

Press release: Environment Agency tests new powers for volunteer bailiffs

The Environment Agency and Angling Trust are running a pilot project, funded by the fishing licence, testing the benefits of giving members of Voluntary Bailiff Service powers to make fishing licence and byelaw checks. If successful, the initiative's expansion would allow Environment Agency fisheries officers to focus on investigations into other types of fisheries crime.

In the first phase of the project, the Angling Trust recruited over 300 volunteers across England to help Environment Agency fisheries officers by providing information and reporting suspicious incidents on riverbanks and lakes.

In the second phase, the pilot project has now trained 10 of the Voluntary Bailiff Service members from the south east to undertake fishing licence and byelaw compliance checking patrols, reporting offenders in the same way that Environment Agency enforcement officers do.

Judy Proctor, head of fisheries at the Environment Agency said:

The volunteer bailiffs already provide a great service to angling by helping our officers catch people fishing illegally. We will be evaluating the pilot carefully to see what more can be done and how we can improve the service.

There is no excuse for illegal fishing. A fishing licence costs from just £30 for a whole year and you can get one on GOV.UK. Anyone fishing illegally can expect to be prosecuted and face a fine of up to £2,500 and up to £50,000 for byelaw offences. In 2015/16, the Environment Agency's patrols checked 62,076 rod licences and brought 2,043 successful prosecutions for fisheries crime.

The Voluntary Bailiff Service recently inducted a further 35 new Phase 1 recruits in the North East and is currently recruiting in the rest of England. Induction and training days are being held this spring and anyone expressing an interest in joining the VBS should email karen.sarkar@anglingtrust.net

Speech: 'FinTech will transform the way we live and do business', says the Chancellor

This fantastic building has a proud history as an international marketplace.

One-hundred-and-forty years ago, it opened as the new home of Billingsgate fish market ...the largest fish market of its kind in the world.

But Billingsgate's heritage as a place of commerce and free trade goes back even further...

...ever since a 1699 Act of Parliament made it "a free and open market for all sorts of fish whatsoever"...

...with a single exception: the sale of eels...

...which was restricted to Dutch fishermen, in recognition of their help in feeding the people of London during the Great Fire.

An early trade agreement that I am sure Prime Minister Rutte will remember during the upcoming negotiations... Global ambition

Of course when this building opened the world was, once again, embarking on an industrial revolution...

...and, like the first, this second industrial revolution was led by British ingenuity and British design.

And whereas the First was characterised by the mechanisation of textile production in the North of England...

...and the advent of the steam engine, first built in the West Midlands...

...the Second saw steel production in Yorkshire take the place of iron...

...the first modern power station constructed in Deptford...

...the first commercial oil refinery in West Lothian...

...and the first commercial telegraph system, just down the road in Euston.

For the first time, merchants in London could send an order to suppliers in India, China or the United States along our international network of telegraph lines...

...to be shipped in steel-built steamships...

...refrigerated where necessary...

...and then distributed by rail to all corners of our country.

These breakthroughs drove the first major wave of globalisation...

...sustaining our economies until the breakthroughs in computing technology and the creation of the World Wide Web...

...led to what is now referred to as the Third Industrial Revolution.

Today we are on the brink of yet another industrial revolution.

One that has the potential, once again, fundamentally to transform the structure of the global economy, and the way we live our lives.

And once again it is British invention and entrepreneurial spirit that is at the forefront of the technologies...

...such as artificial intelligence, robotics, big data analytics, biotech and FinTech...

...that collectively are the drivers of what has become known as the Fourth Industrial Revolution. FinTech

And here in London, it is the combination of financial innovation with available venture capital...

...and the world's largest international financial services marketplace...

...that has put this city at the forefront of the FinTech revolution, changing the way in which financial services are accessed and delivered.

Just as with the telegraph and telephone in the 1870s...

...the first ATMs in the 1960s...

...and the arrival of online banking in the 1980s...

...FinTech will transform the way we live and do business.

Whether it is cashless transactions between friends...

