

New ship to boost safe navigation in UK seas

- government confirms it will buy new state-of-the-art ship for General Lighthouse Authority Trinity House
- cutting-edge vessel will replace the ageing THV Patricia and will use new tech to improve safety at sea
- new ship announced as part of London International Shipping Week, which is promoting the UK as a leading maritime trading nation

Travelling in UK waters will be safer than ever thanks to a new ship bought by the Department for Transport, to help other boats navigate our seas safely and smoothly.

Maritime Minister Nusrat Ghani has today (9 September 2019) marked the start of London International Shipping Week by announcing a new ship for the General Lighthouse Authority, which is responsible for providing more than 600 aids to navigation around UK waters, including ships, lighthouses and buoys, and helping thousands of mariners every year.

The vessel – which is yet to be named – will provide critical navigation aids to even more ships in some of the most dangerous waters in the world, guiding them into safe channels away from wrecks, thanks to an upgrade in the latest technology.

Maritime Minister Nusrat Ghani, said:

Our maritime sector is crucial to UK trade with 95% of our imports and exports transported by sea.

With our waters becoming busier all the time, dealing with incidents quickly and efficiently is more important than ever.

This new ship will support the General Lighthouse Authority to help future-proof their fleet and continue to support maritime safety and trade for generations to come.

This significant investment by the UK government will see a state-of-the-art ship built to replace the ageing THV Patricia – which has been in service since 1982.

The vessel will harness technological and environmental innovations to ensure the safe passage of ships, safeguarding future maritime trade and bolstering the UK's maritime capability.

An invitation to tender has now been launched for the shipbuilding industry to further develop plans for the new vessel, which will join Trinity's existing fleet.

Captain Ian McNaught, Trinity House Executive Chairman said:

We are pleased to hear that the Maritime Minister is content for us to move the vessel replacement project closer towards the design and build phase.

While we must ensure that value for money is central to the design, we will also be looking for new, tested and robust technologies in the vessel design; these technologies will need to offer high performance and resilience and also reduce our environmental impact.

This investment is the latest move by the government to future-proof the UK's maritime sector as the gateway to the world, supporting innovation and ensuring competition thrives once the UK leaves the EU on October 31 (2019).

Earlier this year the Department for Transport also launched its [Maritime 2050 Strategy](#), which sets out an ambition for the UK to become a world leader in the move to clean maritime, reducing the environmental impacts of shipping and supporting UK businesses to grow.

This also follows the existing [National Ship Building Strategy](#), which outlines an ambition to transform the procurement of naval ships, grow the Royal Navy fleet by the 2030s, export British ships overseas, and boost innovation, skills, jobs, and productivity across the UK.

[New ways for people to access guidance and support](#)

- Live webchat in addition to telephone support
- Available for probate and social security and child support queries
- Will be extended for all service centre inquiries

The pop-up window, which connects any user with a specialist team in one of our service centres, can be accessed from the contact us section of the probate and social service and child support (SSCS) service pages on GOV.UK. It enables both parties to message each other in real time, and means the user doesn't need to leave the screen they're working on to ask questions and get a response while they are using online probate or SSCS services.

By linking the user directly to a dedicated team, we will be able to provide better guidance and support more quickly. A transcript of the chat will be kept on record, alongside details of the applicant or claimant's case, to help answer any future enquiries. Users can also download a copy of their

transcript or receive it by email.

People using paper forms can also use webchat if they choose to. All they need to do is visit the GOV.UK service page.

Our webchat was launched in July 2019, and has already been used by over 250 people, helping to resolve queries about a range of probate and SSCS queries. It will gradually be extended to support the full range of service centre inquiries including divorce, civil money claims and single justice procedure which is used for less serious offences.

Jeannine North, Service Centre services manager said:

It's all about offering people a choice. Everyone is different and we want to be able to offer a range of options so that people can choose to contact us in the way that best suits their needs.

Webchat has been introduced alongside: digital reforms which are creating online versions of some services (such as applying for probate and divorce); and our service centres which are centralising our administrative and support functions, bringing trained expertise together under one roof and using technology to support court users queries more effectively.

Parents and guardians given extra time to claim back childcare costs with Universal Credit

Working parents and guardians will be given weeks of extra time to apply to be reimbursed for their childcare costs, the government announced today.

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) today revealed that those who claim the childcare element of Universal Credit will have an additional month to report their costs.

