

[Crime news: process change for intermediaries helping court users](#)

News story

Criminal Bills Assessment manual updated to reflect new guidance on the use of intermediaries to help vulnerable users of courts and tribunals.



We are updating our guidance following changes to the process governing the use of intermediaries to help vulnerable users of the court system.

This follows the launch of the HMCTS Appointed Intermediary Service on 1 April 2022. This aims to help vulnerable people with specialist communication needs to take part in court or tribunal hearings.

COVID-19 contingency record

We are also taking the opportunity to add in an annex of the COVID-19 contingencies now that these are mostly no longer in effect.

This annex will serve mainly as an historical record for the use of providers and the LAA. It also confirms the position regarding travel and remote attendances as we move forwards to business as usual.

Further information

[Legal aid guidance: crime](#) – to view and download Criminal Bills Assessment Manual

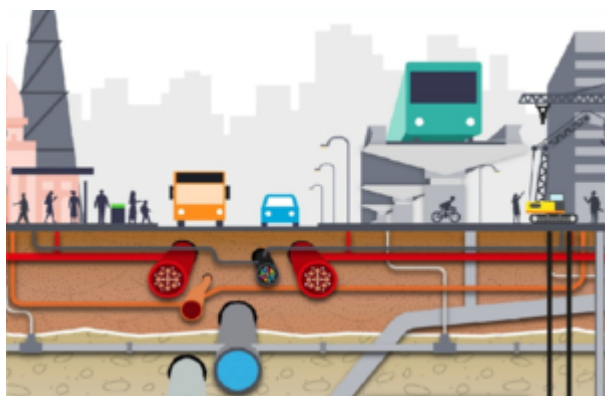
[HMCTS intermediary services](#)

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National Underground Asset Register public consultation launched

News story

The Geospatial Commission is seeking views on current ways of working, the need for potential legislative reform and the future operating model of NUAR.



The Geospatial Commission today launches its [public consultation on the future operating model of the National Underground Asset Register \(NUAR\)](#), a digital service for sharing data on the location of underground pipes and cables. The Commission is inviting those that will benefit from the service and the wider public to provide their views on what the future of NUAR could look like, and is particularly keen to receive responses from those working in the industry.

The deadline for responses is 11.59pm on Thursday 2 June 2022.

The consultation

The current build phase of the NUAR project is well underway. The Geospatial Commission is now holding a [consultation](#) on what the future operating model of the service could be. This consultation is a chance for you to provide your views on how the service could be run.

Questions

The public consultation asks nine questions in total on the following areas:

- Current ways of working
- Assessing the need for legislation and potential measures
- Who should be charged to support the running of NUAR in the future

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Call for evidence launched to understand people's experiences of extremism and its impact on social cohesion

- Public urged to have their say in a major independent review into social cohesion and resilience to extremism
- Dame Sara Khan, Independent Adviser for Social Cohesion and Resilience, gathering evidence for key report
- Review to examine measures to protect and support victims, how we can strengthen social cohesion and build resilience in society against extremism

Victims and communities are being urged to share their experiences as part of a major independent review into the impacts of extremism.

Dame Sara Khan, the government's Independent Adviser for Social Cohesion and Resilience, today (7 April 2022) launched an 8 week call for evidence that will help examine the impact, harm, and response to extremism at a local level.

Dame Khan's review – commissioned by No.10 – aims to understand the breadth and depth of the impact on individuals, communities and social cohesion.

She wants to hear directly from those who have been targeted by extremists to understand the impact on their lives and the support they received. As well as representatives from local councils and civil society, members of the public are being asked to explain what has gone well and what more could be done. These responses will help her understand the impact extremism is having at a local level and what could be improved to protect and build up social cohesion.

Responses will help develop Sara's independent recommendations on how the government can better support and protect victims of extremism and those working to stamp it out, as well as communities that are affected.

Dame Sara Khan, Independent Adviser on Social Cohesion and Resilience, said:

As the former Counter-Extremism Commissioner I saw first-hand the impact of extremist and other divisive activity in our towns and cities. Too often, the response to those sowing hatred and division is slow and ineffective.

