

£2.5 million package announced to help disabled people travel more confidently

- £2.5 million package to improve the accessibility of transport for disabled people
- Accessibility Minister announces £1.5 million to help disabled people travel more confidently
- £1 million new funding to enhance access to lifeline ferry services

The government has today (29 March 2022) announced a £2.5 million package to support disabled people travel more confidently on our transport network as it reopens after coronavirus (COVID-19).

The new funding will include £1.5 million allocated to support all 13 Mobility Centres across England roll out a 'Hubs Mobility Service'. These vital services help people stay mobile after they have been advised to stop driving or if they are unable to learn to drive due to their disabilities, offering them advice on alternatives such as powered wheelchairs, community transport and local services.

The hubs have been successfully piloted at 7 of the centres over the past 2 years and have already helped over 4,000 people regain and retain confidence to travel. The real-life benefits of staying mobile were highlighted in the [Inclusive Transport Strategy](#), which sets out the link between reduced mobility and access to transport with loneliness and social isolation.

Ahead of the announcement, Accessibility Minister Wendy Morton visited Queen Elizabeth's Foundation (QEF) for Disabled People's Mobility Centre in South London last Thursday (24 March 2022), where she met people who had benefitted from the Mobility Centre's services, to help them stay connected and independent.

Wendy Morton Accessibility Minister said:

This funding will help people travel with confidence and comes just in time as our nation rebuilds from COVID-19.

We want to help everyone to be mobile and these vital Hubs Mobility Services will provide life-changing travel advice, keeping people connected to their friends, work and support networks.

I was delighted to meet people benefitting from this service and to hear about the difference this important work has made to their lives.

The visit coincided with QEF's 40th anniversary, celebrating opening the UK's first Mobility Centre and their first Mobility Open Day since the pandemic.

The Minister was able to see and experience some of the assessments funded by the Department for Transport and carried out at Mobility Centres, including for people interested in using wheelchair accessible vehicles, adapted cars and powered wheelchairs.

Karen Deacon, QEF Chief Executive, said:

We were delighted to welcome Minister Wendy Morton to QEF's Mobility Service to discuss how important it is to support people to improve their independent mobility and access public transport, to enable people to live the life they choose.

Whether that be for young children through the fantastic Bugzi powered wheelchair, or people with a life-long disability or who have had a life changing medical event.

Independent mobility and public transport should be equally accessible to everyone, and it was great to see the Minister personally experiencing the challenges some face when relearning to drive in an adapted car and listening to the day-to-day travel challenges disabled people face on public transport.

DfT has also announced that it will provide £1 million to lifeline ferries and seaports serving the Isle of Wight and Isles of Scilly to improve accessibility. The funding will improve access to services for passengers with disabilities.

The government has also confirmed that the 1,000th accessibility audit has been conducted at Oban station in Scotland. As part of the [Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail](#), the government committed to audit all 2,565 rail stations in Great Britain.

This 1,000th audit is a huge milestone as we highlight existing areas of excellence and identify scope for improvements. They will help produce a new public database, so people can better plan their journeys in advance and, along with input from disabled passengers, will shape future investment in accessible rail travel.

DfT has today also published a number of reports on transport accessibility:

[Green aerospace tech to receive record](#)

government funding

- Aerospace Technology Institute (ATI) Programme to receive a record £685 million of government funding over the next 3 years, an increase of more than 50%
- more than £1 billion total funding with industry will support the development of zero-carbon and ultra-low-emission aircraft technology, key to the Green Industrial Revolution
- ATI Programme also to reopen to new funding applications, having already secured more than 81,000 jobs in the past decade

The UK's aerospace technology research programme, the Aerospace Technology Institute (ATI), is to receive record levels of government funding, Industry Minister Lee Rowley confirmed today (29 March 2022), driving forward the research and development of green aviation technology.

The ATI will receive £685 million from the government for the financial years 2022-2023 through to 2024-2025, an increase of £235 million on the previous three-year period. Industry will provide co-funding, taking the total to more than £1 billion.

