

Press release: Businesses get on board with Prompt Payment Code

32 of the biggest suppliers to the government have voluntarily committed to pay 95% of invoices within 60 days – and to work towards adopting 30 days as the norm.

This fulfils a key manifesto pledge and will help the cash flow of small businesses. It is estimated that small and medium-sized enterprises in the UK are collectively owed more than £26 billion in overdue payments.

The signatories to the code are major strategic suppliers who typically have contracts across government of more than £100 million. Together they account for around 40% of government procurement spend.

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in the Cabinet Office Caroline Nokes said:

This is a major boost to payment practices in the UK. Paying invoices on time is vital in providing healthy cash flow to smaller businesses, to help them survive and thrive.

Small Business Minister Margot James said:

We want the UK to be the best place in the world to start and grow a business, but the UK's small-to-medium-sized businesses are currently owed over £26 billion in overdue payments. Such unfair payment practices hamper a business's ability to invest in growth, and have no place in an economy that works for everyone.

It is only right that the government should lead by example, and it's great to see all 32 of our strategic suppliers signed up and committed to fair payment terms.

The Crown Commercial Service (CCS) encourages businesses to sign up to the Code, which is administered by the Chartered Institute for Credit Management (CICM) on behalf of BEIS (the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy).

The voluntary code of practice publicly signifies organisations' commitment to fair payment terms to suppliers, especially smaller businesses.

Philip King, Chief Executive of the Chartered Institute of Credit Managers, said:

It is important to see that all of the government's strategic

suppliers are now leading by example by signing up to the [Prompt Payment Code](#). The PPC allows suppliers to raise a challenge if they feel they are not being treated fairly by a signatory, and such challenges are proving successful not only in delivering payment but also in further improving practices and processes. It's vital that businesses feel confident and have certainty that they will be paid on time, as well as having a route to challenge if they need to.

[News story: Home Secretary awards £17m to tackle violence against women and girls](#)

The 41 projects across England and Wales will carry out a range of activities including providing support to victims, working with perpetrators of abuse to change their behaviour and helping to support children affected by what they have witnessed.

Specialist help will be made available for the most vulnerable victims, including providing support for those with complex needs, including those with substance misuse problems or poor mental health.

The funding for successful bids was announced in a speech by the Home Secretary to the Women's Aid conference to members in Coventry.

Home Secretary Amber Rudd said:

Tackling violence against women and girls is everyone's business. It needs a joined-up, collaborative response locally, providing support to victims through health, education and social care, as well as the police.

These projects will help ensure that victims and survivors get the right support at the right time, as well as intervening early to prevent these crimes from happening in the first place.

Violence Against Women and Girls devastates the lives of victims and families and this Government will continue to do all it can to protect people from these horrendous crimes.

The funding has been awarded through the Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Service Transformation Fund, which is designed to support earlier intervention and prevention so that fewer women reach crisis point.

It includes £600,000 for the ASSIST project in Birmingham, where health commissioners, local authorities and providers such as Black Country Women's Aid will work together to offer specialist support to victims of domestic abuse who have complex additional problems including drug, alcohol and mental health issues which mainstream services are often unable to address. There will be a particular focus on women at risk of having their children taken into care.

In South Wales, £1.4 million will go to a wide-ranging programme of support using the 'Change that Lasts' framework. This includes rolling out the 'Ask Me' scheme through which up to 30 'community ambassadors' will be trained to identify the signs of abuse and to provide safe spaces within communities where women can report it.

Seventeen of the successful projects include working with perpetrators, including programmes with teenage boys to intervene early if they are exhibiting aggressive or worrying behaviour before it escalates into abuse. Today's announcement represents a further demonstration of the government's commitment to tackling violence against women and girls and follows confirmation in the recent [Queen's Speech](#) of the forthcoming Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill.

It will include a consolidated new domestic abuse prevention and protection order, and enshrine a definition of domestic abuse in law. It will establish a Domestic Violence and Abuse Commissioner to stand up for victims and survivors.

The legislation will allow the government to ratify the Istanbul Convention, which will enable UK courts to prosecute British citizens for domestic abuse regardless of where in the world the offence was committed.

The bill will also ensure that if abusive behaviour involves a child, then the court can hand down a sentence which reflects the devastating and life-long impact that abuse can have.

In the last Parliament, the government published its strategy to end violence against women and girls, making clear that everyone needs to play their part – friends, family, employers, health providers and the police. It also introduced a specific offence of controlling or coercive behaviour.

The [VAWG Strategy](#), published in March 2016, committed to launching a VAWG Service Transformation Fund as part of the £80 million pledged to support the government's commitment to tackling VAWG and ensuring victims and survivors get the support they need. Following an additional £20 million announced in the Spring Budget, we have now pledged £100 million in funding over the Spending Review period.

