

Next generation services Innovation Lab: apply for funding

Services – including legal, accounting and insurance – account for almost 80% of the UK economy. Financial and professional services alone are worth £190 billion and employ 2.2 million people. It is vital these services are future-proof, and technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) and data analytics can help the sector become more efficient, productive and globally competitive.

Through the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF), government is supporting industry and researchers to develop next generation services that can transform the UK's services industry. [£20 million of funding](#) has already been allocated to pioneering projects exploring how new technologies could transform the UK accountancy, insurance and legal services industries.

UK Research and Innovation will invest up to £3.5 million to develop responsible data access and sharing methods in the accountancy, insurance and legal services sectors through a 3-day residential Innovation Lab that will explore the use of AI to strengthen the UK services sector.

Collaborate by consortia

The first part of this competition involves individuals participating in a 3-day residential Innovation Lab to develop their collaborative proposals. Applicants are invited across a range of disciplines and backgrounds to create project teams – consortia – that might not otherwise work together, and will be considered by an assessment panel, with desirable traits including:

- an open, flexible and creative outlook
- the ability to work constructively with people from diverse disciplines

Following the Innovation Lab, consortia will be able to refine and finalise their proposals with their consortium before applying to the £3.5 million funding.

The Innovation Lab takes place over 3 days on 14-16 October 2019

- Individuals representing their organisations will take part
- Accommodation and subsistence are provided

Organisations can be a UK-based business, regulatory body, academic organisation, charity, public sector organisation or research and technology organisation (RTO), and must intend to carry out its project work and exploit the results from the UK.

Competition information

Jeremy Wright's Oral Statement on Gambling

Mr Speaker, with your permission, I would like to make a statement about today's announcement on support for those affected by problem gambling.

While we all want a healthy gambling industry that makes an important contribution to the economy, we also need one that does all it can to protect those that use it.

Problem gambling can devastate lives, families and communities.

I have met those who have lost more than the UK's annual average salary on credit cards during one night of gambling online.

And parents who are now without a child as a result of gambling addiction.

Over recent months I have also met representatives from the gambling industry and colleagues from all across the House to discuss what more needs to be done.

We can all agree that it's best to prevent harm before it occurs, and to step in early when people are at risk. But we also need to offer the right support for those people who do experience harm.

We have already acted to reduce the minimum stake on Fixed Odds Betting Terminals to 2 pounds, from 100 pounds.

We have also tightened age and identity checks for online gambling websites; an important step to protect children and vulnerable people who may be at risk.

And today five of the biggest gambling companies have agreed a series of measures which will deliver real and meaningful progress on support for problem gamblers.

This announcement has been welcomed by the Gambling Commission, GambleAware and Gamban.

These are companies which, together, represent around half of the British commercial gambling industry.

At the heart of this package is a very significant increase in their financial contribution to fund support and treatment.

Last year voluntary contributions across the whole industry to problem gambling yielded less than 10 million pounds.

Now five operators:

- William Hill
- Bet365
- GVC – who own Ladbrokes and Coral
- Flutter – formerly known as PaddyPower BetFair
- Sky Betting & Gaming

have said that over the next four years they will increase ten fold the funding they give to treatment and support for problem gamblers.

And in this same period they have committed to spending 100 million pounds on treatment specifically.

The companies will report publicly on progress with these commitments, alongside their annual assurance statements to the Gambling Commission.

Last week NHS England announced it is establishing up to fourteen clinics for those with the most complex and severe gambling problems.

They include where gambling problems coexist with other mental health problems or childhood trauma.

And it has also been announced that the first NHS problem gambling clinic offering specific support for children is set to open.

The funding announced today enables a huge boost for the other treatment services that complement specialist NHS clinics, and it will help us to place an increased focus on early intervention.

I know members across the House have argued for a mandatory, statutory levy to procure funds for treatment and support of problem gambling.

I understand the argument but of course the House knows that legislating for this would take time – in all likelihood more than a year to complete.

The proposal made this morning will deliver substantially increased support for problem gamblers this year.

It may also be said that receipts from a statutory levy are certain, and those from a voluntary approach are not.

But it is important to stress two things. First that these voluntary contributions must and will be transparent, including to the regulator, and if they are not made we will know.

Second, the Government reserves the right to pursue a mandatory route to funding if a voluntary one does not prove effective.

Mr Speaker, this is a clear financial commitment from industry to addressing

the harms that can come from gambling.

But this is not solely about spending money. This is a package of measures spanning a number of different areas, to ensure we tackle problem gambling on all possible fronts.

