

Civil news: further extension to 2018 Standard Civil Contract

News story

We have extended the 2018 Standard Civil Contract until 31 August 2023 except for the immigration category which will be extended for a shorter period.



Providers are being notified of our intention to extend the 2018 Standard Civil Contract until 31 August 2023.

What does this mean?

The 2018 civil contract will be extended to 31 August 2023.

Immigration will be extended for a shorter period and replaced with a stand-alone immigration specific contract. This will enable us to implement changes resulting from the Nationality and Borders Bill. The length of the extension will be communicated as soon as agreed.

The MoJ will be consulting in spring 2022 on new immigration fees as a result of the Nationality and Borders Bill. The new immigration contract will be tendered based on these proposals, once finalised.

How will the further extension work?

We will be writing to all current civil contract providers to confirm our intentions and formally issue extension offers.

2018 Standard Civil Contract

The Standard Civil Contract 2018 is the contract between the LAA and providers for the provision of face-to-face civil legal aid in England and Wales.

The standard terms underpin the commercial relationship between the LAA and providers.

Further information

[Standard Civil Contract 2018](#) – 2018 civil contract documents are available on GOV.UK

Published 23 March 2022

[Kosovo Serb voting within Kosovo in Serbia's elections: joint statement](#)

Press release

The governments of France, Germany, Italy, UK and USA regret the lack of agreement to enable Kosovo Serb voting within Kosovo in Serbia's forthcoming elections.



Joint statement by the governments of France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States:

France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States have intensely engaged with the governments of Kosovo and Serbia in the past months in order to find a pragmatic solution to allow eligible Kosovo citizens to exercise their right to participate in Serbia's elections on 3 April 3 2022.

We acknowledge that it is the Kosovo Government's prerogative to decide whether or not to permit facilitation of voting in another country's elections. While we appreciate Serbia's availability to find a solution, it is with great disappointment that we take note of the Kosovo Government's decision to reject a constructive proposal presented by the Quint. With this decision, Kosovo's Government failed to demonstrate its commitment to the principle of

protecting the civil and political rights of all its citizens, including of members of minority groups.

Such an attitude of the Kosovo Government is not in line with our values and principles and will undermine their European aspirations.

Following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, we welcomed Kosovo's alignment with the statements and declarations EU and the Quint members adopted. However, Kosovo is also expected to uphold its core values and responsibility towards regional stability and respect democratic processes, as well as to commit to protection of the rights of members of minority groups.

We expect the Kosovo Government to act in the interests of all its citizens, to work to decrease tensions and to engage constructively in the EU-facilitated Dialogue on normalisation of relations with Serbia. This is crucial to achieve progress towards a comprehensive normalisation agreement that will ultimately unlock the EU perspective of Kosovo.

We reiterate our strong call upon Kosovo and Serbia to refrain from any actions and rhetoric that increase tensions and may lead to incidents.

Published 23 March 2022

[Commission campaign to support charity trustees continues with roll out of new videos](#)

Press release

The Charity Commission has launched the next phase of its ongoing campaign to help trustees be 'certain in uncertain times'



New to the campaign this year are a suite of animated videos, which bring the regulator's 5-minute guides to life. The campaign also includes new materials on safeguarding, the topic of a [new 5-minute guide](#) introduced last year.

The regulator says the campaign is aimed at trustees who may have gaps in their knowledge – including because they are new to the role – and longer-standing trustees who wish to refresh their knowledge.

The campaign is designed to drive awareness and uptake of the regulator's [5-minute guides](#), which together make up an introduction to the 'core syllabus' that all charity trustees should be familiar with. The content and tone of the materials has been developed following user-testing with trustees.

The campaign is part of a wider initiative to make the Commission's online guidance clearer and easier to access, and to encourage more trustees to make use of it – in support of the objective in its [5-year strategy](#) to 'give charities the understanding and tools they need to succeed.'

The first phase of the campaign was launched last March and was consciously framed to help trustees respond to the uncertainty created by the pandemic. The Commission says the operating environment for many charities remains uncertain, including in light of the war in Ukraine.

Paul Latham, Director of Communications and Policy at the Charity Commission, said:

We know that trustees want to get it right, and are motivated by a passion for their charity's cause. Problems often occur, however, because they have misunderstood or overlooked the basics of the law or good governance, or indeed are over-confident about what they know.

