

Millions invested to support vulnerable people navigating legal issues

- £12 million to help vulnerable people struggling with legal problems
- focus on early intervention to resolve issues before going to court
- 33,000 supported since October 2020

The funding will be awarded to charities and organisations providing support for people facing disputes – helping them to better understand their issues and avoid costly court proceedings.

More than 33,000 people have been supported by organisations receiving similar government grants since October 2020 and nearly two-thirds of cases were resolved before reaching court.

Justice Minister Lord Bellamy said:

Those who most need support should be able to access it quickly and easily, which is why we're increasing funding for organisations providing this vital service.

Early intervention helps prevent people from undergoing lengthy court proceedings – saving time, money and unnecessary stress.

It adds to more than £5 million of investment this year, including a £1 million cost-of-living grant, to help organisations respond to increasing demand for free legal advice. Specialist guidance is offered in person, by telephone or online, to help deal with problems before they escalate or to support those who need to appear in court.

The grant will replace the current Help Accessing Legal Support grant worth £3.2 million which is due to end in June 2023.

The funding benefits people in difficult situations including Helen (not her real name), who was supported by an organisation funded by the grant after leaving an abusive relationship. She continued to suffer harassment from her ex-partner and contacted her local free advice charity who provided guidance on navigating family court proceedings. Helen was able to secure protective court orders aimed at restricting her ex-partner's access to the family home and preventing violent behaviour against her and her daughter.

Helen said:

[The advisor] gave me sound legal advice to help me make choices to keep me safe and get my house back.

If I had not had access to the [advice] it is quite likely that I may have not had the courage or the understanding to go to court to seek these orders, or even worse, that I would have returned to an abusive and volatile relationship as I would not have had any other option.

This legal support is provided by organisations across the country, using the funding where it is needed.

Cara Walker, Mobile Legal Adviser at Norfolk Community Law Service, said:

Providing outreach legal help to people is vital in a large rural county like Norfolk. The Ministry of Justice funding enables me to work with clients on a long term basis in community settings, who have a range of complex legal problems-including welfare benefits, domestic abuse and immigration.

Cathy Ashley, Chief Executive of Family Rights Group, said:

Our Advice and Advocacy Service provides social care and legal expertise to families, including parents whose children are in need or subject to child protection enquiries and relatives raising children who cannot live at home.

The Help Accessing Legal Support Grant is funding our new webchat service for families and is enabling us to provide more intensive support to callers to our advice line, allowing more children to live safely and thrive within their families and safely averting them entering a care system already in crisis.

Further information on how charities and organisations can bid for the funding will be made available shortly.

[A Night of Rhapsody with HSBC, British Embassy, British Council](#)

British-rooted international bank HSBC Philippines together with British Embassy Manila and British Council Philippines brought guests to the final weekend performance of the hit musical “We Will Rock You” at the new state of the art Samsung Performing Arts Theater in the Philippines.

“At HSBC, we value the importance of partnerships that leverage on our global

connectivity to bring international opportunities and experiences to our retail and corporate customers in the Philippines. Together with our partners, we are excited to showcase the best of Britain more so given the growing linkages between the two countries,” shared Sandeep Uppal, President and CEO of HSBC Philippines.

Guests had an exclusive pass to touch, feel, taste and hear everything British, as they celebrated with HSBC Philippines, British Embassy Manila and British Council Philippines this entertaining passage of an unforgettable recreation of what makes Britain great in the eyes of the world. The British experience included interactive photo nooks that featured the famous landmarks and icons such as the Big Ben, London Bridge, Westminster St. subway, tasted a British inspired menu and saw a display of the British brands.

“I’m delighted that the British Embassy was able to partner with HSBC to put on ‘A Night of Rhapsody’ – a great celebration of British culture, music and theatre. There’s no better way than Rock and Roll Diplomacy to break down barriers and show our friends in the Philippines what British talent and creativity is all about,” said His Majesty’s Ambassador to the Philippines Laure Beaufils.

