

Extra powers for regulators to clamp down on rule-breaking solicitors

- Solicitors Regulation Authority's fining powers to increase from £2,000 to £25,000
- Increased deterrents to clamp down on misconduct from law firms and solicitors
- Updated measures will allow cases to be resolved quicker

The changes mean the SRA can now fine law firms and individual solicitors for a broader range of offences – from lower-level cases involving inadequate staff training to those with more serious consequences including failure to implement the appropriate checks required to uncover signs of money laundering by clients.

Previously, disciplinary matters requiring fines over £2,000 would be referred to the independent Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal (SDT).

Given nearly 90 per cent of fines currently issued by the tribunal are under £25,000, these reforms will allow them to focus on fewer, more significant allegations, like firms working for sanctioned Russian oligarchs and businesses.

Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, Dominic Raab said:

The UK can be proud of our world-leading legal services. But it is essential the sector retains its international reputation for the highest standards of probity.

That's why we are allowing swifter and firmer action to be taken against those who break the codes of conduct. And we're freeing up the solicitors' disciplinary tribunal to focus on the most serious breaches, such as those involving Russian sanctions.

The increased powers will reduce the number of cases referred to the SDT, shortening the average time taken for cases to be resolved.

Anna Bradley, Chair of the Solicitors Regulation Authority, said:

The overwhelming majority of solicitors meet the standards we all expect, but when they don't, we step in to protect the public and maintain confidence in the profession.

There was strong public support for increasing our fining powers when we consulted last year and this change will mean we can resolve issues more quickly, saving time and cost for everyone. It

will reduce stress and allow more focus on the most complex and challenging or serious cases.

The SRA investigates almost 2,000 cases annually and handed out over 250 fines in the last year, which is only set to increase as the changes take effect. They will continue to refer firms and solicitors to the tribunal in the most serious cases.

Notes to editors

- Between 2014-2021, around 90 per cent of fines levied by the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal were under £25,000.
- [Example](#) of a recent case handled by the tribunal that would now be handled by the Solicitors Regulation Authority under new measures:
 - In January 2022, the Tribunal fined a solicitor £25,000 for failing to follow the appropriate processes to guard against the risk of money laundering.
 - This included failing to carry out appropriate checks on his client, and improper use of his firm's client account as a banking facility allowing payments of around €300,000 to be made into and out of the firm's account.
 - The solicitor admitted all the allegations in full.

[NATO Public Forum panel Session: 'NATO in an era of Great Power competition'](#)

First of all it's absolutely imperative that we secure Russia's defeat in Ukraine. And it's imperative for the sake of European security, freedom and democracy, and it's the only way that we are going to achieve a lasting peace in Europe.

There are some who are saying that there could be some possibility of negotiations now whilst Russia is still in Ukraine, but I think that would bring a false peace and it would lead to further aggression in the future.

We have to learn the lessons of the past, the failures of the Minsk protocol for example, in being able to secure a lasting peace in the area. So my very strong message is we have to defeat Russia first, and negotiate later.

And I completely agree with the Australian Prime Minister that we need to think very carefully about the messages we're sending to President Xi.

We've seen increased collaboration between Russia and China and we know that China is watching Ukraine closely. They're expanding their military capability and they're extending their global influence.

One significant thing today is that we will see in the new strategic concept put out by NATO specific reference to China. Because it isn't just an issue for the Indo Pacific region, it's also an issue for Euro Atlantic security.

I do think that with China extending its influence through economic coercion and building a capable military there is a real risk that they draw the wrong idea which results in a catastrophic miscalculation such as invading Taiwan.

That is exactly what we saw in the case of Ukraine, a strategic miscalculation by Putin, so this is why it's so important that the free world work together to help ensure that Taiwan is able to defend itself and to stress the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait.

What we're doing is making sure that Taiwan has meaningful participation in international organisations but also working to strengthen our economic ties with Taiwan, because this isn't just about hard security, it's also about economic security.

