

## [News story: CMA clears airport services merger](#)



The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has today cleared Menzies Aviation's takeover of part of Airline Services' business after an in-depth investigation allayed competition concerns.

Both firms supply airlines in the UK with support services including the de-icing of aircraft and ground handling.

An initial Phase 1 probe raised concerns that the merger could result in less choice and higher prices or a reduction in quality for these services for airlines at a number of key airports in England and Scotland. These concerns led to the merger being referred to a Group of independent CMA Panel members for an in-depth Phase 2 investigation.

The CMA has today issued its final decision. Having thoroughly scrutinised the wider evidence base considered in the Phase 2 inquiry, it has found that the market for ground handling services has a strong recent history of companies entering and competing for contracts. The CMA also found that Menzies and Airline Services are not close competitors in the market for de-icing services, meaning the takeover would not lead to a substantial lessening of competition.

The CMA has therefore decided to clear the merger.

Further information can be found on our [case page](#).

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## [News story: New Apprenticeship](#)

# Campaign 'Fire It Up' launches

Leading employers have woken up to the benefits apprenticeships bring to their workplaces, Education Secretary Damian Hinds said today, with top firms including Marks & Spencer and Lloyds Banking Group taking on thousands of apprentices on the Government's new, higher quality apprenticeship programmes.

At a time when many young people will be considering their futures, the Education Secretary wants parents, schools and colleges to make sure apprenticeships are being promoted alongside more traditional academic routes.

So today (Thursday 17 January) the Government is launching a new campaign to promote apprenticeships among young people, parents and employers, whilst confirming that it will write to the largest school trusts who have not published information on their website about how they will ensure providers of vocational education are able to talk to pupils in their schools.

As the Prime Minister said in PMQs yesterday, it is important that young people are able to see that there are different routes for them for their futures, different routes into the workplace – and apprenticeships are an important route for some young people. The Government is also writing to local authorities to remind schools about the requirement to do this to make sure pupils have the full range of information about different career paths that are open to them.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

We are seeing the apprenticeship system in this country come of age, with leading employers waking up to the benefits apprenticeships can bring.

The sad truth is that outdated and snobby attitudes are still putting people off apprenticeships which means they're missing out on great jobs and higher salaries – many of them in the sorts of firms graduates look to land jobs with after university.

It's vital that we challenge people's thinking about apprenticeships which is why the Government's new 'Fire It Up' campaign will aim to shift deeply held views and drive more people towards an apprenticeship.

At the same time we need to make sure that young people have access to information about all of the opportunities that are out there so we are taking action to make sure all schools invite a wide range of providers in to help young people choose the right career path for them.

Anyone considering an apprenticeship can be reassured that it offers high-quality training and a range of exciting career options. The new apprenticeships known as 'standards' have been developed in collaboration with leading firms to ensure they provide people with the skills and knowledge that they are looking for in job hunters. There is a huge range of apprenticeships to choose from including aerospace engineering, nuclear science, teaching, nursing, digital marketing, fashion and law, with the opportunity to study right up to degree level. Apprentices will earn while they learn and can expect to receive around 700 training hours on average – up from 560 hours the year before.

The Department for Education has launched its new 'Fire it Up' campaign to help raise awareness of the huge variety of apprenticeship options available for people of all ages and backgrounds.

The new campaign includes national TV and social media adverts, [and a new website](#) that provides helpful advice and information as well as access to thousands of apprenticeship opportunities across the country.

[#FireItUp](#)

To make sure young people can hear about and understand all the options available to them, like doing an apprenticeship or going to a further education college, the Government backed the Baker Clause in January 2017. The clause stipulates schools must invite a wide range of education and training providers in to help young people choose the right career path for them. Apprenticeships and Skills Minister Anne Milton is writing to the 10 largest Multi Academy Trusts currently not complying with the clause to remind them of their legal duty and if there is evidence that a school is not providing their students with a full range of information, the Government will take appropriate action.