“I’m very grateful to all the artists and staff behind ‘We Will Rock You’ for making this happen and allowing us to take part in their adventure, and I’m very grateful to HSBC for their friendship and collaboration. I look forward to many more opportunities to share the best of British culture and to show the world that the UK is fun, modern, and engaging.”

There was also an exclusive opportunity for guests to meet Sam Sewell, associate producer of the “We Will Rock You” musical. Select guests also had a chance to go on a backstage tour and photo opportunity with the cast.

“With music, singing and dancing being a core part of the Filipino culture, we hope we were able to bridge this passion to life with a British flavor through the hit musical “We Will Rock You,” shared Peter Faulhaber, Head of Wealth and Personal Banking, HSBC Philippines.

[Co-chair appointed to BSL Board advising Government on key issues for Deaf people](#)

- Minister for Disabled People, Tom Pursglove, announces the appointment of Craig Crowley MBE FRSA as co-chair of the BSL Advisory Board
- Mr Crowley is the CEO of Action Deafness, a Deaf-led charity providing

BSL interpreting and community support

- Board's launch follows BSL Act recognising BSL as a language in England, Scotland and Wales, which approximately 151,000 people in the UK use

Mr Crowley is the CEO of Action Deafness, a Deaf-led charity providing BSL interpreting and community support. He has worked tirelessly in several key roles to support Deaf people. As a past Chair of the UK Council on Deafness, Crowley has also been a key figure in the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Deafness, advocating for improved access to BSL in public services.

Recognising BSL as a language in England, Scotland and Wales for the first time, the BSL Act 2022 will make a considerable difference to Deaf BSL signers across the country. The new Board will provide personal and expert advice to the government on the implementation of the Act.

Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work, Tom Pursglove MP, said:

"The British Sign Language Act is a key step to removing some of the barriers experienced by Deaf people in everyday life.

"The BSL Board will ensure we are guided and advised by those who know best how to make these important changes. I am delighted to announce Craig's appointment and look forward to working with him to create a more inclusive, accessible, and fair society for everyone."

The Board's remit will be:

- advising on the use of BSL in public communications and policy delivery
- advising on how to tackle key issues facing Deaf people, such as how to increase the numbers of BSL interpreters

A senior civil servant will serve as the other co-chair. The Board membership will comprise of at least 16 members plus the co-chairs, with a majority of Deaf BSL signers. Membership will also include Deafblind people and/or those who use tactile sign.

The main criteria for appointment for all independent members will include a lived experience of BSL, alongside a willingness to work collaboratively in assisting the government to be more accessible.

ENDS

Further information:

[BSL version of press notice](#)

Members of the Board will be appointed soon.

Biography for Craig Crowley MBE FRSA

Craig Crowley is CEO of Action Deafness, a Deaf-led charity providing BSL interpreting and community support. He was founder Chair and Honorary President of UK Deaf Sport and obtained an MBE in 2006 in recognition of his

service to Deaf Sport. He has also been a former Trustee of Signature and founding Trustee of the National Register of Communication Professionals working with Deaf People.

Mr Crowley currently serves as a Trustee for the Royal School for the Deaf, Derby.

As a former Chair of the UK Council on Deafness, Mr Crowley was a key figure in the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Deafness, advocating for improved access to BSL in public services and greater equity regarding Access to Work funding.

He has pioneered partnerships amongst local Deaf charities to assist in the development of new services. These collaborations have benefitted the Deaf community and provided financial sustainability for key organisations.

Minister Anne-Marie Trevelyan addresses National Press Club of Australia

Thank-you Andrew. Good afternoon everyone.

I want to acknowledge the traditional owners of the land, the Ngunnawal people, and pay respect to elders past and present.

Thank-you also to the National Press Club for giving me the privilege to speak with you today.

I understand every Australian Prime Minister and Opposition leader for the last 40 years has addressed the National Press Club – so –

I am delighted to be in such great company.