I think the lesson we've learnt also from the Ukraine crisis is the increased dependency of Europe on Russian oil and gas contributed to a sense in which Russia felt enabled to invade Ukraine because they knew it would be very difficult for Europe to respond.

So we also need to learn that lesson, I believe, with China of not becoming strategically dependent on China and in fact making sure we have strong alternatives. And not just that the free world has strong alternatives but also allies such as the Pacific Islands that the Prime Minister was talking about, allies in South East Asia, allies in Africa and the Caribbean, also have alternatives to China's economic investment.

People will have seen at the G7 the announcement of \$600bn worth of investment through the Global Partnership for Infrastructure Investment Programme and I think that's a very important alternative to the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative. So I think there were huge lessons we can learn, and we need to learn them as soon as possible.

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PM meeting with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese: 29 June 2022

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson met with Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese at the NATO Summit in Madrid today.



The Prime Minister met Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese at the NATO Summit in Madrid today.

The Prime Minister welcomed Australia's participation in the Summit as the largest non-NATO contributor.

The leaders agreed on the importance of supporting Ukraine and ensuring Putin's vainglorious conquest ends in failure. Protecting human rights and territorial sovereignty is in everyone's interests, and the ramifications of Putin's action and our response will be felt around the world.

The Prime Minister and Prime Minister Albanese both welcomed the AUKUS pact, which is promoting stability and security across the Indo-Pacific. They looked forward to working more together to boost prosperity and create jobs in both our countries, including when the UK-Australia Free Trade Agreement comes into force.

The Prime Minister welcomed Australia's enhanced climate NDC. The leaders agreed that Australia has incredible potential to be a world-leader in the use of renewables and make the hyper leap away from coal and other fossil fuels. The leaders also agreed on the need to help developing countries grow in a clean and sustainable way.

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[Digital revolution to bust Covid backlogs and deliver more tailored care for patients](#)

- Rapid expansion of use of technology – including remote monitoring and virtual wards – to drive efficiency, free up hospital space and clinician time, and bust the Covid backlogs
- NHS App to be updated with new features offering more personalised care

from home, such as increasing patients' access to their records and enabling notifications directly from their GP

- Digital reforms to deliver benefits over the next decade that could save billions in taxpayers' money while also promoting economic growth and private investment

People across the country will benefit from faster, more personalised healthcare, following a digital revolution to make the health and social care system fit for the 21st century.

The Plan for Digital Health and Social Care, published today (Wednesday 29 June), sets out the government's ambitious vision for transforming health and care with digital technology – which give patients access to quicker and more effective care at their fingertips and will save the health and care systems time and money.

The Plan sets out how we will improve access to information for people and their care teams through the NHS App and NHS.uk – resulting in faster, more personalised treatment. This includes bringing information together into the App and enabling people to view and manage hospital appointments, have virtual consultations, and see notifications from their GP.

It also outlines the acceleration of the use of digital technology across the NHS and social care to improve efficiency and free up frontline workers' time, helping to bust the Covid backlogs. By increasing the availability of remote monitoring – where patients can use technology to keep an eye on their condition from home – a further 500,000 people could be better supported by March 2023. Over 280,000 people already used remote monitoring at home and in care homes for long-term conditions in the last year, freeing up hospital beds and saving clinicians' valuable time. This has resulted in improvements in patient outcomes – with problems picked up earlier, shorter stays in hospital, and fewer admissions in the first place.

£2 billion has been earmarked from the spending review to help digitise the NHS and social care sector, and this Plan will help achieve that aim by rolling out electronic patient records in the NHS to drive efficiency which, in turn, will release billions of pounds back to the NHS.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

We are embarking on a radical programme of modernisation that will make sure the NHS is set up to meet the challenges of 2048 – not 1948, when it was first established.

This Plan builds on our Data Strategy to revolutionise digital health and care, which will enable patients to manage hospital appointments from the NHS App and take more control of their own care at home, picking up problems sooner and seeking help earlier.

Ensuring more personalisation and better join up of the system will benefit patients, free up clinician time, and help us to bust the Covid backlogs.

To further free up clinician time, patients will be able to complete their hospital pre-assessment checks from home across the country by September 2024.

