

[News story: Improving prison detection systems: apply for contracts](#)

The [Ministry of Justice](#) has up to £950,000 to invest in innovative projects that help to tackle the presence of drugs, drones and mobile phones in UK prisons.

Innovative ways of detecting contraband

The presence of contraband and illegal items in prison is a major issue that has been regularly highlighted in the media.

In response, the Ministry of Justice is seeking projects that can demonstrate innovative ways of detecting at least one of the following:

- mobile phones and SIM cards, including phones with very low metal content
- illegal substances, particularly in very small quantities
- other contraband, including tobacco, alcohol, weapons and explosives
- drones

Projects must aim to detect contraband in one or more of a number of circumstances including on people, concealed inside the body, in bags, in buildings, at entry and exit points, in vehicles, and in open areas.

A 2-phase opportunity

Funding for projects is under SBRI (Small Business Research Initiative) and will be in 2 phases.

Phase 1 will allow a number of organisations to develop and explain concepts. The best ideas will receive funding in phase 2 to develop them into a working prototype.

Competition information

- the competition opens on 18 September 2017, and the deadline is at midday on 1 November 2017
- up to £500,000 is available for phase 1 projects. These should have costs of up to £50,000 and last 4 to 6 months
- up to £450,000 is available to develop the best ideas from phase 1 into working prototypes
- any organisation that can demonstrate a route to market for its idea, working alone or in partnership with others, may apply
- successful projects will attract 100% funded development contracts
- a briefing event will be held in October

[News story: Civil/crime news: Portal upgrade now complete](#)

Users should now be accessing the Portal through the link to the new LAA Online Portal.

As of 11 September 2017, all users should now be using the link to the new LAA Online Portal:

[LAA Online Portal](#)

This will be needed to access the new Portal for the:

- Client and Cost Management System (CCMS)
- Contracted Work and Administration (CWA)
- Crown Court Litigator Fee online (CCLF)
- Management Information
- eForms

You will no longer have access to these applications through the old Portal.

Now that the upgrade is complete you should see the following improvements.

- increased stability
- quicker log-in times
- more user-friendly password reset process
- status bar for all applications, providing up-to-date information on any issues affecting performance

Using the new Portal

We recommend that you log in to the new Portal to update your security information and familiarise yourself with the features it offers and how it works.

Providing feedback

We would like to hear how the upgrade went for you. A short survey is available for you to complete. Your feedback will help us improve the communications and processes for future changes.

Further information

[New Portal login page](#) – to access the upgraded portal from 11 September

[Portal upgrade guidance](#) – advice on logging into the new Portal and frequently asked questions

[Portal upgrade survey](#) – provide us your feedback on your experiences of the portal upgrade Upgraded Portal Password Resets – a short video on what to do if you forget your password in the upgraded Portal (video will load automatically).

Portalpasswordresets@legalaid.gsi.gov.uk – to submit a password request if your password is not accepted when logging in to the new Portal (allow 24 hours for resets to be actioned)

Press release: New Non-Executive Director appointed at Highways England

Highways England is responsible for operating, maintaining and improving more than 4,300 miles of motorways and main trunk roads throughout England and is delivering the Government's £15 billion Road Investment Strategy.

Alan will join the Board from today (Monday 11 September) for three years.

Alan Cumming appointed as a Highways England Non-Executive Director

Highways England chairman Colin Matthews said:

We welcome Alan to the Highways England board at this exciting time for the company as we continue to focus on safety, customer service and delivering the first Road Investment Strategy. Alan brings a wealth of experience which will also help us as we look to the next investment period and subsequent benefits for road users and the economy.

Alan currently works for Viridor, part of Pennon plc, and is the Board Director responsible for Capital Projects and Engineering; he was previously a Non-Executive Director of the Advance Manufacturing Centre at the University of Sheffield, Director of Projects for British Energy and Deputy Project Director on Hinkley Point C with EDF. He replaces Tom Smith.

Alan will be paid £28,000 for a minimum of 27 days' work per annum. The remuneration for Alan's roles, and that of other non-executive and senior executive posts, are published within the Highways England's annual report each year.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[Press release: Badger vaccination scheme relaunched in fight against bovine TB](#)

A government-backed badger vaccination scheme has been relaunched today by Farming Minister George Eustice to help stop the spread of bovine TB (bTB) in England.

The relaunched Badger Edge Vaccination Scheme, which was suspended for two years following a global vaccine shortage, opens for expressions of interest today, with projects set to start in spring 2018. Successful applicants will receive a government grant for 50% of their costs from a fund worth £700,000 over four years.

The government also announced a contract has been awarded to deliver a new bTB advisory service which will offer clear, practical advice to help farmers protect their herds from the disease and manage the impacts of a TB breakdown on their farm.

