

# Press release: Prisons and Courts Bill to improve access to justice and better protect the vulnerable

Plans to revolutionise the courts to make them more straightforward and efficient, and deliver swifter justice for victims, will be outlined by the Justice Minister Sir Oliver Heald QC today.

The Prisons and Courts Bill, which also contains a range of measures to help boost the reform of our prisons, will be debated by MPs in the House of Commons this week (week commencing 20 March 2017).

Measures in the ground-breaking Prisons and Courts Bill will mean that more cases can be progressed securely online and through video and telephone conferencing, eradicating the need for many administrative hearings to take place in the traditional courtroom setting and reducing the need for travel.

To ensure justice is also open and seen to be done, video booths will be installed in courts across England and Wales to allow members of the media and public to observe virtual hearings from court buildings anywhere in the country. Lists and results of cases that have taken place online, as well as those concluded in a physical courtroom, will also be available digitally.

Justice Minister Sir Oliver Heald QC said:

Britain has the best justice system in the world, but it should also be the most modern. Victims and the most vulnerable are at the centre of our changes, which will help deliver swifter and more certain justice for all.

We want courts that are efficient and fit-for-purpose, with facilities across the entire estate that are modern, user-friendly, and work in favour of our hard-working and dedicated judges and magistrates.

The Prisons and Courts Bill underpins this vision – building on the good progress we have already made in improving the experience of all users and cementing our reputation for global legal excellence so victims get the justice they deserve as quickly as possible.

The Prisons and Courts Bill proposes an extension to the use of video links and virtual hearings which allow victims to take part in cases without having to meet their alleged attacker face-to-face.

Under our virtual hearings measures a further 60,000 pre-trial hearings in the magistrates' court and 17,000 contested bail hearings can also take place by video, along with 30,000 pre-trial hearings in the crown court. This will

save around 34,000 hours of courtroom time. Proposals to introduce online convictions for some limited offences will also benefit the courts. Potentially around 8,000 offences – including 7,000 cases of people travelling without a train and tram ticket, and a further 1,300 cases of people fishing without a licence – could be handled online, taking away the need to be in a courtroom.

Bill measures will also mean around 420,000 summary and triable either way offences can be progressed without the need for administrative hearings to take place in a court. For example, offenders will be able to enter a plea online reducing the need to go to court until they need to attend trial or a hearing where they can be sentenced.

Discussions between the court and legal representatives about issues such as trial location will be able to take place via email or telephone or video conferencing, instead of being in a courtroom.

The government is also removing the requirement for indictable only offences to have a 'first appearance' in the magistrates' court, instead sending those cases straight to the crown court.

The Prisons and Courts Bill underpins our investment of over £1 billion for a modern justice system. The government is investing over £850 million to modernise and digitise the courts, and preserve the full majesty of the physical courtroom for cases that require it, in addition to around £250 million to deliver a fully connected criminal courtroom. This will result in savings of £252 million a year for the taxpayer.

We will move from too many underused and badly maintained buildings to fewer, better buildings with modern facilities. More modern and robust technology will be put in place in courts, such as Wi-Fi, modern telephony and screens for sharing evidence, to make the lives of our excellent judiciary and legal professional users easier.

The Prisons and Courts Bill also provides courts with the power to put an end to domestic violence victims being cross-examined by their alleged attackers in the family courts, calling time on what the Justice Secretary has described as a "humiliating and appalling" practice.

Car insurance premiums will also be cut by around £40 a year, with new fixed tariffs capping whiplash compensation pay-outs and a ban on claims without medical evidence, helping to crack down on the compensation culture epidemic.

In addition, the legislation sets in law for the first time that a key purpose is to reform offenders as they are punished for the crimes they have committed.

## Notes to editors

1. [The Bill](#) was introduced on 23 February 2017. Follow its progress on the Parliament website.
2. Recent announcements:

## [Press release: Foreign Secretary appoints new GCHQ Director](#)

Today Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson announced that Jeremy Fleming has been appointed to succeed Robert Hannigan as Director GCHQ, with the agreement of the Prime Minister.

