

[Press release: London to Exeter rail passengers protected by CMA](#)

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) has been investigating the award of the franchise to FirstGroup and MTR since May, and concluded that there are no competition concerns on the vast majority of routes it would operate.

However, competition concerns have been raised on one route as FirstGroup already operates the Great Western Railway (GWR) franchise, which runs the only other train service between London and Exeter.

The CMA is concerned that FirstGroup having control of both services could reduce competition on the route, leading to higher fares or worse service for passengers.

Acting Chief Executive and Decision Maker, Andrea Coscelli, said:

This is a crucial rail route to the South West, used by around half a million passengers a year. It's therefore vital that passengers do not suffer as a result of reduced competition.

The CMA believes that without its intervention, FirstGroup may be able to increase fares for passengers between London and Exeter, as it will be the only rail operator running all services on this route. We look forward to hearing from the companies involved about how they think they can overcome this.

FirstGroup and MTR now have the opportunity to offer proposals (known as 'undertakings in lieu of reference') to the CMA to address the concerns identified. If these undertakings are considered sufficient, the companies involved will be able to avoid an in-depth phase 2 investigation.

In previous cases, most recently the CMA's decision on the award of the Northern franchise to Arriva, competition concerns have been resolved by the operator agreeing to price caps for the affected lines.

The CMA's decision comes in advance of the start of the franchise, due on 20 August 2017. Further details about the CMA's investigation can be found on the [case page](#).

Notes for editors

1. The CMA is the UK's primary competition and consumer authority. It is an independent non-ministerial government department with responsibility for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries and enforcing competition and consumer law. For CMA updates, follow us on Twitter [@CMAgovuk](#), [Facebook](#), [Flickr](#) and [LinkedIn](#).
2. Under the Enterprise Act, First MTR will now have 5 working days to

propose undertakings in lieu (UILs) of reference to resolve the competition concerns raised by the CMA. If First MTR does not propose UILs or if the CMA is not satisfied with them, the merger will be referred to an in-depth ('phase 2') investigation.

3. The CMA will announce by 25 July its preliminary decision on whether any UILs offered by First MTR might be sufficient to resolve the competition concerns identified. If the CMA provisionally accepts UILs, a consultation will follow.
4. Media enquiries to the CMA should be directed to press@cma.gsi.gov.uk or 020 3738 6798.

[Press release: UK to save a woman's life every 90 minutes by increasing family planning support](#)

The UK will save the life of one woman every 90 minutes through its global leadership in supporting modern, voluntary family planning, International Development Secretary Priti Patel will announce today (Tuesday, 11 July) at a major international summit.

Today there are 214 million women around the world, who despite not wanting to get pregnant, aren't using modern contraception. Progress has been made globally to reach more women with family planning services, but more needs to be done.

Voluntary family planning saves lives by enabling women to plan, and have fewer, pregnancies – reducing their risk of death through unsafe childbirth. This risk is very high in the world's poorest countries, especially for adolescents.

At today's Family Planning Summit, Ms Patel will set out an increased support package – boosting and extending the UK contribution until 2022 – to provide voluntary, modern family planning to women in the world's poorest countries across Africa and Asia.

The UK's total package of support until 2022 will every year:

- help save the lives of over 6,000 women by preventing maternal deaths – that's one woman every 90 minutes
- support nearly 20 million women to receive voluntary contraceptives through family planning services
- help avert 6 million unintended pregnancies
- help prevent the trauma of 75,000 stillbirths and nearly 44,000 new-born deaths

The London Summit is co-hosted by Ms Patel, Melinda Gates (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation) and Natalia Kanem (UN Population Fund – UNFPA), and will look at practical measures to reduce costs and increase availability for the millions of women who want contraception, but can't afford it or get hold of it.

Africa's population is rising to unsustainable levels, with Sub-Saharan Africa passing the one billion mark this year. Giving people access to voluntary family planning helps slow population growth and makes real economic sense. For every £1 spent, governments can save over £4 which can in turn be spent on improving health, housing, water sanitation and other public services.

