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel Member, Prof Peter Sidebotham said:

It's important that we give all families information about safe sleeping, but for some families who are struggling with multiple issues, the existing information is simply not enough.

This is not about blaming parents who have suffered such tragedies. This is a societal issue and we need to listen to and talk with families realistically and honestly so we can make sure that their babies sleep safely all the time.

Chief Executive of The Lullaby Trust, Jenny Ward said:

This review highlights that safer sleep, despite being the best way to reduce the risk of SUDI, is not always easy to follow. We need to identify the families who require additional support to help make decisions that are right for them and their baby, particularly when faced with an unexpected situation such as when your baby is unwell or you are staying away from home.

Despite great reductions in SUDI rates over the past few decades there is still a lot of work to be done, and we know the devastation the death of a baby has on families. We welcome the recommendations and look forward to sharing our learning and knowledge around communicating with families to prevent more babies from dying.

The review examines the deaths of 14 babies from 12 local areas to understand

how professionals can best support parents to ensure that safer sleep advice is heard and embedded.

The findings show that:

- families living within a context of recognised background risks, such as deprivation and overcrowding, domestic violence or poor mental health, are at heightened risk of losing a baby to SUDI – all those working with families need to recognise that and work together – this is not just an issue for midwives and health visitors
- we need a flexible and tailored approach to prevention that is responsive to the reality of people's lives – that means talking honestly with parents about how they will cope in different situations to ensure every sleep is safe
- the best local arrangements for promoting safer sleeping involve a range of professionals as part of a relationship-based programme of support, embedded in wider initiatives to promote infant safety, health and wellbeing
- a prevent and protect practice model should be locally adopted to recognise the continuum of risk of SUDI, with support and interventions that are graded to reflect the needs of different families

The review makes recommendations for the Department for Education, Department of Health and Social Care, Home Office and Public Health England to:

- develop shared tools and processes to support front-line professionals from all agencies in working with families with children at risk to promote safer sleeping as part of wider initiatives around infant safety, health and well-being
- work with the National Child Mortality Database to explore how data collected through child death reviews can be cross-checked against those collected through serious incident notifications
- embed learning from this review as part of the refresh of the high impact areas in the Healthy Child Programme and the specification for health visiting

The review also recommends that further practice-based research is undertaken to establish the efficacy of different interventions to reduce the risk of SUDI and into the use of behavioural insights and models of behaviour change. The panel is exploring options to commission this research and is interested in hearing from organisations to partner on this work.

The panel's annual report shows that babies are most at risk of serious harm and death from abuse and neglect. Therefore, it is undertaking a further in-depth review into the non-accidental injury of infants under one year old.

The [Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel](#) is an independent body that was set up to identify, commission and oversee reviews of serious child safeguarding cases. It brings together experts from social care, policing and health to provide a multi-agency view on cases which they believe raise issues that are complex, or of national importance.

The review examined 14 incidents of SUDI from 12 local areas that were representative of the 40 SUDI cases reported to the Panel between June 2018 and August 2019.

There were 4 parts to the review:

- fieldwork visits in the 12 local areas
- discussions with key professionals and experts in respect of SUDI
- a review of the research literature
- analysis of national child death review data 2018 to 2019

This was a qualitative study, based on interviews with practitioners and families, underpinned by factual details from each case.

Between 29 June 2018 and 30 June 2020, the panel received 757 rapid reviews relating to child abuse and neglect. Of these:

- 198 (26%) involved the death or serious harm of babies and young children due to non-accidental injury
- 62 (8%) involved the death of a child under one year old due to SUDI

Panel member, Dr Peter Sidebotham is available for interview on behalf of the panel. Please contact Amina Makele on 07889133791.

[New Homes England statistics show overall housing starts up in 2019-20, with a higher proportion of affordable homes](#)

- Proportion of affordable homes completed was up on the previous year.
- Overall starts were the highest since official starts were published in 2010-11, and completions the highest for five years.
- Homes for social rent were up by a 91 per cent increase on the previous 12 months, following the reintroduction of grant funding by the government.

Housing programmes delivered by Homes England saw an overall increase in starts and completions in 2019-20 compared to the previous year, according to [official statistics released today \(16 July\)](#).

Last year there were 47,965 new houses started on site and 40,452 houses completed between 1 April 2019 and 31 March 2020. Three-quarters (75 percent) of starts were for affordable homes, with the proportion up from two-thirds (67 per cent) from the previous year.

Homes England programmes are funded by central government to enable private registered providers, house builders, community groups and local authorities to deliver affordable housing.

Market starts – housing built for sale at market rates – were down by 21 per cent on the previous year. Fluctuations in the number of market starts and completions between periods reflects the nature of the programmes, with different types and sizes of sites starting at different times with varying build-out rates.

