

# ESFA to require reduction in subcontracted activity and introduce a new subcontracting standard, following sector consultation

ESFA, as part of new measures, will implement a subcontracting standard and reduce, significantly, the volume of subcontracted activity in the sector.

We will also apply a cap on the volume of subcontracting and will take forward work this academic year to establish the right threshold for that cap and timescales for a staged reduction. All providers' Corporations and Boards who choose to subcontract will have to publish a curriculum rationale for their limited subcontracted activity.

The new measures are being introduced gradually, following a sector wide ESFA [consultation](#) launched earlier this year, to improve the management and oversight of the limited, but necessary, future subcontracting arrangements entered into.

Before the consultation launched, ESFA's chief executive, Eileen Milner [wrote](#) to the sector highlighting concerns about the continued rise in cases of fraud linked to subcontracting arrangements managed by ESFA lead providers despite ESFA's tightening of subcontractor arrangements.

The consultation received over 400 responses, with a large proportion from independent training providers. The majority of proposals were supported, including the requirement for a clear curriculum rationale; control of the volume and value of provision delivered by subcontractors; simplifying third party arrangements with specialist providers such as sport; rationalising funding rules; requiring the publication of fees and charges across all funding streams; and the introduction of an externally validated standard.

## **Eileen Milner said:**

I have been clear that the current arrangements in place for subcontracting were not going far enough from an agency, accounting officer and sector perspective.

We must all be satisfied that public money is being managed properly.

The changes ESFA is introducing will strengthen oversight by lead providers and give confidence that the limited subcontracting that is necessary in the future evidentially and defensibly meets the needs of specific learners or employer, is of good quality and is managed responsibly by the lead provider.

We will work with the sector to test and implement these changes gradually to ensure that the outcome for learners is central.

ESFA will develop the new subcontracting standard through 2020/21, will trial it in 2021/22 and fully implement, once externally validated by audit firms, in 2022/23.

Other areas that will change include:

- placing restrictions and limits on types of subcontracting that have been identified as higher risk
- acting on the use of brokers to 'sell on' provision to subcontractors
- improving, across ESFA, the use of the data and audit returns to identify and act on risks

Although the implementation of these reforms will begin in time for the next academic year, the changes will be brought in over the next three years, to allow for a period of adjustment.

The changes will also need to align to plans for the reform of further education and adapt as necessary.

We will be setting out the detail of these reforms later this year.

You can read the full consultation response on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

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## **[UN Human Rights Council 44: interactive dialogue on the situation of human rights of Rohingya people](#)**

Thank you, Madam President.

Thank you, High Commissioner for your update. The systematic discrimination facing the Rohingya in Myanmar prevents them from living safe and dignified lives.

The UK is deeply concerned by the restrictions Rohingya face on their freedom of movement. In recent months restrictions have increased. Noting that Covid-19 creates legitimate, albeit limited, reasons for restrictions, these are disproportionately affecting Rohingya. Systematic barriers to movement prevent most from accessing adequate healthcare. Bureaucratic processes frequently delay their access to medical care causing lasting harm or death.

We welcome Myanmar's commitment to complying with the ICJ's provisional measures, and we call on the Government to demonstrate that by significantly

easing restrictions, reforming documentation and permission requirements in line with recommendations 18-23 of the Rakhine Advisory Commission and recommendation 16 of the Independent Commission of Enquiry.

The UK welcomes the valuable work of the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar in collecting evidence of the most serious international crimes and violations of international law. The Government of Myanmar must cooperate with its mandate. Accountability for atrocities is essential for Myanmar to move towards peace and stability.

High Commissioner,

What concrete steps should Myanmar take to ensure Rohingya have freedom of movement and equitable access to healthcare, education and livelihoods?

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## [Environment Secretary speech at the COP26 Business Leaders Event](#)

It's a real pleasure to be at this conference today and I wanted to begin by commending the fantastic work of the Council for Sustainable Business. This is an incredibly forward thinking group of companies and you're the early adopters of so many new ways of approaching sustainable business that we can all learn from.