Our campaign encourages all trustees to ask themselves whether they would know how to respond to common situations. We hope to inspire trustees to acquire new knowledge, and refresh their existing expertise, in the best interest of their charity and society as a whole.

The new campaign will run for six weeks on digital channels including social media.

Ends

Notes to editors

1. During the campaign the Commission will release 6 new videos, three of which are available from today, and can be requested from the Commission's press office.
2. The Charity Commission is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales. Its purpose is to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and strengthen society.
3. There are 700,000 trustees in England and Wales, who are ultimately responsible for the governance and management of the 168,000 registered charities. Most trustees are volunteers.

Published 23 March 2022

All schools to have high speed internet by 2025

Every school across the country will be able to access high speed internet by 2025, the Education Secretary has announced today (Wednesday 23rd March).

Speaking at the Bett Show in London, the Education Secretary set out the latest step in cross-government plans to roll out lightning-fast gigabit broadband across the UK.

To achieve this ambition, the Government has also announced a £150 million fund to support schools most in need to upgrade their WiFi connections. Over the course of the next three years, the Department for Education (DfE) will reach out to schools in priority areas to facilitate the introduction of faster and more reliable connectivity.

The department is also publishing its first set of technology standards, aimed at supporting schools and colleges in understanding which technologies they should have in place to best support effective teaching.

The standards refer specifically to broadband and in-school connectivity. Schools and colleges will be able to access advice on the most recommended technology infrastructure, which itself will support best practice in helping pupils learn.

Both steps to further improve technology in schools and colleges will contribute to the Government's aim to level up education for all – improving pupil access and outcomes, reducing teacher workload and making running a

school more efficient.

Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi said:

Digital technology, and the data and infrastructure that underpins it, is changing the way we live, work, and learn. We need to use our experience from the pandemic as a springboard to embed new and better ways of using technology in schools, and across education.

This new investment moves us a giant step forward to helping ensure that every school across the country has the best technology.

Upgrading schools to high speed broadband, setting out clear standards so that schools know what technology they should have in place, as well as providing funding to support them in achieving this, is the latest way we are levelling up education across the country.

The pledge to deliver high speed broadband will make learning more interactive, helping schools and colleges ensure that every pupil has access to the best education possible.

Geoff Barton, General Secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said:

We very much welcome this focus on supporting improved digital technology in schools through the measures outlined by the Secretary of State.

It is really important to seize the opportunities offered by technology to enhance the learning experience of young people and having the right infrastructure in place and evidence base of what works is vital in achieving that goal.

Schools are very keen to make the best possible use of technology for their students, and many already do fantastic work in this direction. Anything which helps will be warmly received.

The £150 million provided to help schools upgrade their technology will include those in the department's previously identified Education Investment Areas. These 55 areas were first set out in the Levelling Up White Paper in February this year and refer to areas of the country where school outcomes are the weakest. They will receive targeted investment, support and action to help children from all backgrounds and areas succeed at the very highest levels.

These updates build on the department's ambition to get children and young people connected in the best way possible, putting 1.9 million laptops and tablets in the hands of disadvantaged children and young people; supporting

1,000 schools in hard-to-reach areas of the UK get online with super-fast broadband; and funding the pioneering Oak National Academy, an online platform supporting pupils' education across the country.

Digital Infrastructure Minister Julia Lopez said:

Getting faster broadband into schools is crucial to levelling up. It means teachers can spend more time teaching instead of staring at loading screens and will put the benefits of interactive and internet-powered technology at more students' fingertips.

That's why I'm giving my full support to the Education Secretary to help hundreds of schools across England seize the benefits of lightning-fast connections, and that's on top of the millions of rural homes and businesses in line for an upgrade through our £5 billion Project Gigabit.

Caroline Wright, Director General, BESA said:

Our research of 1,000s of schools annually shows that teachers top three concerns are connectivity and infrastructure, ICT training, and a lack of funding. I'm glad that the DfE has listened to the evidence on this occasion and is announcing plans to improve connectivity and provide digital standards guidance to better help schools understand the baseline infrastructure that is needed to start addressing the digital divide that exists in our schools.