These latest figures show the highest overall level of starts since official figures were first published in 2009-10, and the highest overall level of completions for five years. Total starts for the previous year (2018-19) were 45,970 with 40,350 completions.

The drop in affordable completions is a result of delivery of different and overlapping funding streams. Delivery through the 2015-18 AHP is tapering off as allocations complete, while the launch of SOAHP 2016-21 is now seeing increasing delivery.

Overall completions are likely to be have been reduced by the impact of Covid-19 on housebuilding in March, when there has historically been an increased rate of completions very close to year end.

Of the starts on site, three-quarters (35,809 or 75%) were for affordable homes, a 17 per cent increase on 2018-19. These are the highest numbers of affordable home starts for ten years. Of the housing completions, 28,261 (70%) were for affordable homes, which is a 2 per cent decrease on 2018-19.

A total of 17,015 affordable homes started in 2019-20 were for Affordable Rent – down 4 per cent on the previous year. There were 11,656 starts under schemes including Shared Ownership and Rent to Buy – up 1 per cent on last year. There were 4,739 starts defined as “Affordable Tenure TBC” homes, where the ultimate tenure category is not known until completion (see note 4 below).

The remaining 2,399 were for Social Rent, a 91 per cent increase on the previous 12 months, following the reintroduction of Social Rent as an eligible tenure for grant funding by the government, which took effect in July 2018.

Of the affordable homes completed, 16,863 were for Affordable Rent – representing an 11 per cent decrease on the previous year, whereas the 9,920 completed under affordable housing schemes including Shared Ownership and Rent to Buy represent a 12 per cent increase on 2018-19. There were 1,478 Social Rent completions, up 49 per cent on the previous year.

Housing Minister Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP said:

“We are determined to ensure all have access to good quality housing and building green, well-designed homes is at the heart of this Government’s mission to support people in every part of the country.

“These figures show Homes England starting the highest number of affordable homes in a decade and a doubling of new social rent homes, meaning many thousands of jobs have been supported too.

“And more homes will be coming as we invest £12 billion to deliver up to 180,000 new affordable homes for families across the land.”

Simon Dudley, Interim Chair of Homes England, said:

“We are pleased to see that the proportion of affordable homes increased significantly last year, and that increased government funding has led to a big increase in the social rent start figures.

“We don’t know the precise impact of the lockdown on completions last year, but we do know Covid-19 is having a major impact on the housing sector and the wider economy in the current year. So it has been really encouraging to see work on site starting to pick up again.

“We welcome the Prime Minister’s recent commitment to building more homes and the additional £450m secured for the Home Building Fund underlines our determination to support SMEs.”

Summary table

HOUSING STARTS	2019-20	2018-19	Variance	% Variance
Affordable Rent	17,015	17,772	-757	-4%
Social Rent	2,399	1,255	1,144	91%
Intermediate Affordable Housing	11,656	11,540	116	1%
Affordable Tenure TBC	4,739
Total Affordable Housing Starts	35,809	30,567	5,242	17%
Market	12,156	15,403	-3,247	-21%
Total Housing Starts	47,965	45,970	1,995	4%
HOUSING COMPLETIONS	2019-20	2018-19	Variance	% Variance
Affordable Rent	16,863	18,889	-2,026	-11%
Social Rent	1,478	995	483	49%
Intermediate Affordable Housing	9,920	8,842	1,078	12%
Total Affordable Housing Comps	28,261	28,726	-465	-2%
Market	12,191	11,624	567	5%
Total Housing Completions	40,452	40,350	102	0.25%

Notes to editors

National housing statistics are published twice a year showing half and full year starts and completions as part of planned national statistical releases. The next release is half-year starts and completions, which are due to be published in November/December. Housing figures cannot be provided outside of these official releases.

This release presents the housing starts on site and housing completions delivered by Homes England between 1 April 2009 and 31 March 2020 in England excluding London (for both the current and historical series) with the

exception of the Build to Rent (BTR), Builders Finance Fund, Get Britain Building and The Home Building Fund – Short Term Fund (HBF – STF) programmes which are administered by Homes England on behalf of the Greater London Authority (GLA) and where delivery covers all of England including London.

Since April 2012, the Mayor of London has had oversight of strategic housing, regeneration and economic development in London.

“Affordable Tenure TBC” refers to units that have reached the start on site milestone but where the tenure of these units has not yet been specified. This was introduced as a flexibility for Strategic Partnerships to enable them to determine tenure close to or at the point of completion. These starts will be restated under their specified tenure headings in future national statistics updates once the tenure has been established at completion.

The list of programmes included in these totals are detailed in the official housing statistics report, which can be found [here](#)

Homes England also manages the Help to Buy equity loan scheme in England (including in London on behalf of the GLA). However, the completions are reported by the Department for Communities and Local Government and, therefore, are excluded from these statistics.