...sending remittances to family in other countries...

...or apps that automatically invest savings at the best rates...

...FinTech provides consumers with better services, more choice, and lower costs.

And as I found on my recent trip to India...

...it has the potential to transform financial inclusion across the developing world too...

...with more than a billion people now biometrically enrolled in that country

and 220 million new bank accounts opened in the last 18 months alone.

For businesses, it can mean access to new and cheaper credit...

...as digitally enabled disintermediation links savers and businesses directly...

...through peer-to-peer lending, crowdfunding and smart lenders with innovative distribution techniques using technology to power credit approvals for on-line SME lending.

And apps that automate firms' compliance processes – so-called "RegTech"...

...have the potential dramatically to cut costs too.

This market is growing at a tremendous pace...

...and with hundreds of millions of people worldwide entering the digital financial system every year that growth shows no sign of abating.

Over the last few months, I have visited Barclay's FinTech accelerators in Cape Town and in Mumbai, and seen the impressive successes they are achieving.

So, I am delighted to announce today that next month Barclays will open its new flagship, 'London Rise'... ..the largest FinTech accelerator of its kind in Europe, offering over 500 workspaces for start-up innovators.

And, also today, HSBC and Tradeshift have confirmed that their new 'procure-to-pay' product will go live in July...

...allowing businesses to manage their entire supply chain and working capital requirements in one place, from any device...

...a great example of a partnership between a banking giant and a FinTech entrepreneur to develop practical solutions to support everyday businesses.

Today is about the UK as the global FinTech hub.

About bringing 450 investors, drawn from every continent...

...together with 100 of Britain's top FinTech firms...

...from Silicon Roundabout in London, to TechNorth in Manchester and Leeds...

...to demonstrate how our entrepreneurs are applying their ingenuity to deliver the next steps in the FinTech revolution.

We have the time zone, the language, the legal system, and the talent...

...in the world's number one financial centre...

...and the fastest growing tech centre in Europe.

And this government is committed – through the Patient Capital Review, and

the work of Sir Damon Buffini...

...to ensuring that we have the deep pools of long-term capital, too.

Taken together we have a FinTech sector that generated almost £7 billion revenue last year...

...and now employs over 60,000 people.

And you don't just have to take my word for it...

...EY and Deloitte have independently ranked the UK as the best place in the world to succeed as a FinTech firm. government support

This is not by accident...

...of course we have the talent, the entrepreneurs, and the markets...

...but we also have the regulatory and tax environment to support it too.

Because we have given our regulators a clear mandate to do so.

The FCA has led the way internationally with their 'regulatory sandbox'...

...allowing firms to test their products with consumers in a safe environment.

The Bank of England's FinTech Accelerator gives companies the chance to work on innovative central banking solutions...

...while the Bank is broadening access to its settlement accounts and payment systems;

The FCA are hosting a regulator's summit today, to discuss what more regulators can do to support the market's growth.

The government has also played its part.

In the last year we have introduced a new investors' relief, to support investment into firms looking to scale up...

... provided £400 million of new capital to the British Business Bank to leverage £1bn of investment in UK technology businesses...

...and through our proposal for the Royal Bank of Scotland, we will see funding for a series of initiatives, worth around £750 million, to boost competition in the UK business banking market, and to stimulate further investment in FinTech of the future.

But we can do more.

This government is consulting on a modern Industrial Strategy...

...and high-growth, knowledge intensive business will be at its heart.

Our tech sector already contributes a bigger proportion of our GDP than any other country in the G20.

But we cannot rest on our laurels...

...we must constantly move onward to remain the best place in the world to start and grow a tech business.

Our Plan for Britain points the way:

We must invest to overcome the poor productivity performance that has plagued our economy for well over a decade...

...and that is why at Autumn Statement I announced a £23 billion National Productivity and Investment Fund.

We need a skills system that offers clear routes into work...

...and that is why at Spring Budget I announced funding for new 'T-Levels' for 16-19 year olds.