View the full list of the [successful projects](#).

Read the Home Secretary's [speech](#).

Press release: Independent Recovery Taskforce for Kensington and Chelsea council

Communities Secretary, Sajid Javid, has today (5 July 2017) announced that he is putting in place an independent Recovery Taskforce to help the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (RBKC) deal with the longer term recovery of the Grenfell Tower fire.

This follows the government's commitment to do all that it can to support those who have been affected by the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower.

Communities Secretary, Sajid Javid said:

The scale of the recovery effort needed on the Lancaster West estate in the months to come cannot be underestimated. Support to survivors, the families and friends of those who lost their lives and residents in the wider community must and will be ongoing. The challenge of providing that support is and will continue to be significant. I want to help the council meet that challenge.

The immediate response to the disaster is being coordinated by the Grenfell Response Team, headed up by John Barradell. He is ably supported by a number of colleagues drawn from London councils, the wider local government sector including the RBKC, the voluntary sector, police, health and fire services as well as central government. Their expertise and hard work is making a huge difference.

As well as providing that immediate support, we must have an eye to the future. This intervention is putting in place the foundations that will support the longer term recovery.

Councillor Elizabeth Campbell, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea said:

We have a lot of very dedicated council staff working to provide help and support to those affected by the Grenfell Tower fire.

But the unprecedented scale of this incident makes it impossible for one organisation to cope on its own.

That's why my first action as leader was to ask DCLG for help, and I'm delighted they have been so swift to respond.

I look forward to working with their staff as we all concentrate our efforts on healing the wounds in the north of our borough and to regain the trust of a community traumatised by disaster.

Further information and details of who will be a part of this taskforce will be announced within the following few weeks.

The full written ministerial statement will be made available during the day (5 July 2017) on Parliament.UK and a link to it will be added here.

[News story: CMA to introduce market investigation changes](#)

Market investigations are powerful tools that can bring in major changes to make markets work better for consumers and businesses.

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) committed, in its Annual Plan, to review the way it conducts them. It took account of experience since market investigations were introduced in the Enterprise Act 2002, as well as legislative changes that came into force in 2014, reducing their time limit from 2 years to 18 months.

Andrea Coscelli, CMA Acting Chief Executive, said:

We believe these changes will enable us to carry out our market investigations more quickly, without reducing their effectiveness. They will preserve a fair and robust process and independence of decision-making throughout, which is central to the regime.

Having considered comments received, we remain convinced that earlier discussion of potential remedies will allow a fuller discussion with all parties involved and bring real benefits in ensuring the most effective measures possible to make markets work better for consumers and businesses.

[Having consulted on these proposals during March to May](#), the CMA is making the following changes to streamline its existing processes and ensure it meets the shorter statutory timescale:

- Assessing potential remedies to improve the market at an earlier stage in the investigation – following consultation it has clarified various aspects, in particular that updated thinking on potential remedies could be included in working papers (as suggested by some respondents) and that in most cases the CMA is unlikely to start detailed work designing

potential remedies at an early stage, but our approach will be tailored depending on the specifics of the case.

- Reducing the number of formal publication and consultation stages – removing the Updated Issues Statement, and combining provisional findings and provisional remedies into a single Provisional Decision Report.
- Earlier interaction with stakeholders during the investigation, including holding hearings sooner in the process.
- Allowing market studies (a shorter look at the market which can precede market investigations) to carry out preparatory work when they are likely to lead to a full investigation.
- Introducing the option for the CMA board to give an advisory steer on the scope of the market investigation, which is run by an independent group of CMA panel members.

The document responding to the comments received and the resulting changes in the CMA's published guidance, are available on the [consultation page](#).

[News story: #CultureisDigital – have your say](#)

Join the conversation on how culture and digital technology can work better together.

#CultureisDigital is a conversation between Government, the cultural sector and tech companies, led by DCMS. It stems from our commitment in the [Culture White Paper](#) to review the digitisation of our public collections and enhance online cultural experiences.

The project looks at how culture and digital technology can work together to drive audience engagement, unleash the creative potential and boost the capability of cultural organisations.

[Watch John Glen introduce the #CultureisDigital online discussion](#)

If you're part of a big or small organisation, in the tech or cultural sector, or someone driving forward ideas and initiatives in these areas, you can join the conversation now, discussing the issues you face and sharing your ideas and solutions to 4 main challenges:

Have your say at cultureisdigital.uk and follow the conversation on social media using the [#CultureisDigital hashtag](#). You can also share your case studies and examples of work already being delivered in this area.