Through its nationwide Enterprise Adviser Network, The Careers & Enterprise Company is also working with schools and colleges to promote technical options and apprenticeships as well giving young people more experience of the world of work.

Analysis has highlighted the positive benefits apprenticeships are bringing to individuals and workplaces across the country, dispelling the myth that a traditional academic route is the only path to a good job. Findings include:

Mr Hinds has pointed to these figures as proof that employers and young people are starting to recognise the benefits of apprenticeships to young people and businesses.

Alim Galloh, apprentice at Channel 4 and campaign star said:

Young people like me are thinking about their options. University is a good idea, but it is not for everyone. Ultimately it wasn't for me because I didn't feel it was preparing me for the job I really wanted. My apprenticeship was an amazing combination of world-class on-the-job learning, hyper relevant qualifications,

with a clear potential career ahead of me. All while earning a salary!

The Government is already taking action to transform technical and vocational education in this country. This includes working with employers to overhaul the apprenticeship system so that it delivers higher quality, more flexible apprenticeships that cover a wider range of sectors and professions and introducing new, gold standard T Levels from 2020 – the technical equivalent to A Levels.

In December last year, Mr Hinds set out his 10 year ambition to get more people into skilled jobs that command higher wages and help put Britain's technical education system on a par with the best in the world. This includes:

- A new generation of Higher Technical Qualifications – an alternative to a university degree to help more people get on in their careers and so employers can access the skills they need. These qualifications at 'Level 4 and 5' – like Diplomas of Higher Education and Foundation Degrees – sit in between A Levels and a degree in subjects like engineering and digital. The kind of training that helps someone step up from being a healthcare support worker to a nursing associate or a bricklayer to a construction site supervisor.
- Reforming the pupil destination measure – the information published in school and college performance tables about what higher study or training pupils go on to do after they leave – to create one measure that shows how many young people are doing higher training of any type. The new destination measure will show separately how many young people go on to study degrees, higher technical apprenticeships or Higher Technical Qualifications like a Higher National Diploma.
- Matching skills to jobs – new guidance and a package of support for Skills Advisory Panels – local partnerships between public and private sector employers, local authorities, colleges and universities – to assess what skills are needed in their local area.

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## **Press release: Government calls for evidence on people who have Variations in Sex Characteristics**

Variations in sex characteristics (VSC), sometimes referred to as 'intersex' or 'differences in sex development', is an umbrella term used to describe physical sex development which differs from what is generally expected of males or females. These variations are present from birth and may be chromosomal, gonadal, anatomical or hormonal.

Depending on the individual case, these differences may be visible at birth or untraceable until puberty, or even later in life. Research from clinical experts suggests the 'number of people born with atypical genitalia may be as high as 1 in 300 births, but the birth prevalence of a condition that may lead to true genital ambiguity on expert examination may be as low as 1 in 5000 births.'

The [call for evidence](#) is designed for VSC individuals, their parents, carers, and legal guardians, and professionals and service providers to share their views and experiences on:

- Terminology – the terms people prefer using to describe having variations in sex characteristics
- Healthcare – how decisions are made around medical interventions and how healthcare services could be improved
- Education – how people with variations in sex characteristics experience school and how the education system could be improved
- Support services – what support, if any, affected individuals and their families receive and how support services could be improved
- Issues faced in day to day life – people's experiences of being in the workplace, of claiming benefits and using sport and leisure services
- Sex assignment, birth registration and correcting birth certificates – whether people have changed their birth certificate if the sex was incorrectly assigned at birth and parent's experiences of registering a child's birth
- Any other issues they have faced and want to raise

The Government Equalities Office has heard from people who had poor experiences when using the healthcare system 20-40 years ago. This included people who struggled to access their medical records and people who did not have access to a psychologist. Reflecting on their experiences, they reported that a psychologist could have helped them make informed decisions about the medical interventions they had undergone at the time.

Some young people have also had to take regular time off from school to attend medical appointments, are unable to fully participate in school activities and require psychosocial support to understand how and why their bodies develop differently to their peers.