And we must embrace the technological change that has the potential to transform our economy for the better...

...and that is why I also announced an Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund to keep the UK at the forefront of disruptive technology.

We can't remain the number one place for FinTech and the other technologies of the Fourth Industrial Revolution...

...by simply relying on our ingenuity, talent and openness...

...we have to go out and get the business.

Findings from our sponsors, EY, show that British FinTech firms most want to expand into Asia.

I could sense that excitement in the delegation of FinTech firms that I took to Mumbai last week to the first UK-India FinTech Conference...

...where we agreed with the Indian Government to work on a UK-India FinTech Bridge...

...in addition to similar arrangements, we've reached with China, Korea and Singapore...

...building vital links between markets and consumers in Britain and Asia.

Conclusion If the UK is going to make the most of the freedoms it will have after leaving the European Union...

...we have to build trade links with the fast-growing economies of Asia...

...we have to invest in the skills of the future...

...and our economy must remain at the cutting edge:

Not just of Fintech. But of AI, biotech – of every area in which we have the potential to lead the world into this new industrial revolution.

The world does not owe us a living.

We will have to strive and graft and fight to seize opportunities; and make the most of them.

That means growing and strengthening the areas – like Fintech – in which we enjoy a comparative advantage...

...it means maintaining and enhancing the UK's reputation as one of the best and most attractive places in the world to do business...

...and it means ensuring we are producing the people with the skills and the aptitude to become the next wave of innovators, entrepreneurs and investors.

Because while we need to continue to attract the brightest and the best from around the world to these shores...

...we must also do better at nurturing and developing the home-grown talent to drive our economy forward in the future.

Our vision of an outward-looking, Global Britain that will deliver the high-skilled, high-wage economy of the future...

...that will power the higher living standards we all want to see for future generations.

So I urge everyone here today – innovators, investors, regulators – to help us realise that vision.

Help us keep the UK at the forefront of the FinTech revolution.

Help us build a truly world-beating new tech sector.

Let your ideas, your apps, your services, your equity demonstrate what's really possible when government, business and regulators all pull in the same direction.

Working together, to build the world's greatest FinTech hub.

[News story: Buffer stop collision,](#)

Preston

At around 14:50 hrs on 1 April, a passenger train struck the buffer stops in platform 3C at Preston station. The train was travelling at around 6 mph (10 km/h) and several passengers suffered minor injuries.

We have undertaken a [preliminary examination](#) into the circumstances surrounding this accident. Having assessed the evidence which has been gathered to date, we have decided to publish a [safety digest](#).

The safety digest will shortly be made available on our website.

Press release: Reporting matters of material significance: guidance for auditors and examiners

The [revised list of matters of material significance](#) is intended to assist auditors and independent examiners in meeting their reporting requirements to the charity regulators.

The new guidance adds 2 new areas for reporting:

1. If an auditor has concerns regarding a charity's accounts and issues a modified audit opinion report or qualified independent examiner's report.
2. Where an auditor has concerns that conflicts of interests or related party transactions have not been properly managed or declared.

The list has been published by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR), the Charity Commission for England and Wales (CCEW) and the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (CCNI).

In all 3 jurisdictions, auditors and examiners have a legal duty to report matters of material significance to the regulator. In order to assist them in this duty there was previously a list of matters which had been prepared jointly by OSCR and CCEW.

Recognising that a number of years had passed since the original list was developed and also that the regulator in Northern Ireland was now also in operation, a decision was taken to refresh the list, considering carefully the regulatory experience to date.

A revised list of matters was prepared and [consulted on from May to September](#)

[2016](#). Consultation feedback was fully considered and a final list has now been developed. The new list of 9 matters of material significance includes 2 new matters (matters 8 and 9) that need to be reported and removes one requirement to report ([see 'Notes to editors'](#)).

The [updated list](#) can be viewed on GOV.UK.