Whether that is water companies who are contributing to peatland restoration, or whether it's some of those fantastic examples we heard of earlier of companies taking individual actions to reduce their carbon footprint. Or whether it's food companies paying special attention to due diligence in their supply chain to prevent deforestation.

I think it's crucial as we start to consider how we can deliver green recovery in the wake of the coronavirus, that we learn from some of the examples you have illustrated today because the coronavirus has brought into sharp focus the importance of our relationship with nature.

Like most new diseases, it's a disease that probably originates from animals – in common with HIV or Ebola – and it's thought to have originated from wet markets; probably from a bat, possibly from a pangolin. It's illustrated again the importance of our relationship with nature and the importance of treating nature with respect, and that the loss of biodiversity and climate change are two sides of the same coin.

It is climate change that is sadly driving the loss of much of our nature and much of our biodiversity. It is climate change that is contributing most to the extinction of species. And yet it is also the case that nature and biodiversity – and the rich biodiversity we contain within our nature can

give life itself, resilience, it enables life to adapt and to evolve – got a very important role to play in contributing to the fight against climate change.

And we're very interested at the moment in driving forward some of the nature based solutions and the role that they can have in tackling climate change and in restoring biodiversity – whether that is a massive expansion of tree planting, both in our farm environment and in some of our upland areas to peatland restoration, which can be a major source of carbon capture, to a new emphasis in our agriculture policy on soil health and the biodiversity that can be contained within that.

Nature has so many of these solutions that can contribute to our battle against climate change and this is a very important year for Defra. We currently have three flagship bills that are making their way through parliament.

We have an Agriculture Bill that puts nature at the heart of our future agriculture policy.

We have a new emphasis on sustainable farming, a new emphasis on nature and allowing habitats to recover and on animal health and animal welfare.

There's a new Fisheries Bill. As well as giving us control of our own waters, it also gives us the power to set the terms of access to our waters, including on the environment. It's a bill that creates some incredibly important environmental objectives, including both on sustainable fishing and climate change.

And finally and by no means least because it is the largest bill by some way: Of course the Environment Bill which sets out an entirely new guidance framework, a new set of targets on areas such as water quality, air quality, biodiversity and waste resource management and introduces new concepts such as biodiversity net gain.

There's also a very important international agenda here, too.

We've had a very good report back from the Global Resources Initiative which was led by Sir Ian Cheshire.

For me, once you've lost ancient woodland, that contributes so much to the health and quality of our environment and is such an important carbon, you will never replace that.

It would take thousands of years to replace it and that is why it is so important that we protect those vitally important forests that we have, the lungs of the world. And that is why I am very interested in doing more to introduce due diligence into the supply chain so that companies really take absolute care of their supply chain and make sure that they are not sourcing products that are contributing to deforestation. We are looking very closely at this report and we are going to be able to say more later this year.

And finally of course next year is going to be a very important year with the

delayed COP 26.

We're working very hard on developing this agenda.

We want nature-based solutions to become an important part of that agenda and that is why so much of what you have been discussing today – some of those fantastic examples of individual companies taking action that I heard about earlier, and of course an appeal to all of you to think about what you might be able to do for next year at COP 26 – is so important.

Because we want to be able to demonstrate the UK is taking a lead in all of these areas both through government with the legislation we're introducing in steps, taking the powers that we now have, but also that British businesses are stepping up to the plate as well and playing their part.

So thank you once again and I look forward to hearing the rest of the conference.

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## **PM: A New Deal for Britain**

This week the Prime Minister has set out the first steps in the strategy to rebuild Britain and fuel economic recovery across the UK.

This government is committed not just to defeating coronavirus but to using this crisis to tackle this country's great unresolved challenges of the last three decades.

To build the homes, to fix the NHS, to tackle the skills crisis, to mend the gap in opportunity and productivity and connectivity between the regions of the UK, to unite and level up.