That is why I have been asked by the Prime Minister to examine what

more is required to protect social cohesion and build resilience against extremism at a local level.

I will be seeking to hear from victims of extremism whose life-changing experiences are often unrecognised and from local authorities and communities who play an invaluable role. I will be taking an independent, impartial and evidence-based approach and I want to hear from all those who have experience of these issues. This public consultation will give everyone an opportunity to contribute.

Minister for Levelling Up Communities Kemi Badenoch said:

Our landmark Inclusive Britain strategy makes clear that we are a welcoming country whose strength lies within its communities. So, when people try to create divisions amongst us, we must be unwavering in our resolve to stay united.

By sharing your views, you will be helping ensure that our work to tackle extremism continues on the right track – so that risks in our communities are easily recognised and swiftly dealt with, and we can build resilience and promote social cohesion.

Our levelling up mission includes empowering communities – and this call to action is a great example of that ideal in action.

Brendan Cox, Co-Founder and Adviser, Together said:

I know first-hand the terrible impact extremism can have on individuals, families and our communities. This is a serious challenge for our society and it is vital we do more to respond to this threat. Sara's review examining how extremism impacts individuals, local communities and social cohesion is important and I encourage everyone to take part so she can build your views into her recommendations to the government.

Jo Broadwood, CEO, Belong – The Cohesion and Integration Network said:

Belong's own research has shown that local areas that prioritised social cohesion prior to and during the pandemic maintained stronger social connections, trust, neighbourliness and more positive attitudes towards others during the crisis. As such, actively attending to and maintaining social cohesion is a vital part of building social capital and supports communities and places to be resilient to the forces of division and polarisation, including violent extremism.

It is vital that we understand cohesion in this broader sense. We therefore welcome this call for evidence and encourage all those with a concern for building a more cohesive, inclusive society to respond.

Nuclear energy: What you need to know

Why nuclear power?

In light of high global gas prices, we need to ensure Britain's future energy supply is bolstered by reliable, affordable, low carbon power that is generated in this country.

New nuclear is not only an important part of our plans to ensure greater energy independence, but to create high-quality jobs and drive economic growth.

Large-scale nuclear is a very low-carbon technology, which provides the reliable baseload power we need at scale from a very small land area; Hinkley Point C, for example, will power around 6 million homes from a just a quarter of a square mile.

Is nuclear power safe?

Yes. As confirmed by the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency, nuclear power plants 'are among the safest and most secure facilities in the world,' and nuclear power is one of the safest forms of energy generation.

For context, the annual radiation dose to an adult living beside a new nuclear plant is much less than taking one trans-Atlantic flight or eating 100g of Brazil nuts – neither of which have heavy radiation.

In the UK, we have a well-respected regulatory system which reflects international best practice, and an industry which places an extremely high value on safety, achieving world-leading health and safety standards every time it is examined.

Nuclear power has operated in the UK for decades without incident, and all UK nuclear operators are answerable to robust and independent regulators – the Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) and the appropriate environmental regulator. If the ONR judged that any nuclear installation was not safe or secure it would not be allowed to operate.

How does nuclear power work?

Traditional nuclear power plants use heat produced during nuclear fission to

produce steam. The steam is used to spin large turbines that generate electricity. Nuclear power plants heat water.

In nuclear fission, atoms are split apart to form smaller atoms, releasing energy. Fission takes place inside the reactor of a nuclear power plant. At the centre of the reactor is the core, which contains uranium fuel split into ceramic pellets.

Each ceramic pellet produces about the same amount of energy as 150 gallons of oil. These energy-rich pellets are stacked end-to-end in 12-foot metal fuel rods. A bundle of fuel rods, some with hundreds of rods, is called a fuel assembly. A reactor core contains many fuel assemblies.

Both the Committee on Climate Change and the International Energy Agency have highlighted the role for new nuclear electricity generating capacity, in partnership with renewables, as a key element of achieving net zero. A recent report by the UN Economic Commission for Europe was clear that “the world’s climate objectives will not be met if nuclear technologies are excluded” from future decarbonisation.