Jeremy Fleming has been Deputy Director General of MI5 since 2013. He will succeed Robert Hannigan, who announced in January his decision to step down once a successor was in place. He will take up his post around Easter. The appointment was made following a recruitment process chaired by National Security Adviser Sir Mark Lyall Grant.

Announcing the appointment, the Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said

Jeremy Fleming is a dedicated public servant whose work over two decades in the intelligence services has helped to keep our country safe. I congratulate Jeremy on his appointment as Director of GCHQ at an important time for the service. I know that he will continue the excellent work of Robert Hannigan in leading this outstanding organisation, when the skill and ingenuity of the UK intelligence community are critical to defending Britain from cyber attacks, terror plots and other activities that threaten us and our allies.

National Security Adviser Sir Mark Lyall Grant said:

Jeremy Fleming emerged from a strong and competitive field as the outstanding candidate to become the next Director, GCHQ. He is a national security professional of the highest standard, who is widely respected across the national security community, in the UK and overseas. I would also like to thank Robert Hannigan for his excellent leadership of GCHQ over the last 3 years, including for the important role he played in preparations for the 2017 Investigatory Powers Act and in the setting up of the National Cyber Security Centre.

New GCHQ Director, Jeremy Fleming said:

It is a great privilege to be asked to lead GCHQ as it approaches its centenary in 2019. The organisation has a distinguished past

and an increasingly important role to play in keeping Britain safe in the digital age. From managing cyber risks posed by nation states to preventing terror attacks, keeping our children safe online and supporting our Armed Forces, the exceptional men and women of GCHQ operate on the new frontline of global challenges.

I'd like to pay tribute to Robert Hannigan, who over the last few years has led GCHQ through the transformation of some of our most important national security capabilities. I look forward to building on his legacy and in particular, the role he has played in increasing the transparency of GCHQ's crucial work and in expanding its cyber mission through the work of the National Cyber Security Centre.

Outgoing GCHQ Director, Robert Hannigan said:

I'm delighted that the Foreign Secretary has appointed Jeremy Fleming to be the new Director. I've known Jeremy for many years and he is a great friend and colleague. He comes with deep intelligence experience and expertise.

## **Notes to editors**

- Jeremy Fleming biography: Jeremy Fleming joined government from the private sector in 1993. He is a career MI5 officer with significant professional experience of national security and intelligence work, including international and Northern Ireland counter-terrorism, counter-espionage, cyber, and protective security. Jeremy joined the Board of MI5 in 2005 with responsibility for Technology. He was seconded to the Home Office in 2007 to be the Director of Strategy for the newly formed Office for Counter Terrorism and led on the revision of the Government's counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST. On return to MI5, he became the Director for intelligence Collection, overseeing a significant uplift in digital capabilities. He was promoted to Assistant Director General in 2011 and led MI5's preparations for the London 2012 Olympics. Jeremy was appointed Deputy Director General of MI5 in April 2013, with responsibility for the agency's core operational work. He has played a lead role in shaping the organisation to disrupt the changing face of the threat from terrorist groups and hostile state actors.
- All questions should be directed to GCHQ press office: 01242 221461 ext 33847; [pressoffice@gchq.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:pressoffice@gchq.gsi.gov.uk)

## **Further information**

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## News story: UK troops arrive in Estonia for major NATO deployment

Soldiers from the 5th Battalion The Rifles Battlegroup (5 RIFLES), including members of an Armoured Engineer Squadron, Military Police Detachment, Artillery Group and Port Task Group, arrived at Amari airbase last night.

They were welcomed by Estonia's Defence Minister Margus Tsahkna, having flown from RAF Brize Norton by Voyager aircraft.

The 120 soldiers are fundamental to setting up a UK headquarters in the country before the rest of the UK deployment arrives next month, increasing the total number of troops in Estonia to around 800.

Soldiers from the 5th Battalion The Rifles Battlegroup arrive at Amari airbase, Estonia.

The UK is taking a leading role in NATO's enhanced Forward Presence, alongside several other contributing nations. The deployments are designed to assure NATO allies of the mutual commitment to collective European security.