Nigel Davies, Head of Accountancy Services at the Charity Commission of England and Wales, said:

Auditors and examiners play a vital role in supporting us to carry out our regulatory functions. We have, as regulators, reflected on our experiences to date and it is clear that not all auditors and examiners have been reporting matters to us. We hope that by providing an updated list auditors and examiners may be clearer in their duties. We urge auditors and examiners to read this updated list of matters which has been informed by our regulatory work to report and continue to report these serious issues to the regulators.

Laura Anderson, Head of Professional Advice and Intelligence at the OSCR said:

The revised list of matters has been drawn from our experience as regulators. We have been greatly encouraged by the level of feedback we have received through our consultation, which has allowed us to refine the list, ensuring it meets both the needs of the regulators as well as examiners and auditors.

Myles McKeown, Head of Compliance and Enquiries at CCNI said:

As a relatively new regulator the list of matters of material significance will be of great assistance to auditors and examiners in our jurisdiction. We have welcomed the opportunity to work together with colleagues in CCEW and OSCR in developing and publishing the final list.

Ends

PR 32/17

Notes to editors

1. Matter 8 from the previous list of matters to be reported has been removed. This is due to the fact that this led to auditors and

independent examiners advising the regulator where they had simply ceased to hold office. Where ceasing to hold office occurs due to a reportable matter this is covered by an alternative matter.

2. Matter 8: “Any notification or matter reported to the trustees on resigning as independent examiner or matter that the examiner is aware of on resignation or ceasing to act that falls within the categories of the previously set out reportable matters, or for examiners the notification on ceasing to hold office or resigning from office, of those matters reported to trustees”.
3. Under legislation in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, auditors and independent examiners have a duty to report certain matters to their respective charity regulators. Although the legislation varies in each jurisdiction the broad requirement is that where an auditor or independent examiner becomes aware of any matter, through the course of their work, which they believe is of material significance for the regulator in the exercise of their function.
4. The [Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator \(OSCR\)](#) is the independent regulator and registrar of Scotland’s 23,500 charities and publishes the Scottish Charity Register at [www.oscr.org.uk](#). Our vision is for charities in which the public has confidence and which provide public benefit.
5. The [Charity Commission for Northern Ireland](#) is the independent regulator of charities in Northern Ireland, established under the Charities Act (Northern Ireland) 2008, responsible for ensuring Northern Ireland has a dynamic and well governed charities sector in which the public can have confidence.
6. [The Charity Commission](#) is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see our [annual report](#).

Press release: Employment remains at record high rate of 74.6%

Official figures released today (12 April 2017) show that the employment rate is at 74.6%, with 31.84 million people in work – an increase of 312,000 on the year and the joint highest rate since records began in 1971.

The Office for National Statistics has also announced that the unemployment rate remains low at 4.7%. It has not been lower since 1975.

Full-time work continues to be the driving force behind the rise in employment. Average weekly wages grew by 2.3% including bonuses over the last year. Wage growth has remained above 2% every month since the beginning of 2016.

Secretary of State Damian Green said:

This is yet another strong set of figures, with unemployment at a rate that hasn't been beaten since the 1970s and more vacancies than ever before.

More people are finding full-time jobs and average wages have grown yet again, meaning more families have the security of a regular wage.

However, there is always more to do. That's why we're creating a welfare system that rewards work through Universal Credit, which helps claimants keep more of the money they earn.

Today's figures also show:

- there are 1.56 million unemployed people, 141,000 fewer than this time last year
- the number of people in full-time employment grew by 146,000 in the last 3 months
- the unemployment rate of 16 to 24 year olds who have left full-time education is 10.9% – a decrease of 1.3% from last year
- long-term unemployment is at 389,000 – the lowest since 2008

Separate figures out today show [1.1 million claims have been made to Universal Credit](#). Of the 490,000 people now claiming Universal Credit, nearly 40% are in work.

Estimates of the Claimant Count are no longer included in the ONS statistical bulletin as they may now be providing a misleading representation of the UK labour market. ONS released a [statement explaining the decision about the claimant count](#) on 23 February 2017.

Media enquiries for this press release – 0203 267 5118

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