In this job, you learn to never pick a fight with people who buy ink by the barrel and I'm looking at all of you.

However, I hope the journalists in the room today will indulge me in highlighting a recent piece in The Australian.

The article asked if the UK would have the "strategic bandwidth" to focus on the Indo-Pacific, in the light of our immense support for Ukraine.

It is a fair challenge. And one that I want to address head-on.

As the UK's newly appointed Minister for the Indo-Pacific, my answer is that we cannot afford to do anything other than focus on this region.

It is home to half the world's people, and half of projected global growth.

It will have a huge hand to play in the global economy for decades and centuries to come. Particularly through rules-setting alliances such as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

It is a glittering hub of innovation, full of natural partners for British scientists, researchers and tech developers.

With the right policies and support, the high growth economies of the Indo Pacific can help lead the world to net zero.

And with 60% of global shipping passing through the region – security and stability here, has a direct impact in British homes and on British businesses.

In short, this region is critical to the UK – to our economy, our security and to the international rules based system, that both our countries cherish.

Which is why last year, when the UK Government set out our strategic direction for the next decade in our Integrated Review, we committed to pursuing deeper engagement and building stronger relationships and partnerships through an “Indo-Pacific Tilt”. This approach is one which our new Prime Minister is absolutely committed to.

Australia is of course one of our closest and most like-minded partners in the region.

In fact I think there are few countries in the world that enjoy such strong historical, political and cultural bonds as we do together

From the dark days of the Second World War to our joint fight against ISIS, we have stood side-by-side, in defence of our shared values and interests. [AUKUS](#) is perhaps a continuation of that tradition.

So when it comes to our Indo-Pacific Tilt, Australia is very much a magnetic force for us.

A reliable partner, whose counsel and judgement we respect.

Over the last couple of years we have been working to cement our Indo Pacific ‘Tilt’ through new agreements, stronger relationships and new institutional bonds.

This demonstrates that we do have the “strategic bandwidth” to focus on the Indo-Pacific, and to continue our support to Ukraine.

I will say more about those ties in a minute, but first I want to reflect on Ukraine.

Russia's assault on Ukraine is illegal and unjustifiable. And it simply cannot be allowed to succeed.

If we allow Russia to violate another country's sovereignty and territorial integrity, every single international border becomes less secure.

President Putin underestimated the resolve of Ukrainians.

The UK alongside Australia and our international partners, stand united against the Russian government's egregious violation of international law and the UN Charter.

In January up to 70 Australian Defence Force personnel will deploy to the UK to help provide training to Ukrainian soldiers.

The UK's total package of military, humanitarian and economic support for Ukraine amounts to nearly £4 billion since the start of the invasion.

We have issued nearly 200,000 visas to enable Ukrainians to find safety in the UK.

That's a commitment of over 7 billion Australian dollars, and the equivalent of relocating the population of Townsville to our shores.

To echo Foreign Secretary James Cleverly, Euro-Atlantic and Indo-Pacific economies and security are indivisible.

Staunch cooperation and prosperous futures are built on so much more than geography.

We are in an era of borderless challenges and competition for knowledge, ideas and global resources.

So influence over energy, critical minerals, alongside innovation and technology, are just as likely to define how states interact and prosper.

Of course we cannot talk about the Indo-Pacific region, without considering the role of China.

The UK will always stand side-by-side with our international partners and allies, and this includes in how we respond to China.

It is important to have dialogue and maintain engagement and bilateral trade with China, a global actor and driver of growth. But China poses a systemic challenge to our shared values and interests when it departs from global rules and norms, and when it aligns itself with aggressive countries like Russia.

Alongside our partners, the UK believes in a free and open Indo-Pacific.

So, I want to reassure you that the UK Government will always stand up for our sovereignty and economic security – and that of our partners.

Let me give you a brief glimpse into the partnerships we've been building right across the Indo Pacific in three broad areas: security and defence; resilience and tackling climate change; and trade and investment.

