

Homes England at UKREiIF 2022

From Tuesday 17 to Thursday 19 May, we'll be part of the inaugural UK Real Estate investment & infrastructure Forum. Senior colleagues from across Homes England will be there to discuss how we can work in partnership to create great places, help people access high quality new homes and build a better housing market.

Homes England Chief Executive Officer Peter Denton:

Alongside our new focus on regeneration, we are here to promote the diverse range of investment opportunities the UK residential sector offers, from investment in truly transformative regeneration projects to investing in funds to build much needed affordable homes.

Homes England can be your partner in the housing market, making introductions, matching capital with local opportunities and partner with you on projects, whether that's through debt or equity funding.

Come and speak to us and find out how we can help you realise your regeneration ambitions.

Who are we?

Homes England is the Government's housing and regeneration agency. We care about the prosperity of places, the affordability of homes and the sustainability of communities.

As part of our mission to increase the supply of well-designed new homes and create places that inspire pride, we have a mandate to turbocharge the property-led regeneration of towns and cities across the country, supporting the UK Government's Levelling Up strategy.

For us, this means working with local leaders and the public and private sector to use our funding, expertise, and statutory powers to help create communities fit for the 21st century that foster local pride and a sense of place.

Last year we:

- Enabled 356,000 new homes to be built
- Provided £306m in equity and loan finance and £175m of infrastructure loan funding
- Helped 56,000 households buy their own home
- Unlocked land that will support the delivery of 170,000 homes.

How can we help you?

1. We can introduce you to the residential market
2. We can partner with you to unlock opportunities
3. We can co-invest in funds and infrastructure
4. We can sell you land
5. We can show you the best places in England to match your capital requirements

Our presence at UKREiiF To understand more about Homes England and how we can support you, come and find us at our stand, or join as at the panel sessions we're involved in during UKREiiF:

Tuesday 17 May

Wolverhampton: The National Centre for Sustainable Construction Alison Crofton, National Development Director
The Cinema State, Tuesday 17 May, 12.00pm – 1.30pm

In Conversation with the UK's Housing Minister Mike Palin, Executive Director, Markets, Partners & Places The Future of Real Estate Pavilion, Tuesday 17 May, 1pm – 1.30pm

Wednesday 18 May

Roundtable Discussion: Defining Homes England's role in Levelling Up the UK – What are the future investment and development priorities? Peter Denton, Chief Executive Officer Newsroom Stage, Wednesday 18 May, 9.30am – 11am

How to deliver 20 Kings Cross style regeneration projects across the UK Peter Freeman, Chair Future of Real Estate Pavilion, Wednesday 18 May, 9.45am – 10.30am

Holistic Regeneration – Creating thriving places for people & nature Mike Palin, Executive Director, Markets, Partners & Places Building Better Communities Pavilion, Wednesday 18 May, 10.00am – 11.00am

York Central Briefing Jon Irvin, Development Director The Future of Real Estate Pavilion, Wednesday 18 May, 10.45am – 11.30am

Solving the Housing Crisis – Accelerating the delivery of high quality and affordable homes Peter Denton, Chief Executive Officer Levelling Up Stage, Wednesday 18 May, 2.45pm – 3.45pm

The future of UK housing and BtR investment: How do we meet demands and needs? Harry Swales, Chief Investment Officer Investor Centre, Wednesday 18 May, 3.05pm – 3.50pm

Can private capital make a meaningful contribution to the affordable housing crisis? Jennifer Murray, Head, Institutional Investment Bury Theatre, Wednesday 18 May, 3.15pm – 4.15pm

Thursday 19 May

Innovative approaches to housing and creating the communities of tomorrow
Elizabeth Rapoport, Assistant Director, Strategy Building Better Communities
Pavilion, Thursday 19 May, 10.00am – 11.00am

Investment Opportunity Showcase: York Central – bringing the unique
development to life Jon Irvine, Development Director Investor Centre,
Thursday 19 May, 11.00am – 11.15am

[Courts shut down rogue volume IVA provider](#)

Vanguard Insolvency Practitioners Limited, MDN Consultancy Limited, Newtco Limited and KIS Financial Consultancy Limited were wound-up in the public interest on 12 May 2022 at the High Court in Manchester before His Honour Judge Hodge.

Petitions were submitted to the court by the Insolvency Service, on behalf the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy. The Official Receiver has been appointed liquidator of the companies.

The court heard that Vanguard was a ‘volume’ Individual Voluntary Arrangement (IVA) provider that enabled people in debt to come to an arrangement with their creditors to pay all or part of their debts.

Vanguard charged customers a fee for facilitating their arrangements, which were supervised by Vanguard’s licensed insolvency practitioner.

Following complaints about Vanguard’s practices, however, the Insolvency Service launched confidential enquiries before investigators uncovered serial abuse of the payments made by Vanguard’s customers.

Vanguard traded from 2016 and used third-party suppliers to help administer the IVAs and realise debtors’ assets. By April 2020 Vanguard had more than 14,000 IVA cases under its management.