The government will build back better, build back greener, build back faster.

We will invest in and accelerate infrastructure across the UK; promote a clean, green recovery; reform our planning system; and strengthen the Union and local government.

All of these changes will make life better for the people of this great country and unleash Britain's potential.

The Chancellor will unveil more of this plan next week, and we will use the forthcoming Spending Review and Autumn Budget to set the direction for the rest of this parliament.

### **Investing in and accelerating infrastructure**

The government is committed to building a Britain with world class infrastructure. Spring Budget 2020 set out that the public sector will invest

£640bn over five years in our future prosperity.

We are redoubling our efforts to get on with this now, in support of economic recovery and jobs right across the country by bringing forward £5bn of capital investment projects, supporting jobs and the economic recovery, including:

- £1.5bn this year for hospital maintenance, eradicating mental health dormitories, enabling hospital building, and improving A&E capacity. This will improve patient care, make sure NHS hospitals can deliver world-leading services and reduce the risk of coronavirus infections.
- £100m this year for 29 projects to improve our road network to get Britain moving, from bridge repairs in Sandwell to boosting the quality of the A15 in the Humber region. Plus £10m for development work to unblock the Manchester rail bottleneck, which will begin this year.
- Over £1bn to fund the first 50 projects of a new, ten-year school rebuilding programme, starting from 2020-21. These projects will be confirmed in the autumn, and construction on the first sites will begin from September 2021.
- £560m and £200m for repairs and upgrades to schools and FE colleges respectively this year.
- £142m for digital upgrades and maintenance to around 100 courts this year, £83m for maintenance of prisons and youth offender facilities, and £60m for temporary prison places, creating thousands of new jobs.
- £900m for a range of 'shovel ready' local growth projects in England over the course of this year and next. This will enable local areas to invest in priority infrastructure projects to drive local growth and jobs. This could include the development and regeneration of key local sites, investment to improve transport and digital connectivity, and innovation and technology centres to build on local comparative advantage
- £96m to accelerate investment in town centres and high streets through the Towns Fund this year. This will provide all 101 towns selected for town deals with £500k-£1m to spend on projects such as improvements to parks, high streets, and transport.

We will establish a new Infrastructure Delivery Taskforce, named 'Project Speed'.

- Led by the Chancellor, Project Speed will bring forward proposals to deliver government's public investment projects more strategically and efficiently. This will ensure we are building the right things better and faster than before.
- The taskforce will aim to cut down the time it takes to develop, design and deliver vital infrastructure projects. For example, it will look at how it can address outdated practices and identify blocks to progress.
- Projects will include the 40 new hospitals the government has committed to build and the school rebuilding programme announced yesterday.

In the Autumn, the government will also publish a National Infrastructure Strategy which will set a clear direction on core economic infrastructure, including energy networks, road and rail, flood defences and waste.

The Government also intends to bring forward funding to accelerate infrastructure projects in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland – working with the devolved administrations to identify where we can get spades in the ground, build our communities, and create jobs faster for citizens across the United Kingdom. We will also carry out a review to look at how best to improve road, rail, air and sea links between our four nations to create a more connected kingdom.

Through the Barnett formula, the UK Government has already given the Scottish Government £5.4bn, the Welsh Government £2.4bn, and the Northern Ireland Executive £1.7bn in capital funding for devolved areas this financial year. We would encourage them to accelerate infrastructure projects in the same way that the UK Government is doing.

## **Promoting a clean, green recovery**

The UK was the first major economy to commit to net zero emissions by 2050 in law. We already have a proven track record of cutting emissions while growing the economy, with over 460,000 UK jobs in low-carbon businesses and their supply chains.

We will continue to build on this even further and deliver a stronger, cleaner, more sustainable economy after this pandemic.

The Government will continue to set out further measures as part of its green agenda in the run up to COP26 in November 2021.