In her key note speech, Ms Patel will highlight the UK's global leadership in responding to the urgent need for voluntary family planning; the innovative technology being used to reach women in the poorest communities across Asia and Africa and call on others – including businesses – to do more.

International Development Secretary Priti Patel said:

It's truly astonishing that in today's world there are still 214 million women around the world who do not want to get pregnant, but who are not currently using modern methods of family planning.

Britain is leading the world on sexual and reproductive health, helping millions more women in the world's poorest countries to access and use desperately-needed family planning services.

This new UK aid support will provide 20 million women with voluntary contraception, change the lives of 6 million women by allowing them to avoid unintended pregnancies and prevent the trauma of 75,000 still births.

But this isn't a job for the UK alone and that's why at this global Summit governments from around the world have come together to make commitments on family planning to address the long term need and unsustainable population growth.

We are supporting the world's poorest women to take control of their lives, so they can finish their education, get better jobs and in turn provide for their smaller, planned families rather than being trapped in a cycle of grinding poverty through unplanned pregnancies.

The Summit will address several pressing issues, including:

- addressing the need in emergency situations. Family planning remains one of the biggest gaps in humanitarian response, leaving women at risk of

maternal death or having to resort to unsafe abortions. The Summit will address this so that women experiencing humanitarian crises can obtain the contraceptives that they need to protect their health

- blockages that mean that contraceptives that are supposed to be available simply don't make it onto the shelves
- making sure women have a choice in contraceptives, along with accurate information, so they can opt for the product that suits them best be it short term, long lasting or permanent. More choice will lead to more uptake
- the specific barrier faced by adolescents – both married and unmarried – including a critical lack of access to accurate information and the cultural barriers around adolescent sexual activity, which can further restrict contraceptive provision for this group.

In addition to saving lives by stopping women from dying in childbirth, investing in family planning provides long term life-changing benefits for women and their families, communities and countries.

It means women can make their own decisions about their own lives and futures, and helps stop the cycle of grinding poverty, improving lives now and in the future. This means local economies can grow, in turn boosting global prosperity, which is in everyone's interests.

The UK put family planning on the international agenda with the inaugural 2012 Family Planning Summit where a goal was established to help 120 million additional women and girls use modern, voluntary family planning by 2020.

Britain is the second largest bilateral donor of family planning in the world. Since the 2012 Summit, the UK has helped nearly 8.5 million additional women to access modern methods of contraception.

Notes to editors:

At the 2012 London Summit on Family Planning, the UK Government committed to spending £180 million per year on family planning until 2020. With this new commitment the UK Government's support will be an average of £225 million per year until 2022, an additional £45 million a year for 5 years. The £45 million is new funding for family planning.

A full programme for the summit can be found [here](#). And the Summit's livestream can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mHlUFR0blHw>

For b-roll footage, photos and relevant documents visit the Summit's [Isebox](#)

Follow the conversation on social media with the hashtag [#HerFuture](#)

News story: £4.2m criminal assets split between Home Office and Jersey

More than £4 million of criminal assets will be split between Jersey and the Home Office, following the signing of an agreement by Solicitor General Robert Buckland QC and Attorney General of Jersey Robert MacRae QC.

The Law Officers' Department for Jersey and the CPS worked together to bring Independent financial advisor Adeel Mirza, 47, to justice. He was convicted of nine counts of fraud in 2013, jailed for six years and ordered to pay back £4,180,788.32.

Prosecutors arranged the sale of nine houses across London – the majority of Mirza's UK property portfolio – which were all registered to a trust in Jersey.

Robert Buckland QC MP said: "The UK and Jersey enjoy good relations which has resulted in effective cooperation in tackling crime. I'm pleased that Mr Mirza's ill-gotten gains will be split between the Home Office and Jersey, to the benefit of taxpayers. Criminals will not be able to keep the profits of their unlawful actions".

The Attorney General for Jersey, Robert MacRae QC, said: "This case of close collaboration with the UK authorities once again demonstrates Jersey's commitment to fighting serious financial crime. In particular it shows that Jersey trusts are no place to hide the proceeds of crime."