Investigators found that between August 2018 and June 2020, Vanguard made payments to various third-party suppliers totalling almost £9 million from their customers’ estates under the guise of expenses or disbursements.

Some of the third parties under a fee sharing arrangement would then make payments to MDN Consultancy and KIS Financial Consultancy, who were connected to Vanguard through close personal or family relationships.

Further enquiries discovered that Vanguard’s licensed insolvency practitioner, responsible for overseeing the IVAs, did not properly explain

to customers what their fees were being used for.

Investigators concluded that Vanguard's practices lacked transparency as did the activities of its licensed insolvency practitioner.

The winding up proceedings were initially defended by Vanguard and the connected companies. But before trial, the four companies confirmed they would not oppose the proceedings without making any admissions. At trial the Court was content to wind up the companies.

The Judge commented that it was of particular concern that the director of Vanguard seemed incapable of seeing anything wrong in the company's failure to disclose to creditors and debtors the mechanism that was used to pay money from the IVA estates, effectively for the benefit of himself and his companies.

Claire Entwistle, Assistant Director of Investigation and Enforcement Services for the Insolvency Service, said:

Following a complex and lengthy investigation, the court recognised the severity of Vanguard and the connected companies' activities before closing them down for good.

This sends a strong message to volume IVA providers that if they do not deal with their cases properly and there is evidence of abuse, we will take strong action to protect customers and stop them.

The winding up petitions have not affected the position of any of the IVAs previously under Vanguard's control. These were taken on by another provider some time ago and consumers should continue to make payments in accordance with the terms of their agreement. Any customers who are concerned should get in touch with their IVA provider in the usual way.

The government recently [consulted on making changes to the insolvency practitioner regulatory regime](#), including whether firms offering insolvency services should be subject to regulation, and will be issuing its response in due course.

Customers

Vanguard's IVA cases were transferred previously and are being serviced by a separate IVA provider, Oakfield. Customers are recommended to direct queries relating to their IVAs to Oakfield.

The Official Receiver

All public enquiries concerning the affairs of the companies should be made to: The Official Receiver, Public Interest Unit, 16th Floor, 1 Westfield Avenue, Stratford, London, E20 1HZ. Telephone: 0300 678 0015
Email: piu.or@insolvency.gov.uk.

The Official Receiver has been appointed as Liquidator of the companies and has legal responsibilities to wind-down the affairs of the company to achieve an orderly liquidation, while realising the assets of the company for the benefit of the company's creditors.

The Official Receiver has a duty to investigate the causes of failure of the company as part of the liquidation process, including the conduct of the directors.

Company information

Vanguard Insolvency Practitioners Limited (Company number: 09610770) was incorporated on 27 May 2015. The company's registered office was at National House, 80-82 Wellington Road North, Stockport, Cheshire, United Kingdom, SK4 1HW. The company was wound up by the High Court of Justice, Business and Property Courts of England and Wales, in Manchester on 12 May 2022.

MDN Consultancy Limited (Company number: 09614459) was incorporated on 29 May 2015. The company's registered office was at National House, 80-82 Wellington Road North, Stockport, Cheshire, United Kingdom, SK4 1HW. The company was wound up by the High Court of Justice, Business and Property Courts of England and Wales, in Manchester on 12 May 2022.

Newtco Limited (Company number: 07371916) was incorporated on 10 September 2010. The company's registered office was at National House, 80-82 Wellington Road North, Stockport, Cheshire, United Kingdom, SK4 1HW. The company was wound up by the High Court of Justice, Business and Property Courts of England and Wales, in Manchester on 12 May 2022.

KIS Financial Consultancy Limited (Company number: 12099856) was incorporated on 12 July 2019. The company's registered office was at National House, 80-82 Wellington Road North, Stockport, Cheshire, United Kingdom, SK4 1HW. The company was wound up by the High Court of Justice, Business and Property Courts of England and Wales, in Manchester on 12 May 2022.

About the Insolvency Service

[Company Investigations](#), part of the Insolvency Service, uses powers under the Companies Act 1985 to conduct confidential fact-finding investigations into the activities of live limited companies in the UK on behalf of the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

[Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is available here.](#)

May 2022: Australia issues joint statement with foreign ministers on the Taliban's increasing restrictions on women and girls in Afghanistan

Joint statement from: the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

"Afghan women and girls make enormous contributions to their country. Achieving peace, stability and economic development requires their equal participation in shaping Afghanistan's future.

"We remain deeply concerned by the continued restrictions on girls' access to education in Afghanistan, and call on the Taliban to respect the right to education and adhere to their commitments to reopen schools for all female students.

"We are deeply disappointed about escalating restrictions imposed by the Taliban that impact on the human rights of Afghan women.

"The Taliban's directive that women and girls must cover themselves in public and leave home only in cases of necessity, and with a man, restricts their universal and inalienable human rights. We deplore that family members could be punished to enforce compliance with these restrictions.

"Afghan women should be free to choose how they express themselves in accordance with their faith and have the right to move freely in society.

