

## Legal Aid Agency extends Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme Contracts

The LAA wrote to current HPCDS providers in July 2018 with an offer to extend their current contracts for one year with the right to extend for a further 12-month period.

This Contract was due to expire on 30 September 2019, however, the LAA is exercising its right to extend contract by a further 12 months. This is to enable Ministry of Justice to develop its policy approach for HPCDS services.

Current HPCDS contracts will now end on 30 September 2020.

Providers do not need to do anything to accept the extension. The LAA will begin to issue notices of the extension to the 2013 HPCDS Contract to individual providers in August. The new schedules will be issued by the end of September 2019.

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## UK aid to help hundreds of thousands of Zimbabweans on the brink of starvation

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- Zimbabwe is facing a chronic food crisis and without support more than 5.5 million people will not have access to the food they need by 2020
- International Development Secretary Alok Sharma announces UK aid support to help malnourished children, families and communities following a UN appeal
- He also urges Government of Zimbabwe to act on its promise to deliver fundamental political and economic reforms

Hundreds of thousands of Zimbabweans will receive life-saving access to food and water thanks to UK aid as the country faces a potentially catastrophic famine.

International Development Secretary Alok Sharma today (Friday 9 August) announced £49 million of UK aid. This will be given to trusted partners to help malnourished children, families and communities following a UN Zimbabwe appeal.

He also urged the Zimbabwean Government to act on its promise to deliver fundamental political and economic reforms.

International Development Secretary Alok Sharma said:

“The Government of Zimbabwe must do more to deliver the promised fundamental political and economic reforms and take responsibility for the humanitarian crisis affecting its people.

“The UK stands with the people of Zimbabwe at a time when millions are at risk of starvation and disease. Through trusted partners we will continue to give families access to food and clean water, and support children to gain a decent education.”

Zimbabwe is facing a chronic food crisis as crops have been devastated by the effects of drought, economic crisis and a powerful cyclone. Without support, more than 5.5 million people in Zimbabwe will not have access to the food they need by 2020.

The food crisis is closely linked to the economic challenges in Zimbabwe which has led to high unemployment and high inflation.

Having already experienced outbreaks of cholera following the devastation of Cyclone Idai earlier this year, water shortages are also leaving the country more susceptible to further outbreaks as people struggle to find clean sources of drinking water.

ENDS

Notes to editors

1. No DFID money is given directly to the Government of Zimbabwe.
2. Today’s announcement of UK aid support will help:
  - Up to 440,000 Zimbabweans who face potential starvation in rural and urban areas get access to food and water via the World Food Programme (WFP) through small cash transfers.
  - Support 300,000 vulnerable people to prepare for a potential cholera or typhoid outbreak by providing disease surveillance, essential medicine to treat water-borne diseases and training for local health workers to rapidly respond to outbreaks.
  - Strengthen disaster planning in Zimbabwe and help get financing in place before disaster strikes so they can better manage the economic impact of emergencies and build their resilience.
  - Discover ways to build the resilience of vulnerable people to economic and climatic shocks. This involves increasing support to a WFP pilot to provide 100,000 vulnerable people in urban communities with assistance so they get

the food they need through access to mobile money.

1. Reducing poverty, hunger and providing clean water and sanitation is at the heart of what UK aid does, but our investment is also about tackling disease and conflict – ultimately creating a safer, healthier and more prosperous world.
2. The £49 million announced today will fund a new humanitarian and resilience programme that will start in October 2019 and run until September 2022 in Zimbabwe. This includes £25.5 million of new funding for DFID Zimbabwe from reallocations within DFID's budget, and £23.5 million funding from DFID Zimbabwe's existing budget that will now be focused on humanitarian support.
3. DFID's total UK aid support to Zimbabwe for 2019/20 is £113.5 million.

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## [UK one of first countries in Europe to receive Google Flood Alerts](#)

Flood warnings issued by the Environment Agency will now appear on Google Search and the [Google Public Alerts](#) map with live alerts becoming visible on personal devices in a matter of seconds once they have been issued.

These flood warnings will also include vital information on steps people can take to keep themselves and their property safe when flooding is expected. This is another important step to help lower the number of people who are affected by the devastating consequences of flooding through early warnings and advice messaging.