First, our historic [AUKUS agreement](#) reflects the unique trust between the UK, US and Australia. It reflects our shared values, and our joint commitment to Indo-Pacific security.

We have made good progress on the deal, entering the final stretch of an eighteen-month feasibility study to deliver nuclear-powered submarine capability for Australia.

The UK and Australia share a long and proud history of naval cooperation. But AUKUS will be more than just this important generation of submarines for the Australian Navy.

Our collaboration on cutting edge defence technology will give our countries a competitive edge, ensuring our people are kept safe from harm and enhancing our ability to achieve shared goals, including promoting security and stability in the Indo-Pacific.

Second, the UK has increased our defence presence in the whole region.

Last year our Carrier Strike Group toured the region engaging with over 40 countries.

Our offshore patrol vessels HMS Spey and HMS Tamar are now stationed in the Indo-Pacific to be able to work with key allies and partners consistently and to build closer relationships and understanding.

HMS Tamar is one of the Royal Navy's newest and greenest ships, and she recently visited Darwin.

HMS Astute, first of her class and one of the most advanced nuclear submarines in the world, docked in Perth last year.

Our maritime partnerships are about promoting the international rules based system, and the fundamental right under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, for maritime vessels to move freely in international waters.

Third, we are working with partners to build their capacity to tackle threats to regional stability.

From illegal and unregulated fishing, to defending maritime law, to tackling serious and organised crime.

We can overcome these challenges by working with allies and partners, listening and responding to regional concerns is at the very heart of our approach.

Listening to the region, and working in partnership, is also central to our approach to building resilience, particularly to climate change.

I have just come from the [12th Conference of the Pacific Community](#) in Vanuatu.

I met with Vanuatu's Prime Minister Ishmael Kalsakau, and Minister of Foreign

Affairs Jotham Napat, and learnt about their priorities of their recently-elected government.

They were very clear that Vanuatu is on the front line of the climate emergency.

So we will be working even more closely with them and with other partners to accelerate global action on climate change. Good intentions aren't enough, action and better finance flow to these most vulnerable communities is now imperative.

The UK is also supporting the delivery of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent, which sets out Pacific countries' vision for a cleaner, safer and more resilient future.

Following the UK's Presidency of COP 26, 90% of the global economy is now committed to net zero, covering 88% of global emissions.

And 90% of the world's forests are now protected under the Glasgow Leaders Declaration for Forests and Land Use.

But keeping the world to a 1.5 degree pathway is the challenge of our time. As Alok Shama said at Sharm El Sheik, just a couple of weeks ago it is really hanging by a thread right now. We can see this in the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Synthesis Report and in Australia's State of the Climate Report released last week.

I am pleased Australia has legislated for a new emissions target of 43% by 2030, and net zero by 2050.

And we welcome Australia's ambition to host COP 31 alongside Pacific partners.

The changes we need to make to our infrastructure and economies are a challenge. But the opportunities on the horizon in the green and clean economy are immense.

In the UK we now have 43% of electricity from renewable sources. We are a global leader in off-shore wind, and we will continue to work with Australia and countries in the region on their own transitions.

I am also delighted to announce a new development a little closer to here in Canberra.

The British High Commission building will soon be home to our new Pacific Development Unit, which will help us deliver even more support for those nations suffering the harmful impacts of climate change.

The third sector of cooperation I will touch upon is trade and investment.

As the former Trade Secretary, I was committed to building the exchange of ideas and technology that we share with Australia.

Last year, we launched the Space Bridge, a new partnership to increase trade, investment, research and collaboration between our space sectors.

The UK is building similar win-win partnerships with economies and sectors across the region.

We gained ASEAN Dialogue Partner status last year, and agreed a Plan of Action over the summer, recognising the importance of ASEAN centrality to maintaining peace and prosperity across the region.

We were the first European country to secure a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with India.

And we intend to be the first European country to accede to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership.