Minister for Equalities Baroness Williams said:

"It is concerning to think that people in the UK may be afraid to visit the doctor or feel unable to take part at school because they are not receiving the support they need or deserve.

"Everyone in this country has a right to an education, healthcare and to go about their daily life without intrusion or fear of humiliation.

"This call for evidence is a chance for us to learn more about people's everyday lives, and I look forward to hearing more about their experiences."

Kaz Williams, adult support co-ordinator at UK Congenital Adrenal Hyperplasia

Support Group, said:

“The UK CAH Support Group is happy to be working with the Government Equalities Office on the Variations in Sex Characteristics call for evidence. We believe this is a positive step forward towards the Government gaining greater understanding and insight into the experiences and needs of children, young people and adults living with a variation in sex characteristics and their families.”

Ellie Magritte, founder of dsdfamilies:

“We at dsdfamilies are delighted that the GEO want to hear directly from young people (aged 16+) and their families about the impact of having different sex development. We are impressed and encouraged by the breadth of topics covered in this call for evidence. Our recent consultations with children and families highlighted their needs relating to support and information, as well as for improvements in levels of understanding throughout health care and wider society. As this is the first time the Government has looked at these issues, we hope this call for evidence will lead to actual changes for children and families and we encourage people to respond.”

Valentino Vecchietti, academic and campaigner:

“As a leading figure in the UK intersex movement, I welcome the UK Government’s call for evidence. It is much needed, and I fully support their intention to seek a greater understanding of the experiences and needs of our varied community.”

The call for evidence will run for 10 weeks from 17 Jan to 28 March 2019 and is open to anyone to respond. The government is working closely with support and advocacy organisations, campaigners, academics and clinicians to raise awareness and understand people’s experiences.

Notes to editors:

The call for evidence can be found [here](#).

Anyone can respond to the call for evidence.

Population stats – Ahmed, S. F. et al. (2016) Society for Endocrinology UK guidance on the initial evaluation of an infant or an adolescent with a suspected disorder of sex development. Ahmed, S.F., Dobbie, R., Finlayson, A.R. et al. (2004) Regional & temporal variation in the occurrence of genital anomalies amongst singleton births, 1988–1997 Scotland. Archives of Disease Childhood, 89, F149–F151. Thyen, U., Lanz, K., Holterhus, P.M. et al. (2006) Epidemiology and initial management of ambiguous genitalia at birth in Germany. Hormone Research, 66, 195–203.

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# Speech: PM's statement at Downing Street: 16 January 2019

This evening the Government has won the confidence of Parliament.

This now gives us all the opportunity to focus on finding a way forward on Brexit.

I understand that to people getting on with their lives, away from Westminster, the events of the past 24 hours will have been unsettling.

Overwhelmingly, the British people want us to get on with delivering Brexit, and also address the other important issues they care about.

But the deal which I have worked to agree with the European Union was rejected by MPs, and by a large margin.

I believe it is my duty to deliver on the British people's instruction to leave the European Union. And I intend to do so.

So now MPs have made clear what they don't want, we must all work constructively together to set out what Parliament does want.

That's why I am inviting MPs from all parties to come together to find a way forward.

One that both delivers on the referendum and can command the support of Parliament.

This is now the time to put self-interest aside.

I have just held constructive meetings with the leader of the Liberal Democrats, and the Westminster leaders of the SNP and Plaid Cymru.

From tomorrow, meetings will be taking place between senior Government representatives, including myself, and groups of MPs who represent the widest possible range of views from across Parliament – including our confidence and supply partners the Democratic Unionist Party.

[Political content removed]

It will not be an easy task, but MPs know they have a duty to act in the national interest, reach a consensus and get this done.

In a historic vote in 2016 the country decided to leave the EU.

In 2017 80% of people voted for Parties that stood on manifestos promising to respect that result.