The Environment Agency has been working closely with Google for two years to design and implement this service in England. The service has already been rolled out in the USA, South America and parts of Asia to alert residents to environmental emergencies such as earthquakes, wildfires and extreme temperatures. The service has recently also gone live in Germany, where Google have collaborated with the German Met Office (DWD)

The Environment Agency already sends flood warnings and alerts to over 1.4 million properties in England which have signed up to a text, email and automated phone call [service](#).

However, Google Public Alerts will give even greater access and visibility to this key public warning service through tens of millions of personal devices, helping people to stay safe when flooding hits. The service has recently also

gone live in Germany where Google have collaborated with the German Met Office.

## **Flood Warnings**

The Environment Agency issues 3 levels of flood warnings: Flood Alert, Flood Warning and Severe

Flood Warning.

- Flood Alert – Prepare. Flooding is possible.
- Flood Warning – Act. Flooding is expected. Immediate action required.
- Severe Flood Warning – Survive. Severe flooding. Danger to life.

People can find out more about what to do in a flood by accessing the Environment Agency's simple Prepare, Act, Survive [plan](#).

**John Curtin, Executive Director of Flood and Coastal Risk Management at the Environment Agency said:**

“This pioneering service will ensure that our live flood warnings and safety advice reaches even more people when it is most needed, giving UK residents access to the first service of this kind in Europe.

“We are always looking to find innovative ways to give people advance warning of potential flood risk so they can take action to keep themselves and their property safe. We will continue to work closely with Google to explore ways in which we can further develop this fundamental public warning service.”

**Malte Will from the Social Impact Partnerships team at Google said,**

“We are very excited about the collaboration with the UK Environment Agency that will enable users to find authoritative information on severe weather conditions in real time.”

In addition to this new service, people can always check their flood risk, sign up for free flood warnings and keep up to date with the latest outlook on the Environment Agency's [Gov.uk page](#), call Floodline on 0345 988 1188 or follow @EnvAgency on [Twitter](#) for the latest flood updates.

Environment Agency flood warnings can still be accessed through gov.uk.

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## **[Prime Minister hails 'world-leading' fusion research at Culham](#)**

The visit marked a Government announcement on plans to develop a new fast-

track visa route for the brightest and best scientists to continue to move to the UK after EU Exit.

During his visit, the Prime Minister was shown the work UKAEA is doing to harness the huge potential of nuclear fusion as a low-carbon energy source. This included the new MAST Upgrade fusion experiment, which is researching a compact design for future fusion power stations.

He also toured Culham's Materials Research Facility to see its cutting-edge research into materials for nuclear reactors. As well as talking to those working at the facility, the Prime Minister controlled the manipulators which remotely handle materials samples.

The Prime Minister spoke with some of UKAEA's apprentices about their careers and about the plans for a new £12M apprentice training centre, Oxfordshire Advanced Skills, opening in September at Culham. He then visited UKAEA's robotics centre, RACE, to see how the latest research is helping UK industry compete in the fast-growing robotics sector.

Mr Johnson said afterwards:

It was fantastic to visit Culham Science Centre today and meet the men and women who are helping to invent a sustainable fusion reactor.

The UK is leading the world in this sector, thanks in significant part to the work of the UK Atomic Energy Authority. I'm confident that with the help of the immigration reforms I have announced today, we will continue to do so for many years to come.

Ian Chapman, UKAEA CEO, said:

We were delighted that the Prime Minister chose Culham as the place to make his first science announcement.

Fusion energy's huge potential is well known and the PM reiterated the Government's support for UKAEA's research. We also showed him how the Materials Research Facility and RACE are providing spillover benefits and supporting UK industry in adjacent fields, at the same time as working towards delivering sustainable fusion energy.

RACE Director Rob Buckingham added:

Talking to the PM today I could see he's an enthusiast for science.

He wants the UK to be bold – and what could be bolder than taking on the challenge of delivering fusion to address climate change.

Ends

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## **UK Atomic Energy Authority**

The UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) researches fusion energy and related technologies, with the aim of positioning the UK as a leader in sustainable nuclear energy. It oversees Britain's fusion programme, headed by the MAST Upgrade (Mega Amp Spherical Tokamak) experiment. It also hosts the world's largest fusion research facility, JET (Joint European Torus), which it operates for European scientists under a contract with the European Commission. Based at Culham Science Centre near Oxford, UKAEA is an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy.

