

Civil news: extension of HPCDS contracts to 29 April 2023

News story

Providers are being notified of our intention to extend HPCDS contracts until 29 April 2023.



Extension notices are being issued shortly to tell providers that Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme (HPCDS) contracts will be extended.

Why is this happening?

We are extending contracts to enable:

- publication of the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) response to the 'Housing Legal Aid: the way forward' consultation
- development and procurement of new contracts by the LAA

This needs to happen now because HPCDS services are currently being delivered through contingency contracts that end on 30 September 2022. So, these contracts, which maintain the 2013 Standard Civil Contract exclusive schedule arrangements, need to be extended.

Extension timescales

All existing HPCDS providers will be offered an extension of their current contract running from 1 October 2022 to 29 April 2023.

What do I need to do?

We will be writing to all current HPCDS contract providers to confirm our intentions and formally issue extension offers over the course of the next month.

Providers will need to sign into the contract extension, or where they do not wish to do so, confirm this to the LAA by the date set out in their letters.

Consultation response

The MOJ consultation on 'Housing Legal Aid: the way forward' ran from 25 November 2021 to 20 January 2022. Publication of the response is expected to happen shortly, and this will be available to view on GOV.UK.

Further information

[Standard Civil Contract \(Housing Possession Court Duty Scheme\) 2013](#) – 2013 civil contract (HPCDS) documents are available on GOV.UK

[Housing Legal Aid: the way forward](#) – to view closed consultation on GOV.UK and the MOJ response when published

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[PM announces new Trade Envoys to boost combined £54 billion of trade](#)

News story

The new Trade Envoys will use their skills and experience to help UK businesses find new export and investment opportunities and promote UK trade in Canada, Republic of Korea and Turkey.



- Prime Minister Boris Johnson has appointed new Trade Envoys to Canada, Republic of Korea and Turkey.
- The three countries already represent a combined £54 billion of bilateral trade with UK.
- Trade Envoys promote UK trade, drive green economic growth, and encourage inward investment to help level up every part of the UK.

The Prime Minister Boris Johnson has appointed new Trade Envoys to boost British business in key markets including Canada, South Korea and Turkey.

The new Trade Envoys – the Rt. Hon. Maria Miller, Rt. Hon. John Whittingdale and Rt. Hon. John Hutton – will use their skills and experience to help UK businesses find new export and investment opportunities and promote UK trade in their allocated market.

Trade Envoys will build on the UK's strong relations with key trading countries and work with the Department for International Trade's global network to break down barriers to doing business, with total trade with Canada, the Republic of Korea and Turkey representing more than £54bn of UK bilateral trade.

They will also promote the major opportunities green trade presents, including the creation of high-value jobs in the UK's low-carbon economy and fuelling technological innovations that can be exported worldwide. The new appointments will extend the total number of Trade Envoys to 40 parliamentarians, covering 80 markets.

UK International Trade Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

These new Trade Envoys will play vital role in promoting Global Britain across the world, driving economic growth, and encouraging inward investment across the whole of the UK.

From the UK's accession to CPTPP, to our ambitions for an enhanced trade deal with South Korea and green trade agenda, there is huge potential for our new Trade Envoys to strengthen and grow our trading relationships between the UK and Canada, South Korea and Turkey.

Trade Envoys are parliamentarians appointed by the Prime Minister, drawn from both Houses and across the political spectrum.

Coming from a range of parliamentary backgrounds, the latest round of Trade Envoys will bring experience in the creative industries to their new roles, with both Maria Miller MP and John Whittingdale MP serving as previous Secretaries of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

The full list of new appointments is below:

- The Rt. Hon. Member for Basingstoke, Maria Miller, has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Canada
- The Rt. Hon. Member for Maldon, John Whittingdale, has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to South Korea
- The Rt. Hon. Lord Hutton of Furness, John Hutton, has been appointed as the Prime Minister's Trade Envoy to Turkey

Background:

- Trade Envoy roles are unpaid and voluntary.
- The UK's green economy is projected to grow by 11% per year from 2015 to 2030, and by 2050 1.4 million people could be directly employed in low carbon good and services sectors – a seven-fold increase from 2018.

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British High Commission celebrates Queen's Birthday in Dhaka and vows to boost girls' life chances

Her Majesty The Queen has ruled for longer than any other monarch in British history, becoming a much loved and respected figure across the globe. The Jubilee is a central element of an exciting year of UK culture and creativity, including the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games and the BBC's Centenary. The Platinum Jubilee will be celebrated in the UK over an extended four-day weekend in June.

Dr Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, MP, Hon'ble Speaker, Bangladesh Parliament, graced the reception as guest of honour. A wide range of dignitaries from the Government of Bangladesh; representatives from Commonwealth nations, OECD and EU countries; and leaders from the fields of business, trade, social development, academia, arts, culture, media and sports joined the celebration.