Schools will be able to access the standards online via gov.uk, and eligible schools will be contacted in due course by the department to enable them to access the funding available to upgrade their technology infrastructure.

Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine: UK statement to the OSCE, 23 March 2022

Thank you Mr Chair. This statement is delivered under the topic raised by Ukraine and I request that this be accurately reflected in the Journal of the Day.

Mr Chair, it is with great regret that we have reached the appalling milestone that it is now a month since President Putin launched his

unprovoked, premeditated and a barbaric attack on Ukraine. Throughout these terrible weeks we have seen the most reprehensible and horrific attacks conducted against Ukraine in which so many innocent people have lost their lives.

We have watched the biggest concentration of forces amassed since the Cold War roll into Ukraine where it has been frustrated by fierce Ukrainian resistance. The Russian invasion has largely stalled on all fronts. Russian forces have made minimal progress on land, sea or air in recent days and they continue to suffer heavy losses. Thousands of troops, hundreds of tanks, attack helicopters, and close air support have so far failed to yield results.

Mr Chair, Russia has unleashed a horrendous amount of violence on the Ukrainian people. Russian naval forces continue to blockade the Ukrainian coast and to launch missile strikes on targets across Ukraine. The blockade of Ukraine's coast is effectively isolating Ukraine from international maritime trade and is contributing to the deteriorating humanitarian situation Russia has created by preventing vital supplies reaching the Ukrainian population. This is exacerbated further with the attacks on Ukrainian ports and port cities, including the atrocious and indiscriminate destruction of Mariupol.

Bogged down and making minimal progress, frustrated Russian military commanders are trying to break the unbreakable – Ukrainian spirit and resolve. They are doing this in the most cowardly way, attacking urban and residential centres indiscriminately from distance using: Multi-launch Rocket Systems, Iskander Ballistic Missiles, artillery, cruise missiles, cluster munitions and thermobaric rockets.

This is not the art of war being conducted by an honourable and professional military of a Great Power. This is indiscriminate destruction. Those carrying out war crimes should know they cannot act with impunity. Indiscriminate attacks against innocent civilians amount to war crimes, for which those who are complicit, must be held accountable. The world is quite literally watching.

Our Russian colleagues have the privileged position to watch uncensored news from around the world reporting the true horrors of President Putin's chosen path of bloodshed and destruction. But again and again, in the face of the overwhelming truth, they continue to peddle the Kremlin's blizzard of lies and disinformation. They have lost all credibility. It is shameful behaviour, disrespectful to this forum, everyone in this room and the diplomatic profession.

Mr Chair, one month in, and President Putin's so-called "Special Military Operation" is certainly not going to plan. We can only imagine how angry he must be. How infuriating it is to be lied to. How devastating the consequences. Russian soldiers are paying a high price for this deceit – they are fighting and dying for a lie.

In contrast, the Ukrainian people are fighting for their homeland. United and

defiant. The world is witnessing displays of courage, determination, and resolve that will go down in history.

The United Kingdom, along with many others, repeatedly warned that any Russian military incursion into Ukraine would be a massive strategic mistake and would come at a severe cost. Last week, we updated this forum on our continued support to Ukraine, our friends, as they fight for the right to choose their own destiny.

This week, I would like to update that the UK Government has now taken the decision to donate Starstreak, a high velocity, man-portable anti air missile to the Armed Forces of Ukraine. With the accompanying training package, this defensive weapon system will allow the Armed Forces of Ukraine to better defend their skies from Russian military aircraft.

I would reiterate, all of our support to the democratic sovereign nation of Ukraine is defensive in nature and will help them defend themselves against this Russian war of aggression.

We will make the Russian government pay the price of its actions. The UK stands with the Ukrainian people in their fight for their homeland. We will work with our partners – for however long it takes – to ensure that the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the independence of Ukraine is restored.

Mr Chair, finally, I would again urge our Russian colleagues, to take a moment – to listen to the overwhelming condemnation ([141 countries at the UNGA](#)) and to listen to the truth. I urge them to consider their position, responsibilities and legacy as diplomats and citizens of Russia and stop their complicit propagation of President Putin's lies to their own people. Their actions and choices today will be ones they have to live with forever.

Thank you. And I ask that this statement be attached to the journal of the day.