The assets are being shared between Jersey and the UK to reflect the work that both jurisdictions dedicated to bringing Mirza to justice and ensuring that he did not benefit financially from his crimes.

Press release: Sir Alan Duncan statement on adoption of UNSC Resolution on Colombia

Foreign Office Minister for the Americas, Sir Alan Duncan welcomed the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution 2366 on July 10. The resolution will support Colombia's continuing journey toward peace.

Minister for the Americas, Sir Alan Duncan said:

We have witnessed Colombia embark on an extraordinary journey since peace negotiations began six years ago. By showing how even the longest and hardest of conflicts can be brought to a peaceful end, Colombia offers a beacon of hope to the world. But history has taught us that building a sustainable peace is a long and difficult process, and so we welcome the leadership shown by both parties in calling for the UN to support the next phase of this journey.

I welcome today's unanimous adoption of UN Security Council resolution 2366. I am pleased the international community has responded so swiftly to President Santos' request for continued UN Security Council support for the peace process. Working closely with partners on the Security Council, the UK was privileged to lead the negotiations establishing a second UN Mission for the next phase of the peace process. The UK remains steadfast in its support for Colombia.

Further information

[News story: £30 million boost to projects supporting vulnerable young people](#)

A multi-million pound funding package to improve the lives of vulnerable children and young people around the country was announced on Thursday, 6 July, by Robert Goodwill, Minister for Children and Families.

In his first address to the children's social care sector since being appointed as Minister, he confirmed that 24 projects will receive a share of £30 million to take their important work forward.

The projects are part of the Children's Social Care Innovation Programme, which is backed by £200 million of government funding. This programme has supported 95 projects to date, providing evidence of best practice that is helping to improve children's services across the country.

In his speech at the ADCS annual conference, the Minister said:

Through the Innovation Programme, we continue to fund exciting and pioneering projects that look to shake-up our traditional approach to social work.

Together they proffer a broad and balanced portfolio which both test new innovations, and scale and spread those that have been successful in Round One of the programme.

The projects that have been awarded funding include Credo Care, Derby City Council, The Adolescent and Children's Trust, Munro, Turnell & Murphy, and Barnardo's.

Credo Care's project, working with Hertfordshire and Staffordshire, aims to find specialist foster placements close to home for young disabled people currently living in out-of-area residential care. This new type of foster caring will focus on young people with the most complex needs.

Roy Hipkiss, Director of Credo Care, said:

Credo Care is delighted to be included in the Innovation programme and we look forward to contributing to successful outcomes for disabled young people.

The Specialist Foster Care Placement Project will provide foster care placements for disabled children and young people in residential care, and in doing so will change their trajectories into adulthood. The personal care offered in the foster placements will improve the quality of their lives immediately, while developing the self-care skills and supportive networks that are so difficult to provide within their residential placements.

Meanwhile another grant will go to Barnardo's, to maintain and expand the role of the National Female Genital Mutilation Centre (NFGMC). The centre was launched in 2015 alongside the Local Government Association.

Director of the National FGM Centre, Michelle Lee-Izu said:

Barnardo's and the Local Government Association are delighted the government has given the National FGM Centre further funding to help wipe out this hidden form of child abuse by 2030.

It will enable us to extend the reach and remit of the Centre's vital work and support more girls and families in areas of both high and low prevalence of female genital mutilation.

Since working with some local authorities that claimed to rarely come across cases of FGM, we have been supporting 198 families in these areas, which clearly demonstrates how much the FGM Centre is

needed. It also shows how much more we need to do in terms of training professionals to identify girls at risk and report cases of concern.

The funding will also allow us to extend our work to other harmful traditional practices such as breast ironing and flattening.

All of the projects which receive funding through the Innovation Programme are committed to sharing their learning with the sector, and today we are also publishing evaluation reports of some of the remaining projects from round one.

Alongside this, an evaluation report on Doncaster Children's Services Trust is published today. This looks at the implementation and early impact on service improvement and outcomes for children since the trust was set up in 2014, finding evidence that the model is working.

Notes to editors

- For more information, contact the Department for Education press office on 02073 407488