In honour of Her Majesty, the theme of the event was Empowering Girls to Change Their World. The British High Commission invited girls and young women from across Bangladesh to join the party and introduce themselves to guests, sharing their dreams for the future. A significant portion of the sponsorship raised for the event will be used to support girls' education across Bangladesh through the British Council's EDGE Programme.

EDGE, standing for English and Digital for Girls' Education, is designed to help adolescent Bangladeshi girls to receive capacity building, career counselling, mentorship, language skills, digital navigation skills and, importantly, how to protect themselves from child marriage, cyber bullying, gender-based harassment and intimidation. Launched in September 2021, the new phase of the programme aims to improve life skills for out-of-school and marginalised adolescent girls and build their self-confidence to enable them to have a greater say in their futures. The programme is currently providing training to 2,400 young girls in Bangladesh and helping to give them economic opportunities and strengthen their voices.

Robert Chatterton Dickson, British High Commissioner to Bangladesh, said

"I am thrilled to welcome our friends in Bangladesh to celebrate Her Majesty The Queen's birthday and Platinum Jubilee marking her 70 year reign – a unique milestone. Her Majesty has been an incredible source of strength for the UK and the Commonwealth through a period of enormous change.

"Today, thanks to the generosity of our partners, we are making a donation to further the causes of girls' education and women's empowerment in Bangladesh. Through this contribution we pay tribute to Her Majesty's exemplary devotion to a life of service and celebrate the international cooperation she has championed throughout her reign."

During the evening, beneficiaries of the British Council's Active Citizens, LEAD Bangladesh, Pathways to Empower Young Women in Bangladesh and EDGE programmes, and students from the Asian University for Women in Bangladesh, highlighted the importance of investing in women and girls to build a prosperous, diverse and peaceful world. In Bangladesh, the UK's work provides access to education to marginalised children, especially girls, and works with the Government of Bangladesh to strengthen the country's education system and to make education more equitable for girls.

Notes to editors

The Queen's Birthday Party is celebrated by British Embassies and High Commissions around the world. This year, the Queen turned 96 on 21 April.

More information on Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee can be found on www.platinumjubilee.gov.uk.

Further information

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Growing number of civilian casualties in Russia's barbaric war against Ukraine: UK statement to the OSCE

Thank you, Mr Chair.

The people of Ukraine have now endured three months of suffering at the hands of the Russian government and the Russian military, following the latest invasion. As of Monday, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) recorded 8,462 civilian casualties, of which nearly 4,000 are fatalities. The true figure is likely to be significantly higher, and rises every day. We may not know the true human cost of this war for years to come. It is nothing short of a tragedy.

As verified by OHCHR, most of the civilian casualties recorded were caused by explosive weapons with a wide area impact, including shelling from heavy artillery, rocket systems, missiles and air strikes. As Russian military operations faltered in the first weeks of the invasion, we saw the indiscriminate and widespread use of weapons in civilian areas. In the Chernihiv region north of Kyiv, an estimated 3,500 buildings were destroyed or damaged during Russia's abandoned advance towards Kyiv. 80% of these were residential buildings. This illustrates Russia's preparedness to use artillery and wide area weapons in civilian areas, with no regard for the men, women and children who live there.

We saw the shocking effect of these tactics against the populations of Mariupol, Kherson and numerous other towns and cities. As President Putin renews his focus on the Donbas region, once again, the commitment to respect international humanitarian law has been thrown aside. Prior to 24 February, the people of Donbas had already suffered eight years of conflict, killing approximately 3,400 civilians and wounding 7,000. Now, the Governor of Luhansk describes a 'scorched earth approach' in and around the city of Severodonetsk, with residents trapped in shelters and basements to shield from relentless Russian bombardment. Inevitably, further innocent lives will be lost.

The Geneva Conventions are clear on the obligations of nations to respect international humanitarian law. We again call on Russia to abide by the principles of proportionality and distinction; and to immediately cease the indiscriminate use of wide area impact weapons in civilian areas, particularly around uniquely protected locations such as medical facilities. We again call on Russia to facilitate safe corridors for the evacuation of civilians and for the distribution of essential supplies. Inaction on the protection of innocent civilians speaks volumes. And ultimately, Mr Chair, we again call on Russia to stop this senseless and strategically failing war and withdraw its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine.

As stated by my Foreign Secretary, "we cannot forget the barbarism inflicted

on Ukraine, from the levelling of cities like Mariupol to the slaughter, rape and torture of innocent civilians in towns like Bucha.” The Kremlin continues to lie about causing civilian deaths, attempting to distract the world from the horrifying truth of its atrocities. Alongside partners, we will make sure the truth is heard. [The UK is supporting the International Criminal Court Investigation into all allegations of war crimes](#), including through £1m in funding and technical assistance. We are leveraging the UK’s significant legal and specialist expertise, including in conflict related sexual violence, to ensure that the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine can pursue domestic prosecutions and seek justice for its citizens.