Funds will be used to capitalise on the UK's world-leading R&D system and support the development of zero-carbon and ultra-low-emission aircraft technology, cementing the UK's place at the forefront of advancing new green technology, whilst supporting tens of thousands of jobs.

Previous projects supported include ZeroAvia's six-seat hydrogen-electric aircraft, which is the largest such aircraft in the world, as well as Rolls-Royce's development of the largest, most efficient aircraft engine ever.

Industry Minister Lee Rowley said:

Since its formation in 2013, the Aerospace Technology Institute has been an enormous success, already funding world-leading innovations like hydrogen aircraft and 3D printed components. These projects are making a real-world impact and could one day help the global aviation industry transition to net zero.

Today's commitment is a sign of our increasing ambition and will give large and small businesses the confidence to invest in the technologies that will bring civil aviation into the next generation.

Aerospace Technology Institute CEO Gary Elliott said:

I am delighted that the UK Government's commitment to R&T investment in sustainable aircraft has today resulted in an uplift to £685 million for the UK aerospace sector over the Spending

Review period, in addition to the commitment at the Budget that the ATI Programme will continue until 2031. With the support of the Aerospace Growth Partnership, and with government investment matched by industry, the ATI will be able to invest more than £1 billion over the next 3 years in the cutting-edge technology needed to move towards our net zero targets. This has allowed us to reopen ATI funding to new applications from April and we will work with BEIS and Innovate UK to ensure that this funding drives UK economic growth and reduces global aviation emissions.

The government has also confirmed today that the ATI Programme will reopen to new funding applications on Monday 4 April.

The ATI Programme began in 2013, has secured more than 81,000 high value jobs and added £97 billion in value to the economy to date. It co-funds industry-led innovation in civil aerospace technology and manufacturing, supporting the development of the next generation of zero-carbon emission or ultra-low emission aircraft, while growing the UK's competitive position in civil aerospace.

As a result of its success, the ATI Programme has received an extension to 2031. This commitment gives industry the confidence to continue to co-invest with the government, driving growth, jobs, innovation and reducing aviation emissions.

Aviation Minister Robert Courts said:

As the government prepares to publish our Jet Zero Strategy this summer it is great to see new funding to support the development of new aerospace technology.

This funding, in addition to £180 million of government funding already announced to support the UK sustainable aviation fuels, demonstrates how we are supporting our aviation sector to decarbonise whilst maintaining its critical role in connecting people.

The ATI Programme is a key component of the government's Jet Zero policy, which includes the Jet Zero Council, established to convene government, industry and academia, and jointly chaired by the Business Secretary and Transport Secretary. A final Jet Zero strategy will be published this summer.

This funding is in addition to £180 million of new government funding announced in the Net Zero Strategy to support the deployment and commercialisation of Sustainable Aviation Fuel plants in the UK.

Failing landlords to be named and shamed as government steps up support for social housing tenants

- Sub-standard social landlords to be publicly shamed if failing to meet standards
- Resident Panel will give tenants a voice to raise their complaints at the heart of government
- Social housing reforms will transform the experiences of residents by tightening regulation and holding landlords to account
- Measures will help ensure we meet target to half number of non-decent homes by 2030

The government will “name and shame” failing social housing providers as part of major reforms to give residents a stronger voice and drive up standards.

Today’s move means social landlords providing sub-standard housing and services would be publicly called out on the government’s website and across social media channels.

Measures announced today (29 March 2022) also include a Resident Panel that will allow tenants who live in social housing to be heard directly by government. Around 250 social tenants from across England will be invited to share their experiences and help us ensure our reforms work to drive up standards.

As set out in the Social Housing White Paper, our reforms – due to be delivered through legislation – will transform the experiences of residents, with a major reform of the way in which social landlords are regulated and held to account for the homes and services they deliver.

The government has already set out a wide range of measures designed to drive up standards and fix a broken complaints system including by strengthening regulation of the sector, improving the Housing Ombudsman Service, and empowering residents to know and exercise their rights.