More information: [www.gov.uk/ukaea](http://www.gov.uk/ukaea) Twitter: @UKAEAofficial

## **Fusion energy research**

Fusion research aims to copy the process which powers the Sun for a new large-scale source of clean energy here on Earth. When light atomic nuclei fuse together to form heavier ones, a large amount of energy is released. To do this, fuel is heated to extreme temperatures, hotter than the centre of the Sun, forming a plasma in which fusion reactions take place. A commercial power station will use the energy produced by fusion reactions to generate electricity.

Nuclear fusion has huge potential as a long-term energy source that is environmentally responsible (with no carbon emissions) and inherently safe, with abundant and widespread fuel resources (the raw materials are found in seawater and the Earth's crust).

Researchers at Culham are developing a type of fusion reactor known as a 'tokamak' – a magnetic chamber in which plasma is heated and controlled. The research is focused on preparing for the international tokamak experiment ITER, now being built in southern France. ITER – due to start up in 2025 – is designed to show that fusion can work on the scale of a powerplant, and if successful should lead to electricity from fusion being on the grid by 2050.

Fusion research at Culham is funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council ([EPSRC](http://www.ukri.org/EPSC)) and by the European Union under the EURATOM treaty.

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# Clothes designed to grow as children age could mean savings for parents while cutting waste

- Businesses developing pioneering products to fight plastic pollution and clean up our oceans to receive funding boost
- projects across the UK, from Bath to Edinburgh and London to Yorkshire, are being backed by the government / Sky Ocean Ventures partnership
- green economy already growing faster than other sectors with green jobs expected to grow up to 2 million by 2030

Innovative businesses creating green alternatives to plastic bottles, cosmetic beads and synthetic materials are being backed by new funding from the government and Sky.

10 projects have been given a funding boost from the government and Sky Ocean Ventures – Sky’s impact investment fund – to find fast and future-proof solutions to the ocean plastics crisis.

Bath-based company Naturbeads is developing a biodegradable alternative to microscopic plastic beads found in cosmetics including exfoliators and toothpastes. Their work with the University of Bath will tackle the 30,000 tonnes of micro plastics from consumer products that end up in our oceans and are ingested by sea creatures.

Meanwhile, London company Petit-Pli have created expanding clothes that grow with the wearer, inspired by satellite folding structures and origami. They hope to diversify from children’s’ clothes to maternity wear using the cash boost.

Business Secretary Andrea Leadsom said:

Trailblazing UK businesses are giving us all the choice to buy more sustainable clothing, packaging and cosmetics that are better for our environment.

Consumers have shown they are keen for green and we’re committed to championing those innovative companies that lead the way in this, protecting the planet while at the same time opening up huge opportunities for the UK economy.

Jeremy Darroch, Sky’s Group Chief Executive, said:

These 10 innovative investments can create meaningful change and help the world turn off the plastics tap. We look forward to supporting the businesses and their breakthrough ideas.

Backing for Naturbeads follows the government's success in banning microbeads from cosmetic products last year, and its plans to end the sale of plastic straws, stirrers and cotton buds from April 2020. Naturbeads joins a further 9 projects receiving funding to develop innovations to challenge single-use plastics and encourage the modern consumer to reuse and recycle products.

Successful projects to help reduce waste and pollution also include:

- flexible cardboard packaging for surfboards and bottles, created by Cornwall-based surfers Flexi Hex after noticing plastic waste on their local beaches
- a carbon neutral water bottle, made from 100% natural materials, that can biodegrade completely in a matter of months – from Edinburgh-based Choose Water
- West-Yorkshire based textile innovators HD Wool, who are replacing synthetic fleeces with the next generation of sustainable wool products

Professor Duncan Wingham, Executive Chair of NERC – the Natural Environment Research Council for UK Research and Innovation, said:

Plastic pollution is a global crisis that affects our oceans and our land.

This partnership with Sky Ocean Ventures, along with other programmes, will help establish the UK as a leading innovator in smart and sustainable plastic packaging solutions, delivering cleaner growth across the supply chain, with a dramatic reduction in plastic waste entering the environment by 2025.