For the UK, the benefits of membership speak for themselves: access to a high standards, free trade area worth over 16 trillion Australian Dollars a year.

And a potential market of half a billion customers in some of the fastest growing economies on the planet.

But this isn't just about benefits for the UK.

In the CPTPP we will be staunch friends to Australia.

We will be an unequivocal advocate for high standards and greater collaboration on priorities like developing our green and digital economies, and making our supply chains more resilient.

As many of you may know we are finalising the enabling legislation in the UK Parliament for our bilateral free-trade deal with Australia.

As an MP for a rural constituency, I know from sheep farmers in the North East of England that there are strong views on both sides.

But as I tell them, we have achieved a modern, world class, comprehensive deal that is good for the UK and good for Australia.

It won't just end tariffs on goods, and slash red tape for businesses, it will open up opportunities for our citizens to live and work in each other's countries.

There's a golden rule in story-telling, show don't tell.

But I hear you say – that's rich coming from me as I've just spent the last 15 minutes telling you about the UK's commitment to the Indo-Pacific!

So I'll close by showing you what we are doing

I am here, in the region. Our ships are here. Our people are here. Our High Commissions and Consuls across Australia and the Indo-Pacific are here – including six missions across the Pacific Islands, three of which we have opened in the last three years – in Vanuatu, Samoa and Tonga.

We are building science, trade and defence partnerships with Australia and our partners across the Indo-Pacific.

We are global Britain, and you are modern Australia.

We celebrate what our countries have already achieved together, and we look ahead to facing the challenges that come together.

Thank you.

Government joins with households to help millions reduce their energy bills

- New £1 billion ECO+ scheme will see hundreds of thousands of homes across the country receive new home insulation, saving consumers around £310 a year
- ECO+ will extend support to those in the least energy efficient homes in the lower Council Tax bands, as well as targeting the most vulnerable
- a new £18 million campaign will give the public advice on how they can save hundreds on their own bills without sacrificing comfort

Business and Energy Secretary Grant Shapps today (Monday 28 November) launches a government push to help millions of people across the country bring down their energy costs for this winter and beyond.

It is part of wider action this week across energy policy to help the UK meet its ambition of becoming energy independent.

Under plans announced today, the new ECO+ scheme will extend support to those who do not currently benefit from any other government support to upgrade their homes. Joining the existing £6.6 billion 'Help to Heat' energy schemes this new £1 billion funding will ensure hundreds of thousands more households benefit from new home insulation and with that, lower bills.

Plus a new £18 million public information campaign will also offer technical tips and advice for people to cut their energy use, while also keeping warm this winter. Alongside the impact on their bills from the Energy Price Guarantee, the campaign will demonstrate how consumers can make significant savings.

Of the £1 billion funding available through the new ECO+ scheme, around 80% of the funding will be made available for those households who are in some of the least energy-efficient homes in the country – that is, those with an EPC rating of D or below – and in the lower Council Tax bands.

This will benefit those households who do not currently benefit from any other government support to upgrade their homes. Around a fifth of the fund will also be targeted to those who are the most vulnerable, including those on means tested benefits or in fuel poverty.

On top of this, the government will significantly expand its Help for Households campaign to help customers to reduce their own household energy usage and bills, while also giving vulnerable groups the right information for doing this without harming their health.

This includes promoting some of the government's top recommended actions to help households save money on their energy bills, such as:

- reducing the temperature a boiler heats water to before it is sent to radiators (known as the boiler flow temperature) from 75°C to 60°C
- turning down radiators in empty rooms
- reducing heating loss from the property such as by draught proofing windows and doors

It also comes ahead of the Business and Energy Secretary setting out his latest package of measures to deliver home-grown, affordable energy – helping to cut bills and bolster the country's long-term energy security and independence.

Business and Energy Secretary Grant Shapps said:

The government put immediate help in place to support households in the wake of global energy price rises caused by Putin's illegal march on Ukraine. Today, we launch the first of many measures to ensure the British public are never put in this position again as we work towards an energy independent future.