What about nuclear waste disposal?

The government is committed to using Geological Disposal Facilities (GDF) to dispose of nuclear waste.

GDF is internationally recognised as the best long-term solution for dealing with radioactive waste.

We need a sustainable solution for the radioactive waste that has already accumulated over many decades. It’s currently stored safely in facilities around the UK, but this isn’t a long term solution and we will be moving towards geological disposal for new and existing waste.

A programme of local engagement events is planned from 4th March for local people to find out more about a GDF and what it would mean for the community that hosts it.

A GDF is a multi-billion-pound infrastructure investment and will provide skilled jobs and benefits to the community that hosts it for more than 100 years. It is also likely to involve major investments in local transport facilities and other infrastructure.

What is the government currently doing to support nuclear power?

The strategy will see a significant acceleration of nuclear, with an ambition of up to 24GW by 2050 to come from this safe, clean, and reliable source of power. This would represent up to around 25% of our projected electricity demand. Subject to technology readiness from industry, Small Modular Reactors will form a key part of the nuclear project pipeline.

A new government body, Great British Nuclear, will be set up immediately to bring forward new projects, backed by substantial funding, and we will launch

the £120 million Future Nuclear Enabling Fund this month. We will work to progress a series of projects as soon as possible this decade, including Wylfa site in Anglesey. This could mean delivering up to 8 reactors, equivalent to one reactor a year instead of one a decade, accelerating nuclear in Britain.

We are committed to building the first new nuclear power station in a generation at Hinkley Point C in Somerset, which will provide 3.2 GW of secure, low carbon electricity for around 60 years to power around 6 million homes and provide 25,000 job opportunities.

EDF are the lead investor building Hinkley Point C. They are targeting the first reactor coming online in June 2026. The developer is fully funding the project.

We have been in constructive negotiations on the Sizewell C project in Suffolk since January 2021, as the most advanced potential project in the UK. If approved Sizewell C would be a replica of Hinkley Point C, providing electricity for 6 million homes, and creating thousands of high value jobs nationwide.

In January we provided £100 million of funding for the Sizewell C developer to invest in the project to help bring it to maturity, attract investors, and advance to the next phase in negotiations.

As set out in the 2021 Spending Review, up to £1.7 billion of funding is available to support approval of at least one new nuclear power plant this Parliament.

The Nuclear Energy (Financing) Act received Royal Assent last week. The Act will enable use of the Regulated Asset Base funding model for new nuclear projects, which will unblock obstacles to developing these projects and cut the cost of financing them.

The Advanced Nuclear Fund includes up to £210 million announced in November 2021 for Rolls-Royce to develop the design for one of the world's first Small Modular Reactors. This could be deployed in the UK in the early 2030s to turbocharge UK nuclear capacity.

We are also establishing a new Future Nuclear Enabling Fund of up to £120 million to provide targeted support for new nuclear and make it easier for new companies to enter the market.

What are Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)?

Small Modular Reactors are smaller versions of conventional water-cooled nuclear reactors. Designs come in different sizes but have power output roughly a fifth to a third of the larger and more traditional reactors at Hinkley Point C.

There are a wide range of new reactor technologies under development around the world. Many designs have the potential for a range of applications beyond low-carbon electricity generation, including production of hydrogen, direct

heat for industrial or domestic use or nuclear waste management.

The UK government believes that SMRs could play an important role alongside large nuclear as a low-carbon energy source to support a secure, affordable decarbonised energy system. They can be easily manufactured away from the sites where they are used and deployed where needed and could be a transformative technology for the UK's industrial heartlands.

What are Advanced Modular Reactors (AMRs)?

AMRs are the next generation of nuclear power. These reactors use novel and innovative fuels, coolants, and technologies to generate extreme heat for industrial applications as well as for electricity to power people's homes.

They take advantage of the same modular-building principles as SMRs, making them more flexible to deploy.