In addition to the investment in technology, the plan recognises our frontline professionals are at the bedrock of health and social care services, so it will bolster the skills in the workforce by:

- Developing a National Digital Workforce Strategy to bridge the skills gap and ensure the NHS remains an attractive place to work
- Grow the specialist data and tech workforce through graduates, apprentices and experienced hires, creating an additional 10,500 positions
- Embed digital skills development into university curriculums to support our future and incoming workforce
- Provide a digital learning offer for adult social care staff, such as offering accessible training and online resources.

The Plan will also promote the use of digital health and social care records, which will underpin more seamless information sharing between care teams, including appropriate access to GP records for people working in care homes, such as registered managers. The adoption of digital social care records and other care technologies is backed by £25 million this year, announced at London Tech Week.

Dr Timothy Ferris, national director of transformation at NHS England and NHS Improvement, said:

By harnessing the power of digital and data we can improve both how people access services and the way we provide care.

Today's plan for digital health and care sets out an ambitious vision for a future where the NHS puts more power and information at patients' fingertips, and staff have the tools they need to deliver better and more joined-up services for those who need them.

More than 28 million people now have the NHS App in their pocket. To support patients to access more personalised care from home, new features will be added to the NHS App, enabling it to become a digital front door to NHS services.

By March 2023, NHS App users will be able to:

- Book Covid-19 vaccines through the NHS App, as well as the NHS website
- Receive NHS notifications and messaging, including reminders and alerts for Covid-19 vaccine booking and prescription readiness
- Start to see notifications and messaging sent from their GP through the NHS App
- Start to view and manage hospital elective care appointments across participating trusts
- See new information within their GP record by default, with the ability

- to request retrospective information at their practice
- Access a user profile where they can set and manage contact details and register with a GP practice

Further ambitions for the NHS App will see features including improving access to screening services and enabling reminders, improving ease of access to child health records for parents and carers, and improving access to relevant clinical trials.

Simon Bolton, Chief Executive at NHS Digital, said:

Technology is central in empowering patients and giving them more control when it comes to their health and wellbeing.

The NHS App has changed the way millions of adults in England access healthcare services in the three years since its launch and these new features will go further to improve how patients can manage their health and to reduce the burden on the frontline.

We are committed to working with our partners across health and social care to deliver the digitally enabled transformation of the NHS and create a system which provides better outcomes and access for patients.

The publication of the Plan for Digital Health and Social Care follows the publication of [Data Saves Lives: Reshaping Health and Social Care with Data](#).

Supportive quotes

Professor Vic Rayner, CEO at National Care Forum said:

I welcome the focus the government has on supporting digital transformation across the social care sector. There are many opportunities that digital can offer plan brings together a range of initiatives, setting out a pathway that talks ambitiously of a future where digital supports people and communities to live the lives they want. It is vital that this programme of change continues to listen, adapt and work with the care sector so that the opportunities it presents are available for all.

Dr Layla McCay, director of policy at NHS Confederation, said:

NHS leaders welcome the digital health and care strategy and see it as an important step in joining up health and social care records digitally under one roof. This is essential for enabling better system working and will allow vital data to be shared more widely, helping staff to deliver better care for patients.

The plan presents an exciting opportunity not only to expand access

to care via digital channels, but to accelerate the adoption of evidence-based technologies that will help make care more preventative, personalised and empowering for patients.

The task ahead will be challenging and must be done carefully not to exacerbate inequality. It's important that investment in IT infrastructure for the NHS continues and that systems are supported to implement these changes as they work hard to tackle the care backlogs. We hope that the forthcoming digital workforce strategy will help address recruitment and retention issues whilst making the NHS an attractive place to work for digital professionals.

Sarah Sweeney, Head of Policy at National Voices (National Voices is the leading coalition of health and social care charities in England), said:

We welcome the ambition to use technology as an enabler for joined up, personalised care. We haven't yet realised the full power of digital tools to help achieve person centred, inclusive and accessible care for people and we have lots more to discover. We look forward to working with health and care leaders, health and care charities and people living with ill health and disability to explore how digital tools can be used to make what matters to people matter in health and care.