### Transport:

- We are making additional funding available this year to attract investment in 'gigafactories', which mass produce batteries and other electric vehicle components, enabling the UK to lead on the next generation of automotive technologies.
- £10m of funding will be made available immediately for the first wave of innovative R&D projects to scale-up manufacturing of the latest technology in batteries, motors, electronics and fuel cells.
- Additional funding will also allow us to progress initial site planning and preparation for manufacturing plants and industry clusters, with sites under consideration across the UK.
- This funding forms part of our commitment to spend up to £1bn to attract investment in electric vehicle supply chains and R&D to the UK.
- And this comes on top of the over £1bn we provided at Budget to support the rollout of ultra-low emission vehicles in the UK via support for a super-fast charging network for electric vehicles, and extension of the Plug-In Grant schemes.
- The UK will also aim to produce the world's first zero emission long haul passenger aircraft.

### Rebuilding our natural infrastructure:

- Re-forestation Britain by planting 75,000 acres of trees every year by 2025.

- £40m Green Recovery Challenge Fund to help halt biodiversity loss and tackle climate change through local conservation projects, connecting more people to the outdoors by delivering up to 5,000 jobs.

Innovation:

- Up to £100m of new funding for research and develop a brand new clean technology, Direct Air Capture (DAC), which captures CO2 emissions directly from the air around us. If successful, DAC technology could be deployed across the country to remove carbon from the air, helping sectors where it's tough to decarbonise such as aviation.
- To help bring forward this technology, the government is exploring options around carbon pricing and incentives, where the government may pay a price per tonne of CO2 captured.

## **Reforming our planning system**

We will make it easier to build better homes where people want to live.

New regulations will give greater freedom for buildings and land in our town centres to change use without planning permission and create new homes from the regeneration of vacant and redundant buildings.

Under the new rules, existing commercial properties, including newly vacant shops, can be converted into residential housing more easily, in a move to kick start the construction industry and speed up rebuilding.

The changes include:

- More types of commercial premises having total flexibility to be repurposed through reform of the Use Classes Order. A building used for retail, for instance, would be able to be permanently used as a café or office without requiring a planning application and local authority approval. Pubs, libraries, village shops and other types of uses essential to the lifeblood of communities will not be covered by these flexibilities
- A wider range of commercial buildings will be allowed to change to residential use without the need for a planning application
- Builders will no longer need a normal planning application to demolish and rebuild vacant and redundant residential and commercial buildings if they are rebuilt as homes
- Property owners will be able to build additional space above their properties via a fast track approval process, subject to neighbour consultation.
- These changes, which are planned to come into effect by September, will both support the high street revival by allowing empty commercial properties to be quickly repurposed and reduce the pressure to build on green fields land by making brownfield development easier.

The Prime Minister also announced that work will begin to look at how land owned by the government can be managed more effectively.



Ahead of the Spending Review, a new, ambitious cross-government strategy look at how public sector land can be managed and released so it can be put to better use.

This would include home building, improving the environment, contributing to net zero goals and injecting growth opportunities into communities across the country.

These announcements come alongside a package of measures to support home building across England, including:

- A £12bn affordable homes programme that will support up to 180,000 new affordable homes for ownership and rent over the next 8 years, confirmed today.
- Included in the affordable homes programme will be a 1,500 unit pilot of 'First Homes': houses that will be sold to first time buyers at a 30% discount which will remain in perpetuity, keeping them affordable for generations of families to own.
- Funds from the £400m Brownfield Land Fund have today been allocated to the West Midland, Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire, Liverpool City Region, Sheffield City Region, North of Tyne and Tees Valley to support around 24,000 homes.
- The Home Building Fund to help smaller developers access finance for new housing developments will receive additional £450m boost. This is expected to support delivery of around 7,200 new homes.

The government will launch a Policy Paper in July setting out our plan for comprehensive reform of England's seven-decade old planning system, to introduce a new approach that works better for our modern economy and society.