Firstly, a responsible gambling industry is one that works together to reduce harm and wants customers to be safe, whichever platform they use or however they choose to gamble.

The companies already identify customers whose gambling suggests they may be at risk, and they take steps to protect them. Their licences require this. But they will go further.

We have already seen the successful launch of GAMSTOP, the multi-operator self-exclusion scheme.

I am pleased that companies have committed to building on this through the greater sharing of data between them to prevent problem gamblers from experiencing further harm.

Secondly, the five companies will use emerging technology to make sure their online advertising is used responsibly.

Where technology exists that can identify a user showing problem gambling behaviours, and then target gambling adverts away from that person, they have committed to using it.

More generally, industry has already committed to a voluntary ban on advertising around live sport during the daytime, which will come into force next month.

Third, operators have committed to giving greater prominence to services and campaigns that support those in need of help.

They have pledged to increase the volume of their customer safer gambling messaging...

To continue their support for the BetRegret campaign, which is showing promising early results...

And to review the tone and content of their marketing, advertising and sponsorship to ensure it is appropriate.

These are welcome commitments and represent significant progress in terms of the support that operators give for those impacted by problem gambling.

But as technology advances, we will need to be even more sophisticated in how we respond.

The five companies who have proposed these measures today will be working closely with Government, charities and regulators so we can address any new or developing harms.

I commend the leadership of the five companies who have put them forward.

They are proposals from some of the industry's biggest companies.

And I believe it is reasonable for the biggest companies with the largest reach and the most resources to do more and show leadership.

But the industry as a whole needs to engage in tackling problem gambling, and we want other firms to look at what they can also do to step up.

And I repeat, it will remain open to government to legislate if needed.

So this is not the end of this conversation.

And we will keep working hard as a Government to make sure we protect users, whether online or in the High Street.

Mr Speaker, there is still much more to do, but today's announcement is a significant step forward.

It means substantially more help for problem gamblers, more quickly than other paths we could take.

We must and we will hold the companies that have made these commitments to them and we will expect the rest of the industry to match them.

They will change lives for the better and contribute to the ongoing work we are doing to make gambling safer for everyone.

I commend this statement to the House.

New Task Force to help revitalise high streets and town centres

A new forward-thinking High Streets Task Force supporting local leaders to revitalise high streets and town centres has been launched today (2 July 2019) by High Streets Minister Jake Berry MP.

The High Streets Task Force will be comprised of experts who will provide tailored guidance and advice to local authorities seeking breathe new life into their local high streets and town centres as they battle against changing consumer habits.

Announcing the new Task Force, High Streets Minister Jake Berry MP said:

High streets and the way we use them are changing, and this

government is committed to helping communities to adapt. We want to see vibrant town centres where people live, shop, use services and spend their leisure time.

But in order to evolve successfully, high streets must meet the needs of their local community and the key to this is strong local leadership. This is why we are providing additional support through a High Streets Task Force, drawing on the best expert advice, training and data that's available.

The Task Force has been created in response to the recommendations of the High Streets Expert Panel chaired by the hugely successful entrepreneur Sir John Timpson, who argue that successful change is created by local communities who have a vision for their high streets and town centres.

It will be run by the Institute of Place Management (IPM). The IPM has put together a consortium of high street experts with a wide range of knowledge and insight, including in planning and design. As part of this offer, local authorities will also be able to access up-to-date behavioural data that will provide insights into consumer habits.

Over the summer, the Task Force will engage with key stakeholders and agree a project plan with government.

Welcoming the announcement, Professor Cathy Parker Co-Chair of the Institute said:

We are looking forward to working with our partners through the High Streets Task Force. With support and investment from the government and professionals across the country, we have a fantastic opportunity to develop places that are really valued by the local communities they serve.

Today's announcement comes during the second Great British High Street Week, a week of activity to celebrate high streets up and down the country and share the work that government is undertaking to support them. The [Great British High Street Awards](#) are part of this work, and entries are due to close shortly.

The Awards not only celebrate the best high streets across the nation, but also champion 'Rising Stars' – the most ambitious high streets which are taking a lead and working together to revive, adapt and diversify.

A selection of 40 shortlisted finalists will be chosen by an independent judging panel. Shortlisted high streets are eligible to win up to £15,000 for their local community.

The Task Force was announced at Autumn Budget as part of our plan for the

high street, which also included the £675 million Future High Streets Fund and measures on planning and business rates. The Task Force will work with places receiving money from the Future High Streets Fund.

Formed in 2006, the Institute of Place Management (IPM) is the international professional body that supports people committed to developing, managing and making places better.