Both measures are key parts of the government's [strategy to eradicate bTB in England](#), which includes one of the most rigorous cattle surveillance programmes in the world, strong movement controls, promoting good biosecurity, and badger control where the disease is rife.

Bovine TB costs taxpayers over £100m every year and England has the highest incidence of the disease in Europe. In 2016 more than 29,000 cattle had to be slaughtered in England to control the disease, causing devastation and distress for farmers and rural communities.

Farming Minister George Eustice said:

Bovine TB not only has a devastating impact on our beef and dairy farms, but causes harm and distress to infected cattle. We have a clear plan to eradicate the disease over the next 20 years and this year we are restarting the government-backed Badger Edge Vaccination Scheme to stop the disease spreading to new areas.

Vaccination is just one part of our comprehensive strategy, which also includes tighter cattle controls, improved biosecurity and

badger control in areas where bTB is rife to tackle the reservoir of disease in wildlife.

While our eventual aim is to eradicate the disease completely, farmers are facing the reality of bTB on their farms every day, which is why we are also launching a new bTB Advisory Service to offer advice to all farmers on limiting on-farm disease risk.

New measures

New measures outlined today include:

- Eleven additional licences for badger control covering parts of Devon, Wiltshire, Somerset, Dorset and Cheshire. Licences have been granted for supplementary badger control in areas of Gloucestershire and Somerset which have completed their original four-year licences.
- The relaunch of the Badger Edge Vaccination Scheme following suspension due to a global shortage of TB vaccine, with groups invited to submit expressions of interest and feedback on the criteria for the scheme.
- A new bTB Advisory Service for farmers to provide advice on-farm and by phone or email to farmers in High Risk and Edge Areas on bTB biosecurity and risk-based trading, set to launch this autumn.
- Tighter control of Inconclusive Reactors (IRs) in the High Risk and Edge Area, to come into force from 1 November.

Chief Vet Nigel Gibbens said:

Taking action to prevent bovine TB infection of cattle from the reservoir of disease in local badger populations is an essential part of the government's 25-year strategy to eradicate the disease in England. Proactive badger control is currently the best available option and the licensing of further areas is necessary to realise disease control benefits across the High Risk Area of England, rather than at local levels.

In 2016 badger control operations in Somerset, Gloucestershire, Dorset, Devon, Cornwall, Herefordshire and Wiltshire were all successful in meeting their targets, and the government is committed to introducing badger control over a wider number of areas in line with plans set out in the bTB strategy.

Background

1. Expressions of interest in the BEVS scheme should be emailed to: BEVS@defra.gsi.gov.uk
 2. The TB Advisory Service will launch next month, delivered by the Origin Group. Farmers can pre-register their interest by email: info@tbas.org.uk
 3. [Information on Natural England's licensing for badger control operations](#)
 4. New rules on Inconclusive Reactors will come into force following a [public consultation](#)
 5. For information, advice and guidance on bTB, visit the [TB Hub](#)
 6. For more information about this press release, contact the Defra press office: 020 8225 7318.
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[News story: Hurricane Irma: Foreign Secretary interview on BBC Today Programme](#)

I sympathise with the distress of all the families in the Caribbean, but I must point out we have had half a million British nationals in the path of this hurricane. In St Martin in particular, this is controlled with the Dutch and the French, who have been evacuating people but in priority depending on their medical needs. This is a very big consular crisis and I am confident we are doing everything we can to help British nationals, but there are half a million affected.

We've been able to get 700 troops into the region, and police officers coming in. I think there are now more than 50 UK police arriving in the area. I've talked to the governor, Gus Jaspert, and he has told me of the psychological benefits of seeing UK service personnel helping and restoring a sense of order.

No, we were there as soon as the crisis broke. It doesn't make any sense when a hurricane is impending to send in aircraft or ships that are not going to be capable of withstanding the storm. If you look at what is happening now, there is an unprecedented British effort to deal with what has been an unprecedented catastrophe.

The emergency hotline is there – 44 (0) 207 008 0000 – we instantly set up a system for people to donate via the Red Cross. I must respectfully dissent from the critics of the Government. Gus Jaspert is being hailed as a hero and that is right. We have responded in a timely and highly organised fashion. These are British overseas territories and we are going to be there for the long-term. We will come with a recovery plan for these islands and help them

restore their financial services and tourism industries.

Taxpayers money is already being deployed. £28 million has already been spent and we will be announcing further support over the next few days. This is an absolute priority for our Government and we understand the huge economic blow that has been dealt in these islands. The Government is working together at all levels to restore confidence and I pay tribute to the local administrations.

Read more about the [government's response to Hurricane Irma](#).