Working alongside the UK forces this year will be French personnel, and from next year, Danish partners. All are there at the request of the Estonian Government. The Battlegroup will provide a proportionate, defensive, and combat capable force to defend our NATO ally and deter any form of hostile activity against the Alliance.

An AS90 and a Challenger 2 tank being loaded onto cargo ship in the port of Emden, Germany, before deployment to Estonia.

The UK-led Estonia Battlegroup is one of four NATO multinational deployments to the eastern part of the Alliance. Other nations are deploying to Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, the last of which will include 150 UK personnel, on a persistent, rotational basis.

Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon said:

In the face of an increasingly assertive Russia, NATO is stepping up its commitment to collective defence. British troops will play a leading role in Estonia and support our US allies in Poland, as part of wider efforts to defend NATO.

Our rising defence budget means we can support those deployments in the long-term and strengthen our commitment to European security.

Commanding Officer of 5 Rifles Lieutenant Colonel Mark Wilson added:

The UK and Estonia have a long and proud history of serving together, including in Afghanistan, so it is an honour to lead 5 RIFLES on this deployment as part of NATO's enhanced Forward Presence. My soldiers are looking forward to again be working, training and exercising alongside their Estonian counterparts.

This week, around 300 UK vehicles have also departed to Estonia, including Warrior infantry fighting vehicles, Challenger 2 tanks and AS90 self-propelled artillery pieces. These vehicles, loaded onto a Roll-On-Roll-Off ferry, are currently on their way and set to arrive towards the middle of next week. French armoured vehicles, including tanks, are also due to arrive in Estonia via train after being loaded yesterday.

Personnel from the 5th Battalion The Rifles depart from RAF Brize Norton for Estonia.

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## [News story: Priti Patel will double public donations to the Disasters Emergency Committee East Africa Crisis Appeal this weekend](#)

In response to the unprecedented public support for the Disasters Emergency Committee East Africa Crisis Appeal, this weekend the UK Government will match pound for pound the next £5 million donated by the public.

This is in addition to the £5 million match funding already donated by the UK Government which helped Britain raise a phenomenal £12 million for the [DEC appeal](#) in just 24 hours.

### **International Development Secretary Priti Patel said:**

I want to say a huge thank you to the British people. Once again, the life-saving generosity of the British public has exceeded all expectations with their response to this vital cause. I've seen first-hand how every penny really does make a huge difference to saving lives across East Africa. That's why the Government will double donations up to £5 million this weekend to make your money go even further.

The Great British public has acted without hesitation to stop people dying of famine and hunger. Right now UK funded aid is reaching those most in need with food, water and emergency healthcare. Now it's time for the international community to step up and follow Global Britain's lead before it's too late.

This new support will double the impact of the public's own donations up to an additional £5 million and ensure that charities working on the ground can reach even more people in need.

This brings total UK Government match funding for the DEC Appeal to £10 million.

The UK's support will go directly to the Disasters Emergency Committee Appeal and provide vital and life-saving emergency supplies.

The Disasters Emergency Committee brings together 13 leading UK aid agencies to raise money at times of humanitarian crisis in poorer countries. By working together we can raise more money to save lives and rebuild shattered communities.

### **Notes to editors:**

Donations can be made at [www.dec.org.uk](http://www.dec.org.uk) or by calling 0370 60 60 610.

- £25 could provide a month's supply of life-saving peanut paste to a malnourished child.
- £60 could provide clean drinking water for two families for a month.
- £100 could provide supplies to a clinic treating severely malnourished children for a week.

### **UK support to Somalia:**

- In Somalia, more than 6 million people have no reliable access to food and there are 360,000 acutely malnourished children. All the signs are pointing to a famine as bad, or worse, than the one in 2011 which killed 260,000 people. The UK is acting now to prevent this.
- We recently announced humanitarian support for Somalia worth £100 million to respond to famine warnings, on top of a further £10 million announced by the International Development Secretary Priti Patel during a recent visit to Somalia.
- This £110 million of UK aid support will provide:
  - Up to 1 million people provided with emergency food assistance
  - Over 600,000 starving children and pregnant and breastfeeding women

- provided with nutritional interventions
- Over 1 million people provided with safe drinking water and hygiene
- More than 1.1 million people provided with emergency health services.
- Global Britain will bring the international community together in London for a conference later this year to agree future support to Somalia, which is firmly in the UK's interests.