A new ECO scheme will enable thousands more to insulate their homes, protecting the pounds in their pockets, and creating jobs across the country.

And in the short term, our new public information campaign will also give people the tools they need to reduce their energy use while keeping warm this winter.

Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt said:

With Putin's war driving up gas prices worldwide, I know many families are feeling worried about their energy bills this winter and beyond. Our extensive energy support package is insulating people from the worst of this crisis, but we're also supporting people to permanently cut their costs.

In the longer term, we need to make Britain more energy independent by generating more clean, affordable, home-grown power, but we also

need more efficient homes and buildings.

Our new ECO+ scheme will help hundreds of thousands of people across the UK to better insulate their homes to reduce consumption, with the added benefit of saving families hundreds of pounds each year.

Making homes more energy efficient is the best way to cut household energy use and is already helping reduce household energy bills, while also creating jobs across the country.

Since it was launched in January 2013, the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) schemes have delivered as many as 3.5 million energy-efficiency measures in around 2.4 million homes. The ECO+ scheme, which will run from spring 2023 for up to 3 years, extends that support even further and will see hundreds of thousands of households receive new insulation, saving them around £310 a year.

By rolling out predominantly low-cost insulation measures such as loft insulation and cavity wall insulation, the ECO+ scheme will support the government's new ambition to reduce the UK's final energy consumption from buildings and industry by 15% by 2030. The £1 billion scheme is backed by a new £6 billion investment to contribute to the existing £6.6 billion energy efficiency funding pot.

The new funding pot will also provide long-term funding certainty across for the industry, supporting the growth of supply chains and green jobs in the sector, as the government takes further action to tackle fuel poverty and reduce energy bills.

Improving the energy efficiency of UK homes is a crucial part of the government's strategy. Thanks to government support so far, the number of homes with an energy efficiency rating of C or above is at 46% and rising, up from just 13% in 2010. We are investing over £6.6 billion over this Parliament to help decarbonise homes and buildings, and to ensure all homes meet EPC band C by 2035. An additional £6 billion of new government funding will be made available from 2025 to 2028. Further details on allocation of additional funding will follow in due course.

To further support households and help meet the government's new energy demand reduction target, the government has also expanded its public awareness campaign to help reduce bills for households and protect vulnerable people over the winter and beyond. Backed by £18 million, this campaign will complement existing government support schemes. such as the Energy Price Guarantee and the Energy Bills Support Scheme and the information provided will save households money. For example, if a typical household reduced their boiler flow temperature from 75°C to 60°C and turned down radiators in empty rooms, they could save £160 a year on their energy bill at current prices. This also has the benefit of reducing the temperature a boiler heats water to before sending it to radiators, while making no difference to the temperature a room is actually heated to.

Information will be available on the existing Help for Households [website](#).

The government is delivering a new energy demand reduction target announced at the Autumn Statement to reduce energy demand by 15% by 2030.

The £6 billion of new government funding to back this target will be made available from 2025 to 2028.

This provides long-term funding certainty, supporting the growth of supply chains, and ensuring we can scale up our delivery over time.

Further details on allocation for this additional funding will follow in due course.

This is on top of £6.6 billion of existing spend in this parliament through Help to Heat schemes including the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund, Home Upgrade Grant and Local Authority Delivery Scheme.

ECO+

The existing ECO scheme (known as ECO4) is targeted at those who need support most; those in social housing, on a low-income or fuel poor. However, with the significant increase in energy bills, the government intends up to 80% of ECO+ to help a wider customer base who are currently not eligible for support under existing government-backed energy efficiency schemes.

The UK Government intends to lay necessary legislation for the scheme to launch in spring 23 and run until March 26. However, the government also plans to work with energy suppliers to explore the potential for some earlier delivery in 2023.

The [consultation](#) will run from 28 November to 23 December.