We have committed up to £385 million in the Advanced Nuclear Fund (ANF) to support SMRs and AMR development. This includes up to £210 million awarded as a grant to Rolls-Royce SMR to develop their SMR design, which will be matched by industry.

This fund will be part of the measures the government will take to inform investment decisions during the next Parliament on further nuclear projects.

The ANF also includes funding for progressing plans for an ambitious Advanced Modular Research, Development & Demonstration (RD&D) programme which aims to enable an AMR demonstration by the early 2030s, at the latest. We recently announced that High Temperature Gas Reactors (HTGRs) will be the technology focus for this programme.

How long does it take for a nuclear plant to come online?

The timeframe for new nuclear projects coming online varies considerably depending on a range of factors.

Large-scale nuclear projects do have long-construction periods, but Small Modular Reactors for example could be deployable during the early 2030s, with innovation in manufacturing and construction having the potential to bring down build time further.

What's happening to the older nuclear power stations?

EDF, which operates all of the UK's Advanced Gas-cooled Reactors (AGRs) as well as Sizewell B, have extended the lifetime of many of the power stations built in the 1970s and '80s in the UK.

However, when nuclear stations reach the end of their generating capability, they move into the next phase of their lives which is to remove the fuel and to prepare for decommissioning.

This process is handled by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA), a government agency with high-level technical expertise in handling this

process in a safe and secure manner.

There are currently 6 generating stations across England and Scotland operated by EDF Energy. Sizewell B, the UK's only Pressurised Water Reactor, is expected to continue generation past 2028.

The AGR stations at Torness, Hinkley Point B, Heysham 1, Heysham 2 and Hartlepool will end generation between 2022 and 2028.

Two other AGR stations, Dungeness B and Hunterston B, recently ended generation to move into the final defueling phase and then decommissioning.

In terms of future use for these sites, the NDA have a clear mission to safely decommission them, freeing up land for future uses.

The NDA welcomes engagement from all stakeholders with a potential future use of land and have a history of engagement and land transfer across their portfolio.

Major acceleration of homegrown power in Britain's plan for greater energy independence

- The Prime Minister's plan boosts Britain's energy security following rising global energy prices and volatility in international markets
- bold new commitments to supercharge clean energy and accelerate deployment, which could see 95% of Great Britain's electricity set to be low carbon by 2030
- ambitious, quicker expansion of nuclear, wind, solar, hydrogen, oil and gas, including delivering the equivalent to one nuclear reactor a year instead of one a decade
- over 40,000 more jobs in clean industries to be supported thanks to measures, totalling 480,000 jobs by 2030

Cleaner and more affordable energy to be made in Great Britain under bold plans to boost long-term energy independence, security and prosperity.

The government's British Energy Security Strategy sets out how Great Britain will accelerate the deployment of wind, new nuclear, solar and hydrogen, whilst supporting the production of domestic oil and gas in the nearer term – which could see 95% of electricity by 2030 being low carbon.

The strategy will see a significant acceleration of nuclear, with an ambition of up to 24GW by 2050 to come from this safe, clean, and reliable source of power. This would represent up to around 25% of our projected electricity

demand. Subject to technology readiness from industry, Small Modular Reactors will form a key part of the nuclear project pipeline.

A new government body, Great British Nuclear, will be set up immediately to bring forward new projects, backed by substantial funding, and we will launch the £120 million Future Nuclear Enabling Fund this month. We will work to progress a series of projects as soon as possible this decade, including Wylfa site in Anglesey. This could mean delivering up to eight reactors, equivalent to one reactor a year instead of one a decade, accelerating nuclear in Britain.

Our ambitious plans also include:

- Offshore wind: A new ambition of up to 50GW by 2030 – more than enough to power every home in the UK – of which we would like to see up to 5GW from floating offshore wind in deeper seas. This will be underpinned by new planning reforms to cut the approval times for new offshore wind farms from 4 years to 1 year and an overall streamlining which will radically reduce the time it takes for new projects to reach construction stages while improving the environment.
- Oil and gas: A licensing round for new North Sea oil and gas projects planned to launch in Autumn, with a new taskforce providing bespoke support to new developments – recognising the importance of these fuels to the transition and to our energy security, and that producing gas in the UK has a lower carbon footprint than imported from abroad.
- Onshore wind: We will be consulting on developing partnerships with a limited number of supportive communities who wish to host new onshore wind infrastructure in return for guaranteed lower energy bills.
- Heat pump manufacturing: We will run a Heat Pump Investment Accelerator Competition in 2022 worth up to £30 million to make British heat pumps, which reduce demand for gas.