A package of measures announced today goes even further. It includes:

- Publicising on social media where landlords have breached the Regulator’s consumer standards or where the Housing Ombudsman has made its most serious finding – severe maladministration – against them.
- The launch of a Resident Panel, inviting residents to have their say on how to improve the quality of social housing. The Panel will allow residents to scrutinise and influence measures to strengthen the Decent Homes Standard, training and qualification for staff, a new Access to Information Scheme and other planned reforms.
- Publishing [draft clauses to legislation](#) that will reform the regulation of social housing through tougher consumer powers, greater enforcement

tools to tackle failing landlords and new responsibilities on social landlords.

- A new [factsheet](#) explaining the role of the Regulator of Social Housing and Housing Ombudsman Service.
- A [single gov.uk page](#), setting out our progress on implementing the measures in the Social Housing White Paper and further measures being introduced to improve quality of social housing.

Minister for Social Housing Eddies Hughes MP said:

“Everyone in this country deserves to live in a safe and decent home. It is unacceptable that anyone should have mould covering their walls, risk slipping on a wet floor or have water dripping from the ceiling.”

“We have published draft legislation today to toughen up regulation of social housing landlords. This includes naming and shaming those landlords who fail to meet acceptable living standards and giving tenants a direct channel to raise their concerns with government.”

“This package will help to deliver on our commitment in the Levelling Up White Paper to halve the number of non-decent rented homes by 2030.”

Today’s announcement follows the government’s campaign to help people secure improvements to their living conditions.

The government’s ‘Make Things Right’ campaign helps residents raise complaints if they are unhappy with their landlord’s services and struggling to get problems resolved, with clear advice on how to progress issues to the Housing Ombudsman if necessary. Adverts have run on digital and social media channels, as well as music streaming sites, to raise awareness of the complaints process and barriers to these being progressed.

Any social housing resident can [submit an application to join the Panel](#), which will close on Friday 29 April.

The new panel will be a way for tenants across the country to get involved in our work to drive up social housing quality.

The Resident Panel will be supported by a national survey. Around 5,000 residents will be asked to share their views about their landlord’s services during March and April 2022. The survey will be used to monitor the impact our reforms will have on social housing residents.

We will publish on social media where landlords have breached the Regulator’s consumer standards or where the Housing Ombudsman Service has made its most serious finding – severe maladministration – against them. See the [latest findings from the Housing Ombudsman Service](#).

The Housing Ombudsman is focused on helping to resolve individual complaints made by tenants, shared owners and leaseholders about their landlords. They can consider complaints and disputes and may help mediate to find a

resolution. The Regulator of Social Housing is focused on ensuring that the landlord meets the standards set for social housing providers. This includes that the landlord is well-managed and financially viable, provides tenants with quality accommodation, choice and protection, and that its tenants can hold their landlords to account. Read a [factsheet on the Housing Ombudsman, and Regulator of Social Housing](#).

[PM call with President Duda of Poland: 28 March 2022](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to Polish President Andrzej Duda this afternoon.



The Prime Minister spoke to Polish President Andrzej Duda this afternoon about the need for the international community to accelerate its support to Ukraine in the days ahead.

The leaders lauded Ukraine's impressive resistance against Russian troops, and the Prime Minister said that he believed President Putin would never succeed in his ambitions to subjugate the people of Ukraine.

Both leaders agreed on the need to continue to isolate the Kremlin over its illegal invasion and to maintain the pressure on economic sanctions.

The Prime Minister also set out his ambition to accelerate and deepen the UK's cooperation with Poland, and the pair agreed to meet again soon to discuss how the two countries could work even more closely together.

Published 28 March 2022

PM call with President Zelenskyy of Ukraine: 28 March 2022

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy this afternoon.



The Prime Minister spoke to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy this afternoon, as part of their ongoing dialogue.

President Zelenskyy spoke about the appalling humanitarian situation in Mariupol, where heavy fighting continues.

The Prime Minister offered his full support to Ukraine in the face of Russia's continued aggression, including with humanitarian support and more defensive equipment.

President Zelenskyy provided an update on negotiations and the two leaders agreed to coordinate closely in the days ahead. The Prime Minister reiterated the UK would maintain and strengthen economic pressure on Putin's regime.

Published 28 March 2022