As part of Manchester Metropolitan University, the IPM works with policy makers, practitioners and providers to identify the core skills and competences involved in the effective management, development and marketing of places.

For more information visit: www.placemanagement.org

Media inquiries: Dan Cottam d.cottam@mmu.ac.uk

[UN Human Rights Council 41: Syria](#)

Thank you, Mr Pinheiro, Commissioners,

The UK reiterates its support for the important work of the UN Commission of Inquiry on Syria. We are grateful for the latest update and regret that the human rights situation remains of grave concern.

The UK shares the Commission's concerns about the violations committed in Idlib. It is inexcusable that civilian infrastructure, including hospitals and schools, have been attacked, despite the UN Office for Humanitarian Affairs sharing deconfliction information with Russia and other parties. With over 300 killed and 330,000 displaced since the end of April, we agree with the Commission that all sides must end the violence, return to the Sochi ceasefire, and abide by their obligations under international humanitarian law.

We are grateful for the Commission's continued work on the issues of arbitrary arrests and torture – including sexual violence, in detention. We condemn executions and other unexplained deaths in regime detention. We note that arrests of perceived opponents and recent returnees have continued in areas re-taken by the regime. Courageous journalists too continue to be targeted by the regime and extremist groups, both afraid of the truth being told.

Mr Pinheiro, Given reports of numerous medical facilities being targeted in Idlib even after the UN had provided deconfliction information to all parties, will the Commission investigate this? Deliberate attacks on these buildings may amount to war crimes.

Thank you, Mr Vice-President.

University research to receive major funding boost

- £2.2 billion research funding for English universities for 2019 to 2020 announced today to help translate our researchers best ideas into reality
- an overall increase of £91 million including an additional £45 million for quality-related research (QR) funding – representing a real-terms increase of 2.3%
- the move forms part of government’s Industrial Strategy commitment to boost R&D spending to 2.4% of GDP by 2027 – the highest ever level of R&D investment in the UK

Universities and Science Minister Chris Skidmore has today (Tuesday 2 July) confirmed an additional £91 million for university-led research, taking the annual budget allocations for university-led research to a record high.

Research and development is at the heart of the government’s modern [Industrial Strategy](#), and today’s increase means universities in England will receive £2.2 billion in the 2019 to 2020 academic year to support their research. Funding forms part of the government’s overall aim to boost spending on R&D to 2.4% of GDP by 2027; the UK’s highest recorded level ever.

Additional funding includes a real-terms uplift of 2.3% for mainstream quality-related research (QR) funding. The money for university research was announced today by Research England in its annual budget allocations.

The additional funding will give universities more capacity to invest in the people, partnerships and infrastructure that are essential for delivering cutting-edge research that brings real-world benefits. For example, past funding has supported the Manchester Cancer Research Centre, based at the University of Manchester, that is improving clinical care and treatment for cancer patients, and the funding underpins the work of the Cyber Security Innovation at Royal Holloway, University of London, to carry out research into pressing cyber security problems across a number of industries. It is allocated in line with universities’ research strengths as measured through periodic quality assurance review.

Universities Minister Chris Skidmore said:

I am delighted that for the first time since 2010, we have a significant uplift in QR funding for universities. One of my personal priorities has been to place universities at the heart of

innovation for the future and I'm pleased to have worked to deliver on this.

This announcement today marks an important recognition of university research and the need to invest more in flexible, curiosity-driven research that has tremendous benefits to developing our international standing as a research powerhouse.

Increased investment in research and development is a key ambition of the government which has committed to 2.4% GDP spent on R&D by 2027 – a vital part of our industrial strategy. The government has already committed to investing an additional £7 billion on R&D by 2021, the largest increase for 40 years.

The increase includes additional contributions from the National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF), supporting universities to implement the government's Industrial Strategy.

Government investment in university research funding is now at a record high. This funding enables universities to play their fullest role in delivering on the government's modern industrial strategy, helping to meet the Grand Challenges including the needs of the ageing society and moving to a cleaner, greener economy.

Commenting on the announcement of £91 million in additional university-driven research funding, including a £45 million increase in QR funding, Alistair Jarvis, Chief Executive of Universities UK, said:

This is a significant investment into the future of research in the UK, and a positive step towards the government's target to invest 2.4% of GDP into R&D.

Quality-related research funding plays a key role in developing new talent, strengthening research culture and building the skilled workforce the UK needs if we are to perform effectively as a modern knowledge economy.

With many of the greatest research discoveries and advances having evolved from curiosity-driven research, it is critical that we continue to invest across all subject disciplines.

The detailed budget allocations are available on the [Research England website](#).