## **Strengthening the Union**

- We will take steps to guarantee and enhance our internal market and find new ways to invest in Scotland, Wales, England and NI and focus on "levelling up" our whole country.
- As above, the Government also intends to bring forward funding to accelerate infrastructure projects in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland – working with the devolved administrations to identify where we can get spades in the ground, build our communities, and create jobs faster for citizens across the United Kingdom.
- The Spending review will create a multi-year, UK-wide Shared Prosperity Fund which will support which will support local economic recovery by driving economic growth and tackling deprivation.
- We will carry out a review to look at how best to improve road, rail, air and sea links between all parts of the UK to create a more connected

kingdom.

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## Major investment in small businesses through justice system improvements

- extra £285 million spending on courts and prisons will go to local businesses
- funding boost will create thousands of jobs and sustain thousands more
- improvements will help speed up justice and reduce reoffending

The funding comes on top of an estimated £600 million already earmarked for capital projects this year, including the construction of 2 new prisons.

With courts and prisons spread across England and Wales, this funding boost will create and sustain thousands of jobs nationwide in the construction and digital industries and related sectors.

Over £140 million will be spent installing temporary prison cells, repairing and refurbishing prisons, approved premises and young offender institutions, and improving IT in jail.

A further £142 million will be pumped into the courts system to speed up technological improvements and modernise courtrooms, building on the rapid progress made to keep the system running during the coronavirus pandemic. Combined with the £48 million already set aside this year, there will be £153 million for improvements to court and tribunal buildings – the biggest single investment in maintenance of the court estate for over 20 years.

The investment will end up in the hands of hundreds of small and medium-sized businesses, their suppliers and, ultimately, in the pay packets of tens of thousands of people across the country.

The Lord Chancellor, Robert Buckland QC MP, said:

We have already launched the most ambitious prison building programme for generations, delivering over 13,000 places by the mid-2020s, and have dramatically increased the use of technology in the courts system.

This extra spending will keep thousands of people in work and generate jobs for thousands more, helping the UK recover from the economic freeze brought on by coronavirus.

These improvements will also help to speed up justice through the courts and improve education in prisons and youth custody so that offenders leave less likely to reoffend.

One thousand temporary cells will be installed to increase capacity and help speed up maintenance work, allowing the Prison Service to close wings at other prisons for refurbishment. Sixty million pounds of funding will go towards the UK-based small and medium companies which produce this specialist accommodation.

A further £40 million will be spent on repairs outside the prison gate generating immediate employment for local maintenance companies across England and Wales. The former HMP Camphill site on the Isle of Wight will be demolished so the area can be regenerated with new housing and former aircraft hangars near prisons on the Isle of Sheppey in Kent will be restored to safeguard these historically important buildings.

Over 100 courts will see improvements as part of the extra investment, with at least 2,250 jobs created in the process nationwide. A further £30 million will be spent to give 750 more court rooms the ability to hold remote hearings within six months. Around £10 million extra will be spent building new court facilities and £95 million on maintenance this year, on top of the £48 million already planned.

This includes courts such as Wrexham, Hull, and Leeds which will benefit from new court cells, court rooms, and improved accessibility as part of this investment. Maintenance at over 100 courts will see buildings across the country refurbished and become more energy efficient.

An extra £20 million will be spent improving IT in prisons so that more court and parole hearings can be heard remotely via video conference suites. The funding will also go towards technology which improves prisoners' digital literacy and education so that they are better able to find work on release and move away from criminal behaviour.

Some £10 million has been set aside to refurbish the youth custody estate, installing in-room showers, improving existing and building new education facilities and to roll out secure in-room learning technology. The projects will help rehabilitate young offenders, while providing millions of pounds of contracts to businesses in Yorkshire, the West Midlands and the South East where these establishments are based.

Approved Premises – which are used by the Probation Service to monitor high-risk offenders recently released from prison – will see £10 million worth of building and security improvements, including upgrading CCTV and alarm systems.