## **UK support to South Sudan:**

- The situation in South Sudan is dire. Children will die tomorrow, and the day after, and the day after that, until the South Sudanese authorities allow food and life-saving aid to reach those most in need.
- Famine has now been officially declared in some parts of South Sudan – the first declaration of famine anywhere in the world for 6 years. 100,000 people in Unity State (Leer and Mayendit Districts) are now at risk of starvation.
- Almost 5 million face the daily threat of going without enough food and water and 3 million people have been forced from their homes because of ruthless violence and widespread rape.
- The UK was one of the first major donors to respond to the UN's appeal to South Sudan and we are leading the way by making sure millions of people in South Sudan get urgently needed food, water and medicine, as well as longer term support to provide much-needed education.
- The UK has announced £100m for 2017/18 that will provide:
  - food for over 500,000 people
  - life-saving nutritional support to more than 27,500 children
  - safe drinking water for over 300,000 people
  - emergency health services for over 100,000 people
  - livelihood support for over 650,000 people and
  - vaccinations for over 200,000 livestock.
- The UK is also leading the way in providing support for the region, bolstering help for neighbouring countries such as Uganda (almost £50 million over the last 3 years) to cope with the influx of refugees from South Sudan.
- In 2016, the UK's support to Uganda has provided: food for 650,000 people including 45,000 children; shelter for 56,250 people; blankets, water containers and sanitary towels for 64,000 people; and vaccinated 210,000 children.
- The UK will not look the other way while people suffer: the Government of South Sudan must put an end to abuses and deliver long-lasting peace.
- The international community now needs to step up alongside Global Britain to stop famine spreading and help support stability in South Sudan and the region, which is firmly in our interests.
- It is first and foremost the responsibility of the country's leaders to



alleviate the pressure on its people, and to stop obstructing the UN, as well as NGOs, who are delivering vital lifesaving aid to the South Sudanese people and ultimately create lasting peace and stability.

### **UK support to Kenya:**

- We are responding early and working with the international community to prevent a repeat of the Horn of Africa crisis in 2010/11.
- Our support at an early stage has helped mitigate the impact of droughts, saving lives and reducing the need for costly and often late humanitarian appeals.
- We have provided 11,500 children under 5 with nutrition.
- The Hunger Safety Net Programme (HSNP) – supported by UK aid – aims to reduce poverty and hunger, and build economic resilience for the most vulnerable people in the 4 poorest arid and semi-arid land (ASAL) counties (Turkana, Mandera, Marsabit and Wajir). It covers an area equivalent to 91% of the UK and 60% of the beneficiaries are women.
- HSNP provides small regular cash transfers as an alternative to food aid to support around 600,000 people, empowering people to make decisions about what they need, cutting out the middle man and reducing waste. Payments are made to households and work out at around £3.33 per person per month, paid every 2 months.
- HSNP can also rapidly scale up to reach a further 1.5 million people by providing emergency cash transfers to prevent the effects of drought. To date, on the basis of satellite early warning data, HSNP has scaled up support 11 times since 2015, including 3 times in response to the current drought.
- All payments are made electronically through biometric systems which are some of the most secure in the world, and mean British taxpayers can be sure that the help they provide goes directly to the less fortunate, not those trying to abuse the system.
- HSNP is now a flagship programme of the Government of Kenya, managed by the National Drought Management Authority (NDMA) as part of the wider National Safety Net Programme (NSNP). The Government now funds over a third (34%) of the programme, having started contributing in 2013. And the Government will be taking on increased costs in future.