The UK joins [the OSCE Chair in Office, the Secretary General and international partners in strongly condemning the detention of four OSCE SMM National Mission members in areas of Donetsk and Luhansk temporarily controlled by Russia and its proxies](#). As the Secretary General has repeatedly communicated, functional immunity pertaining to acts performed by SMM staff in their official capacity during their employment with the SMM should continue to be respected following separation, as a principle of international law. All efforts to intimidate, harass and undermine the credibility and impartiality of current or former SMM staff must cease immediately.

Finally, I want to reiterate my comments from last week on the growing threat to global food security. Food and energy prices are rising, pushing the world’s most vulnerable to the brink of famine, directly because of Russia’s actions. These prevent Ukraine from exporting its wheat, corn, barley and sunflower oil and harvesting future produce. The Russian government is trying to hold the world to ransom in pursuit of its illegal war against Ukraine. The Russian government must not succeed.

Mr Chair, the UK is committed to helping Ukraine uphold its sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, to defend itself and resist future attacks or coercion. Ukraine deserves the right to choose its own future and prosper. And we will stand shoulder to shoulder with Ukraine in ensuring that no one will ever dare attack it again.

[Attorney General hosts Ukrainian Prosecutor General visit to support war crimes investigations](#)

The Attorney General, the Rt Hon Suella Braverman QC MP, will host a visit of the Ukrainian Prosecutor General, Iryna Venediktova today (Thursday 26 May) to reiterate the UK’s support for Ukraine’s war crimes investigations.

The Ukrainian Prosecutor General will spend two days in the UK for

ministerial and official meetings to discuss what more the UK can do to support her work to bring war criminals to justice.

The visit is part of an ongoing dialogue between the UK and Ukraine to help Ukraine seek justice for Russia's atrocities. Earlier this month the Attorney visited the Prosecutor General in Ukraine, leading [a delegation of UK war crimes experts](#) to the region. The visit also follows Wednesday's launch of the [Atrocity Crimes Advisory group](#), a joint mechanism between the UK, the US and the EU to coordinate support for Ukraine in its war crimes investigations.

As part of the visit the Attorney General and Prosecutor General will meet the Deputy Prime Minister, the Rt Hon Dominic Raab MP, to discuss the UK's support for international accountability efforts, particularly at the International Criminal Court.

The Prosecutor General will also meet Minister of State and the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Lord Ahmad to discuss the UK's wider spectrum of support to Ukraine.

Commenting ahead of the visit, the Attorney General, Suella Braverman QC MP, said:

"Russia's illegal invasion has brought barbarity to Ukraine and justice must and will be done.

"It is an honour to host the Ukrainian Prosecutor General, Iryna Venediktova in London following my visit to Ukraine earlier this month.

"I am determined that British expertise will help Ukraine uncover the truth and hold those responsible in Putin's regime to account for their actions."

Speaking about her visit to London, the Ukrainian Prosecutor General, Iryna Venediktova said:

"It is a great pleasure to be in London, to continue my important dialogue with Attorney General Braverman, and meet the Deputy Prime Minister and Lord Ahmad. I, and the people of Ukraine, deeply appreciate the United Kingdom's support as we search for justice together."

Speaking ahead of the meeting the Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor, and Secretary of State for Justice Dominic Raab MP said:

"Russian commanders carrying out war crimes should know they cannot act with impunity.

"The UK stands shoulder to shoulder with Ukraine and we have provided £1 million and specialist expertise to support the International Criminal Court's investigation so these war criminals are held to account."

Speaking ahead of his meeting Minister of State and the Prime Minister's Special Representative on Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Lord Ahmad said:

“The Russian invasion of Ukraine has been characterised by despicable crimes, including sexual violence and the murder of innocent civilians. We’re committed to ensuring the perpetrators are held accountable.

“Today’s meetings with Iryna Venediktova will be vital in discussing how the UK can support Ukraine in its investigations. This includes our deployment of war crimes experts to the region, and by working closely with our US and EU partners in the Atrocity Crimes Advisory Group, launched this week. We will not rest until justice is served.”

Note to editors

1. In March, the Attorney General appointed [Sir Howard Morrison](#) QC, as an independent adviser to the Ukrainian Prosecutor General’s Office.
2. On 29 April the Foreign Secretary announced that [the UK would deploy a team of war crimes experts to support Ukraine’s investigations.](#)
3. On 25 May The UK, the US and the EU announced the launch of the Atrocity Crimes Advisory Group (ACA). The overarching mission of the ACA is to support the War Crimes Units of the Office of the Prosecutor General of Ukraine (OPG) in its investigation and prosecution of conflict-related crimes. The ACA will bring together multinational experts to provide strategic advice and operational assistance to OPG specialists and other stakeholders in areas such as collection and preservation of evidence, operational analysis, investigation of conflict-related sexual violence, crime scene and forensic investigations, drafting of indictments, and co-operation with international and national accountability mechanisms.