Responding to the publication of the government's Digital Health and Care Plan, Dr Malte Gerhold, Director of Innovation and Improvement at the Health Foundation, said:

This Plan is a welcome consolidation of the myriad of workstreams on tech and digital going on across the NHS and social care – which if properly aligned could add up to a good deal more than the sum of their parts. Steps like making better use of technology and data to support clinical decision making and manage population health could make a big difference to improving both quality of care and the way in which the health and care system uses its resources.

The Plan's focus on inclusion is welcome. Health Foundation research has found that, while most patients had a positive experience of the increased use of technology during the pandemic, for some groups, including those with a carer, the experience was less positive. Addressing these issues will be important to ensure that those who face particular barriers get the benefits from the increased use of technology.

Achieving the Plan's ambitions will mean learning the lessons of previous initiatives that have struggled to deliver. Many of the new service models proposed are about changing the way staff work and patients interact with services – so it is critical that local services are supported to redesign pathways and implement these

changes in practice. Realising this vision will depend on a range of factors beyond the scope of the Plan itself, not least tackling workforce and capacity pressures. If the NHS is to recover from the pandemic and become more resilient it will need significant resources, including a fully funded, long-term workforce strategy, and boosted capital investment to support new ways of working.

Cllr David Fothergill, Chairman of the Local Government Association's Community Wellbeing Board said:

Digital technology has great potential to support those who draw on care services, and the launch of the Digital Health and Care Plan is a positive step in enabling people to live the lives they want.

We look forward to working with NHS to ensure digital transformation occurs in parallel across both social care and health. Only by ensuring that care has an equal footing with health are we able to achieve the best outcomes for people and communities.

The interim chief executive of NHS Providers, Saffron Cordery said:

We welcome this plan which rightly signals digital transformation as a high priority within the NHS, and aims to set out a clear national vision for a digital future, consolidating previous national guidance.

It also provides a much needed and clearer plan of action for trust leaders as they progress digital transformation within their trusts and support digital transformation within systems.

Julian David, techUK CEO, said:

The UK's response to COVID-19 has shown that the scale of opportunities that digital, data and technology offer to address the challenges faced by health and social care is enormous, and the UK needs to capitalise on this potential.

The Digital Health and Care Plan sets out a clear vision for fostering an ecosystem that has collaboration at its core and where innovation can truly thrive. As the document makes clear, to deliver this vision on the ground, the NHS and social care will need to work closely with industry as true partners. Only by doing so will we realise the true benefits of digital transformation.

Government launches review into short-term tourist accommodation

- Open call for evidence aims to understand impact of increase in short-term holiday lets in England following the rise in use of rental booking websites and apps
- Review will look at the market and the opportunities and challenges presented for consumers and tourism communities
- Airbnb listing data showed a 33 per cent increase in UK listings between 2017 and 2018

A review into the effect of short-term holiday lets will seek to improve the holiday letting market for those living in popular tourism destinations.

The scheme, proposed in a new government review looking at the impact of increases in short-term and holiday lets in England, could involve physical checks of premises to ensure regulations in areas including health and safety, noise and anti-social behaviour are obeyed.

Further measures the Government is considering include a registration 'kitemark' scheme with spot checks for compliance with rules on issues such as gas safety, a self-certification scheme for hosts to register with before they can operate, and better information or a single source of guidance setting out the legal requirements for providers.

Tourism Minister Nigel Huddleston said:

We've seen huge growth in the range of holiday accommodation available over the last few years.

We want to reap the benefits of the boom in short-term holiday lets while protecting community interests and making sure England has high-quality tourist accommodation.

While no decisions have been taken, this review will help us work out the options to look at so we can protect our much-loved communities and thriving holiday industry.

Housing Minister, Rt. Hon Stuart Andrew, said:

Holiday let sites like Airbnb have helped boost tourism across the country, but we need to make sure this doesn't drive residents out of their communities.