### **UK support to Ethiopia:**

- In 2017, a new drought is hitting Ethiopia hard. Over 13 million people are currently in need of food assistance; this figure is likely to rise.
- Across the country, 9.1 million people are without access to water, and 1.9 million need support to prevent their cattle dying. 3 million children and pregnant women are projected to be acutely malnourished by May. People urgently need access to clean water, food and healthcare.
- In response to the continuing drought, the UK has increased much needed support to Ethiopia by giving an extra £11.5 million to provide around 800,000 people with lifesaving clean water, basic food, and emergency nutrition to malnourished children. This will provide emergency nutrition treatment to 25,000 malnourished children, clean water for 100,000 people and will provide vaccination and treatment to 600,000 cattle.

- Ethiopia is hosts over 800,000 refugees, mainly from South Sudan, Somalia and Eritrea. New refugee arrivals from all 3 countries will continue to increase.
  - The humanitarian situation is worsening. Forecasts for the upcoming spring rains are poor, and the lack of rainfall means there will continue to be humanitarian needs, particularly for water and food, throughout 2017.
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## **Press release: Planned roadworks in and around the M25: weekly summary for Monday 20 March to Sunday 26 March 2017**

The following summary of planned new and ongoing road improvements over the coming week is correct as of 17 March 2017 but could be subject to change due to weather conditions or unforeseen circumstances. All our improvement work is carried out with the aim of causing as little disruption as possible.

### **M1 junction 2 Mill Hill, Greater London: bridge investigation**

Work to maintain safety by carrying out bridge investigations will start this week. The northbound entry slip road will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 5am, from Monday 20 March for 5 nights. Work on Friday will start at 11pm. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A1 and A41 to M1 junction 4.

### **M1 junction 6a (M25), Hertfordshire: electrical repair**

Work to maintain safety by carrying out electrical repairs continues this week. The southbound link roads to the M25 in both directions will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 5am, on Monday 20 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the M1 junction 6, A405 eastbound and M25 junction 21a.

### **M3 junctions 2 (M25) to 4a Farnborough, Hampshire: smart motorway improvement**

Work to reduce congestion and improve journey times continues this week between junctions 2 and 4a with narrow lanes and a 50mph speed limit in place

on both carriageways, with a free recovery service operating 24 hours a day.

The northbound carriageway between junctions 3 and 2 will be closed overnight, between 8pm and 5.30am, from Monday 20 March for 5 nights. Work on Saturday will finish at 7am. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A322, A30, M25 junction 13 and M25 junction 12.

The southbound carriageway between junctions 4 and 5 will be closed overnight, between 8pm and 5.30am, from Monday 20 March for 5 nights. Work on Saturday will finish at 7am. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via M3 junction 4, A331, A30 and A287 to M3 junction 5.

The southbound carriageway between junctions 2 and 3 will be closed overnight, between 8pm and 5.30am, from Wednesday 22 March for 3 nights. Work on Saturday will finish at 7am. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via M25 junction 13, A30, A322 to M3 junction 3.

The northbound exit slip road at junction 4a will be closed overnight, between 8pm and 5.30am, from Monday 20 March for 4 nights. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via M3 junction 4, A331 and the M3 southbound to junction 4a.

The northbound carriageway between junctions 4a and 4 will be closed overnight, between 8pm and 7am, on Saturday 25 March 2017. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A327, A30 and A331 to M3 junction 4.

The scheme is due to be completed in June 2017. For further information [visit the scheme website](#).

## **M4 junctions 3 (A312) to 1 Chiswick, West London: electrical installation**

Work to improve safety by carrying out electrical installation continues this week. The carriageway in both directions, including Heston Services and junction 2, will be closed overnight, between midnight and 5.30am, from Monday 20 March for 5 nights. Work on Saturday morning will finish at 6am. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A312 and A4.

## **M4 junction 4b (M25), Greater London: carriageway survey**

Work to maintain safety by carrying out carriageway surveys will start this week. The dedicated link roads from the M4 in both directions to the M25 anti-clockwise will be closed overnight, between 10.30pm and 5am, on Sunday 26 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the M25 clockwise to M40 junction 1 and return.

## **M25 junction 2 (A2), Kent: resurfacing**

Work to improve journeys by carrying out resurfacing will start this week.