Now, over two and a half years later, it's time for us to come together, put the national interest first – and deliver on the referendum.

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## Speech: Rapid progress on peace agreement in Mali

Thank you Mr President.

Let me also thank Assistant Secretary-General Keita for her briefing and wish her well in her new role, since it's the first time since I've seen her in her new role. And I also welcome the presence of Her Excellency Foreign Minister Camara and welcome her to the Council.

Mr President, I will focus largely on the implementation of the Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in my statement.

2018 saw renewed commitments by the Government of Mali and the signatory armed groups to the expedited and full implementation of the 2015 Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation. In March, we saw the parties commit to a roadmap for the implementation of priority actions and in October, the Pact for Peace was signed, recommitting to the swift and inclusive implementation of the Agreement.

The United Kingdom welcomes recent progress, notably the launching of the accelerated disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration (DDR) and integration process and the establishment of a working group on the participation of women in the peace process. We welcome the efforts of the Malian Prime Minister in support of the implementation of the Agreement, including the establishment of a new Ministry.

Mr President, these developments are welcome and they underscore the genuine importance that the Government attaches to the process. And having heard the Minister speak with passion and conviction, I know that she is also personally committed. However, there must be considerable and rapid further action in order to achieve the full implementation committed to by all parties to the Agreement.

For example, as noted in the Secretary-General's report, progress has been made to establish ten district level interim administrations. But steps must now be taken to operationalise these interim administrations. Of 72 civil administrators appointed in June of last year, only seven, we understand, have been deployed to their duty stations.

It is now three and a half years since the Agreement was signed. Timelines in the March 2018 roadmap have passed unfulfilled. We are encouraged by the Government's plans for 2019 and we hope that these will be successful in order for the Malian people to enjoy a more peaceful and prosperous future.

As ASG Keita recalls and the parties to Agreement will recall the Security Council's decision last month to place three individuals on the 2374



sanctions list for impeding the peace process. The parties will also recall our expressed readiness to take further such measures if needed.

The United Kingdom therefore reiterates our previous calls on the Government of Mali and the Plateforme and Coordination armed groups to redouble their efforts and take the additional steps needed for the immediate and full implementation of the Agreement. As ASG Keita said there is an impatience around the table about the missed milestones we have heard about session after session in this Council.

Mr President, turning to the situation on the ground, we recognise the challenging circumstances in which the Malian Government and MINUSMA operate. The United Kingdom unequivocally condemns recent attacks against MINUSMA personnel and supporting contractors. We express our condolences to the families of those who have tragically lost their lives and we thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Mali and all of his staff for their important work in very challenging circumstances.

The United Kingdom is deeply concerned by the large numbers of civilians who continue to be affected by targeted terrorist attacks and intercommunal clashes, particularly in the centre of Mali.

We welcome the steps taken by the Government of Mali to re-establish state presence via their integrated security plan for the centre. However, to ensure that the root causes of the instability in the centre are sustainably addressed, and to enable MINUSMA to provide complementary support, the United Kingdom encourages the Government to also develop a comprehensive political strategy for the centre.

Mr President, the human rights situation remains concerning. However the United Kingdom welcomes the progress that has been made in the prosecution of members of the Malian defence and security forces who were accused of perpetrating human rights violations. To increase the people's confidence in those defence forces, it is critical to thoroughly investigate all human rights violations and ensure justice and accountability.

Mr President, in conclusion, the United Kingdom welcomes recent steps that have been taken to foster stability in Mali. Now is the time for further action. Rapid progress is needed on the implementation of the peace agreement in a full, effective and inclusive manner while political, security and development efforts – particularly in central Mali – are intensified. And the United Kingdom stands ready to support. We are increasing our diplomatic presence in Mali, Niger and Chad. We have deployed Chinook helicopters to Operation Barkhane which provides logistical support to the G5 Sahel force. Our Department for International Development is spending \$370 million across the Sahel in the last four to five years, and we will significantly increase our development assistance in coming years.

Thank you Mr President.