"The international community cannot consider these recent directives as isolated decisions. The Taliban have taken other actions that limit the human rights of women and girls.

"These include their rights to education, work and freedom of movement, opinion and expression through restrictions on unaccompanied travel, participation in the workforce, and ability to express themselves openly.

"These decisions contradict repeated Taliban assurances to respect and protect the human rights of all Afghans.

"All Afghans should be able to enjoy their fundamental human rights. These rights are indivisible and inalienable, expressed in international human rights law, and endorsed by all members of the United Nations.

"We call on the Taliban to reconsider decisions which constrain the right of women and girls to make their own choices, gain an education, work, and

participate equally in society.

“We will continue to judge the Taliban on their actions, not their words.”

[British Army on manoeuvres in North Macedonia](#)

Press release

More than 2,000 members of the British Army's Global Response Force have demonstrated their ability to react to global crises during an exercise with NATO allies.



Some 3,000 personnel from eight NATO countries are training together in North Macedonia on Exercise Swift Response, under the command of 16 Air Assault Brigade Combat Team (BCT).

The UK contingent is made up of the 2 PARA Battlegroup, built around the airborne infantry of 2nd Battalion The Parachute Regiment. They have been supported by artillery, engineers, logisticians, medics, and signallers from 16 Air Assault BCT; and Aviation Task Force 1 with Apache attack helicopters and Chinook support helicopters.

Minister for the Armed Forces James Heappey MP said:

Exercise Swift Response shows how the British Army is transforming to become more lethal, agile, and expeditionary. Exercises alongside our partners and Allies are necessary to maintain our advantage in a complex and ever-changing world.

I remain proud of our Armed Forces who continue to serve their country on postings around the world, providing leadership in uncertain times.

Travelling by road, rail, sea and air to North Macedonia – NATO's newest member since joining in 2020 – troops carried out joint training to build their capabilities and relationships. The soldiers then deployed onto the rugged Krivolak training range by parachute and helicopter to secure and defend a foothold in simulated hostile territory, and then take the offensive.

Commander of 16 Air Assault BCT Brigadier Nick Cowley said:

On Exercise Swift Response, 16 Air Assault Brigade Combat Team, alongside multiple Army and RAF units, has truly demonstrated the lethality, agility and expeditionary capabilities of the Global Response Force. We have deployed thousands of miles across Europe to link up with our NATO allies to conduct arduous training in a challenging environment to make sure that we are ready to deploy on the most demanding missions, at short notice.

I have been hugely impressed by the quality of our soldiers and their ability to integrate with NATO allies. This exercise has absolutely showed me that we are ready for anything.

The manoeuvres in North Macedonia are one element of Exercise Swift Response, which will see multinational forces under the direction of US Army Europe and Africa conducting simultaneous training across Europe – from the High North to the Balkans – to practice how airborne units can rapidly project force in response to developing crises.

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[Defence Secretary meets US counterpart to discuss support for Ukraine](#)

Ben Wallace met his US counterpart, Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin, at the Pentagon in Washington DC on Wednesday. They spoke about joint UK-US efforts to support Ukraine, including through supply of military aid and the coordination and delivery of donations from other partners.

They also discussed the ongoing drive to ensure NATO can deter and defend against any Russian aggression towards allies in Eastern Europe and looked ahead to the upcoming NATO Summit in Madrid in June.

Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said:

It was extremely good to meet again with my good friend and NATO partner, Lloyd Austin.

The US and UK relationship is as strong as ever. We will continue to work with unity and resolve to provide Ukraine with what it needs to defend itself against Russia's unprovoked invasion.

We discussed the next steps to provide defensive support for Ukraine, as well as AUKUS, the future of NATO, and other aspects of our shared security.

The UK and US have been at the forefront of international efforts to support the Ukrainian government and armed forces as they defend themselves from the unprovoked attack by Putin's forces. The US has supplied around £3 billion of military aid to Ukraine since the war began, while the UK has just confirmed £1.3 billion in extra funding for military operations and aid to the country – on top of the existing £1.5 billion of UK support including humanitarian aid and grants, as well as military kit such as armoured vehicles, anti-tank missiles and air defence systems.

Both countries have also taken leading roles in organising international donations of military equipment. The Defence Secretary has hosted two international donor conferences to coordinate military aid from 35 partner nations, while RAF aircraft have moved thousands of tonnes of military assistance from donors around the world to Ukraine.

In the three-day visit to the US, the Defence Secretary carried out a series of engagements with senior politicians and defence and intelligence officials, all aimed at reinforcing this close trans-Atlantic co-operation in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, as well as discussing wider defence issues.

Engagements included bilateral meetings with Commander of US Cyber Command and Director of the National Security Agency General Paul M. Nakasone, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley, as well as meetings at the Central Intelligence Agency headquarters in Langley and the Defence Intelligence Agency headquarters in Washington.

He also represented the UK at the Munich Leaders Meeting, discussing pressing security challenges with allies and partners on both sides of the Atlantic.