The dedicated link road from the M25 anti-clockwise to the A2 westbound will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 5am, on Sunday 26 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the junction 2 roundabout.

## **M25 junction 10 (A3), Surrey: communications**

Work to maintain safety by carrying out communications work will start this week. The anti-clockwise carriageway between the slip roads will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 5am, on Thursday 23 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the exit and entry slip roads.

## **M25 junction 10 (A3), Surrey: carriageway repairs**

Work to improve journeys by carrying out carriageway repairs will start this week. The anti-clockwise exit and entry slip roads will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 5am, from Monday 20 March for 3 nights. A clearly signed diversion will be in place for the exit slip road via junction 9 and return. A clearly signed diversion will be in place for the entry slip road via junction 11 and return.

The anti-clockwise carriageway will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 5.30am, from Thursday 23 March for 2 nights. Work on Friday will start at 11pm. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the exit and entry slip roads.

## **M25 junctions 10 (A3) to 11 Chertsey, Surrey: bridge joint replacement**

Work to improve journeys by carrying out bridge joint replacement on the structure that carries the M25 over the River Wey and the South West Trains railway line continues this week. The clockwise carriageway and junction 10 entry slip road will be closed overnight, between 9pm and 8am, on Saturday 25 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A3, A245, B374 and A317 to junction 11.

## **M25 junction 12 (M3), Surrey: smart motorway improvement**

Work to improve journeys by carrying out smart motorway improvement continues this week. The dedicated link roads from the M25 in both directions to the M3 southbound will be closed overnight, between 8pm and 5.30am, from Wednesday 22 March for 3 nights. On Saturday work will finish at 7am. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via M25 junction 13, A30, A322 to M3 junction 3.

## **M25 junction 14 and Terminal 5 spur road, Heathrow, Greater London: inspection**

Work to maintain safety by carrying out inspections continues this week. The anti-clockwise exit slip road will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 5am,

on Sunday 26 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the M25 clockwise to junction 13 and return.

## **M25 junctions 20 Hemel Hempstead to 21a St Albans, Hertfordshire: electrical repair**

Work to maintain safety by carrying out electrical repairs continues this week. The clockwise carriageway will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 5am, on Wednesday 22 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the M1 northbound to junction 8, M1 southbound to junction 6, A405 eastbound to M25 junction 21a.

## **M25 junctions 30 Thurrock to 31 Lakeside, Essex: street lighting**

Work to maintain safety by carrying out street lighting maintenance continues this week. The clockwise carriageway will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 5.30am, from Monday 20 March for 2 nights. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the dedicated link road between junctions 30 and 31.

The dedicated link roads between junction 30 and 31 in both directions will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 5.30am, on Wednesday 22 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A13, Wennington Interchange and the A1306 and vice versa.

## **A1(M) junctions 3 Hatfield to 4 Hertford, Hertfordshire: tunnel maintenance**

Work to maintain tunnel safety by carrying out repairs will start this week. The northbound carriageway will be closed overnight, between 10pm and 5am, on Saturday 25 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via A1001.

## **A282 junction 1a Swanscombe, Kent: tunnel maintenance**

Work to maintain safety by carrying out tunnel maintenance will continue this week. The northbound entry slip road will be closed overnight, between 9pm and 5.30am, from Monday 20 March for 4 nights and on Saturday 25 March. A clearly signed diversion will be in place via the A282 southbound to junction 1b and return.

## **A282 (M25) Dartford – Thurrock Crossing: routine maintenance**

Work to improve journeys by carrying out routine maintenance at the Dartford Crossing continues this week. The following closures will be in place overnight, between 9pm and 5.30am, with fully signed diversions in place during the northbound east tunnel closures for oversized vehicles.

- Monday 20 March: northbound west tunnel
- Tuesday 21 March: northbound west tunnel
- Wednesday 22 March: northbound west tunnel
- Thursday 23 March: northbound west tunnel
- Friday 24 March: northbound east tunnel
- Saturday 25 March: northbound west tunnel
- Sunday 26 March: northbound east tunnel

## **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.