We are already taking action to tackle the issue of second and empty homes in some areas by empowering councils to charge up to double the rate of council tax.

This review will give us a better understanding of how short term lets are affecting housing supply locally to make sure the tourism sector works for both residents and visitors alike.

Airbnb listing data showed a 33 per cent increase in UK listings between 2017 and 2018 and the rise in the use of online platforms for short-term letting has brought many benefits – from an increase in the variety and availability of options to allowing people to make money from renting out spare rooms and properties.

Almost three quarters of people (72 per cent) told Airbnb in its green tourism [report](#) that the environmental benefits of home sharing played a role in their choice to travel using that platform. A separate [report](#) by the firm in 2018 said a typical UK host on their platform earns an average of £3,100 a year.

But the Government understands there can be an impact on housing supply and price in these areas and there are fears caused by [evidence](#) of a rise in anti-social behaviour including noise, waste and drunken behaviour in local communities. Lower protections for guests caused by negligence of health and safety regulations are also amidst concerns.

The review will also consider the operation of the provisions in London under the Deregulation Act 2015 to allow for measures to be taken against anti-social behaviour, whilst allowing Londoners to rent out their homes.

The devolved administrations have taken steps in this area. The Scottish government set out legislation requiring all local authorities in the country to establish a licensing scheme by October 2022. In Northern Ireland tourist accommodation cannot be provided without a valid certificate issued by the national tourist board. Wales has [publicly stated its ambition](#) to establish a statutory registration or licensing scheme.

And in other countries, anyone wishing to advertise and provide guest accommodation in Portugal must register electronically before doing so, Greece requires anyone renting out their home to paying guests to register, and, in parts of Ireland designated 'Rent Pressure Zones', hosts are only allowed to short-term let their primary residence after having registered.

David Weston, Chairman of the Bed & Breakfast Association, said:

We are pleased that the Government is launching this call for evidence. It is the right time to consider how we protect all

consumers, regardless of an accommodation owner's business model, and level the playing-field between traditional business and those on newer platforms.

The call for evidence will help the Government strike the right balance between achieving those aims, yet avoiding imposing disproportionate new burdens or costs on small businesses.

We will be playing a constructive role in helping the Government develop a proportionate solution, and we call on all tourism accommodation owners to take part in the call for evidence, and ensure your views are heard.

Merilee Karr, Chairperson, Short Term Accommodation Association, and Founder and CEO, Under The Doormat said:

The STAA is pleased to be able to contribute to the call for evidence on short-term lets and holiday accommodation in England, announced today by DCMS. Short term and holiday rentals play an increasingly important role in the English tourism economy by contributing significant numbers of jobs in local communities and generating valuable sources of income for local homeowners and businesses.

Any new regulatory solution should recognise this contribution and seek to support the industry as an important part of the wider UK tourism sector. As an industry we look forward to working with DCMS to ensure that a simple, cost-effective regulatory solution is found, which takes into account the needs and benefits to communities, and supports owners to rent out properties that would otherwise sit empty. We are glad to hear that the UK Government is committed to a solution which gets the balance right, and we look forward to sharing our insights and thoughts on practical solutions with policymakers.

The commitment to consult on tourist accommodation was first made in the government's Tourism Recovery Plan published in June 2021.

We have already taken action to give communities greater ability to manage the impact that second homes can have in some locations. These include closing tax loopholes, introducing higher stamp duty and permitting councils to apply higher council tax on second homes.

This call for evidence will allow the government to gather the evidence and data to inform any future steps and it wants to hear the views of all parties, including hosts, online platforms, accommodation businesses and local authorities.

ENDS

Notes to editors:

- The call for [evidence](#) will run for 12 weeks.
- [Airbnb listing data](#) showed a 33 per cent increase in UK listings between 2017 and 2018, from 168,000 in 2017 to 223,000 in 2018.
- The Bed & Breakfast Association (www.bandbassociation.org) is the UK trade association for owners of B&Bs, guesthouses and small family-run hotels: a sector of some 35,500 small businesses with combined sales of £3.6 billion [ONS, 2019].