Up to 85% of childcare costs can be reimbursed through Universal Credit. Previously those reporting costs had to do so in the same month-long Universal Credit assessment period in which they were incurred.

This extension for reporting costs provides parents with more flexibility and could help claimants with 2 or more children avoid losing out on more than £1,100 per month.

Minister for Employment Mims Davies said:

Sometimes there just aren't enough hours in the day to get everything done, and that's before something unexpected happens like a trip to the hospital or having to stay late at work.

We are determined to support families to balance work-life and parenthood. Allowing an extra month-long assessment period for people to report their childcare costs means people shouldn't have to worry about missing out on crucial payments they are entitled to.

Costs can be reported online, and those in work while in receipt of Universal Credit can apply for up to £646.35 per month if they have one child and up to £1,108.40 for 2 or more children.

The support can be claimed in the month prior to starting work if a person has accepted a job offer.

This improvement follows a number of changes to Universal Credit which aim to make the system simpler and more beneficial than ever before.

Up to 100% advance payments are available for claimants and budgeting support is available for anyone who needs extra help.

The government has removed the 7-day waiting period meaning nobody has to wait to make a claim and people can continue to receive Housing Benefit for 2 weeks while they wait for the first payment.

Meanwhile, in addition to the Universal Credit childcare offer, the government provides a wide range of childcare support for families, including 30 free hours for 3 and 4-year-olds of working parents, 15 free hours for disadvantaged 2-year-olds and for all 3 and 4-year-olds.

Media enquiries for this press release – 0203 267 5116

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[Joint statement following the meeting between PM and Taoiseach Leo Varadkar: 9 September 2019](#)



The Prime Minister and the Taoiseach had a positive and constructive meeting in Government buildings this morning. This was an essential and timely opportunity for the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach to establish a relationship and a better understanding of each other's positions.

They spoke privately over breakfast for more than half an hour before joining their delegations for another half hour meeting.

While they agreed that the discussions are at an early stage, common ground was established in some areas although significant gaps remain.

The UK and Ireland are committed to securing an agreement between the European Union and the UK, and recognise that negotiations take place through the Brussels Task Force.

They also shared their commitment to the Belfast/Good Friday Agreement and the restoration of the power-sharing institutions in Northern Ireland.

They look forward to meeting each other again in the near future.

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[Expansion of the shortage of occupation list](#)

British based businesses will have improved access to skilled workers following changes to the Immigration Rules announced by the immigration minister today (Monday 9 September).

The changes mean that occupations such as veterinarians, architects and web designers will be added to the shortage occupation list (SOL), giving people coming to the UK to work in these industries priority in securing a Tier 2 work visa, over occupations not on the list.

It also means that employers can advertise job vacancies for the occupations

included to all nationalities as soon as it's available, making it easier for them to access the international talent they need.

Immigration Minister Seema Kennedy said:

Giving British based businesses the access to the brightest and best global talent is a key priority for this government.

That is why we have made it easier for employers to hire the skilled workers, such as vets and web designers, that this country needs to flourish.

The Tier 2 shortage of occupation list (SOL) is a list of occupations recognised by the Migration Advisory Committee (MAC) as being in national shortage, which they assess would be sensible to fill, in part, through non-EEA migration.

Reflecting recommendations by the independent Migration Advisory Committee in its review of the shortage occupation list in May 2019, today the Immigration Rules have been amended accordingly, putting the changes into law.

When reviewing the shortage of occupation list, the MAC considers a range of factors including whether the role is in national shortage and whether it is sensible to fill with migrant workers.

In addition to expanding the SOL, the Immigration Rules have been amended to further demonstrate the government's commitment to transferring the 480 unaccompanied children under section 67 of the Immigration Act 2016 as soon as possible.

The updated rules will ensure that those children transferring under section 67 are granted with 'section 67 leave' upon arrival. This form of leave allows them to study, work, access public funds and healthcare, and is a route to settlement which they would not ordinarily have had. Currently, those who transfer to the UK under section 67 only receive 'section 67 leave' if their asylum application is unsuccessful.

It will provide the children, and the local authorities who will care for them, with additional reassurance and guarantee their status in the UK at the earliest opportunity.

The Home Office has also streamlined English language testing ensuring that doctors, dentists, nurses and midwives who have already passed an English language test accepted by the relevant professional body, do not have to sit another test before entry to the UK on a Tier 2 visa. This change will make sure that hospitals and medical practices across the country will be able to access the staff they need more quickly.