We will also look to increase the UK's current 14GW of solar capacity which could grow up to 5 times by 2035, consulting on the rules for solar projects, particularly on domestic and commercial rooftops.

We will aim to double our ambition to up to 10GW of low carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030, with at least half coming from green hydrogen and utilising excess offshore wind power to bring down costs. This will not only provide cleaner energy for vital British industries to move away from expensive fossil fuels, but could also be used for cleaner power, transport and potentially heat.

The Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, said:

We're setting out bold plans to scale up and accelerate affordable, clean and secure energy made in Britain, for Britain – from new nuclear to offshore wind – in the decade ahead.

This will reduce our dependence on power sources exposed to volatile international prices we cannot control, so we can enjoy

greater energy self-sufficiency with cheaper bills.

This plan comes in light of rising global energy prices, provoked by surging demand after the pandemic as well as Russia's invasion of Ukraine. This will be central to weaning Britain off expensive fossil fuels, which are subject to volatile gas prices set by international markets we are unable to control, and boosting our diverse sources of homegrown energy for greater energy security in the long-term.

Consumer bills will be lower this decade than they otherwise would be as a result of the measures this government has taken.

The British Energy Security Strategy will also increase the number of clean jobs in the UK by supporting; 90,000 jobs in offshore wind by 2028 – 30,000 more than previously expected; 10,000 jobs in solar power by 2028 – almost double our previous expectations; and 12,000 jobs in the UK hydrogen industry by 2030 – 3,000 more than previously expected.

In total, the British Energy Security Strategy builds on the Prime Minister's Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution, and, together with the Net Zero Strategy, is driving an unprecedented £100 billion of private sector investment into new British industries including Offshore Wind and supporting 480,000 new clean jobs by the end of the decade.

Business and Energy Secretary, Kwasi Kwarteng, said:

We have seen record high gas prices around the world. We need to protect ourselves from price spikes in the future by accelerating our move towards cleaner, cheaper, home-grown energy.

The simple truth is that the more cheap, clean power we generate within our borders, the less exposed we will be to eye watering fossil fuel prices set by global markets we can't control.

Scaling up cheap renewables and new nuclear, while maximising North Sea production, is the best and only way to ensure our energy independence over the coming years.

The strategy follows a series of engagement by the Prime Minister and ministers across government with key industry leaders, including from the oil and gas, wind and nuclear sectors. The government continue to work with industry in the coming weeks to drive forward these commitments as fast as industry can deliver.

Notes to editors:

- Prices of renewables have been consistently decreasing, with the price of offshore wind dramatically falling by around 65% since 2015, onshore wind prices down 50% since 2013, and residential roof top solar panels are now less than 50% the price they were a decade ago.

- In the immediate term, we're providing £9 billion package of support for consumers to manage rising cost of living. This includes a £150 council tax rebate from April and a further £200 energy bill reduction in October to cut energy bills quickly for the majority of households, while the energy price cap continues to insulate millions of customers from even higher volatile global gas prices. We are investing over £6.6 billion to improve energy efficiency and decarbonise heating over this parliament. In the next few years this will deliver upgrades to over half a million homes, delivering average bill savings of £300.
- To further drive down demand, and permanently reduce energy bills in the longer term, a temporary VAT cut on the installation of energy efficiency projects such as solar panels, insulation and heat pumps will be in place for the next five years to 2027.
- Britain's first nuclear power station in a generation, Hinkley Point C, is currently under construction, and we are in constructive negotiations with the developer on the Sizewell C project in Suffolk. The 2 projects combined would generate about 6.5GW of power.