

PM call with First Minister Paul Givan and Deputy First Minister Michelle O'Neill: 17 December 2021

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to First Minister Paul Givan and Deputy First Minister Michelle O'Neill.



The Prime Minister has spoken to First Minister and Deputy First Minister of Northern Ireland this afternoon to discuss the ongoing response to the Omicron variant.

They agreed on the vital importance of the vaccine rollout and acceleration of the booster campaign.

They also discussed shared challenges including the economic disruption caused by Covid and will continue to work together.

The Prime Minister confirmed UK Government will be convening a COBR meeting over the weekend with counterparts from the devolved administrations to continue discussions.”

Published 20 December 2021

New national security regime from 4 January 2022

To businesses and investors.

We are now approaching the full commencement of the National Security and Investment Act 2021 on 4 January 2022. The Act introduces new powers for government to investigate and, if necessary, intervene in investments and other acquisitions of entities and assets in, or linked to, the UK where they could harm the UK's national security.

This is the biggest shake up of the UK's national security investment screening powers for 20 years, and I wanted to write to you to set out what this means.

As a government, we have always wrapped our arms around business and we will continue to welcome the huge role foreign direct investment plays in our economy – creating jobs and driving growth across the country. However, while we prize our open approach to investment, we must balance this with measures that protect the safety of our citizens.

I understand that the majority of investors are only seeking to grow their businesses and contribute to the UK economy by investing here, but it is an unavoidable truth that a handful want to do us harm.

In the UK, we see ever more ingenious threats to our national security. The government has been very clear that we want the UK to remain an attractive place to do business and the Act is an important part of ensuring investment in the UK can continue with predictability and transparency while protecting national security.

Our economy has changed greatly over the last 20 years, and these reforms are about modernising our existing powers which derive from the Enterprise Act 2002. This is not about stifling investment, but about adapting to new threats. The Act establishes a dedicated investment screening process for national security purposes. It cannot and will not be used for anything other than national security.

The approach of the Act will be familiar to those of you who have dealt with investment screening in other like-minded countries, such as the USA, Australia, Germany, and Canada. I want to reassure you that the vast majority of acquisitions will be unaffected by these powers. We know that only a small minority of acquisitions pose a potential risk to the UK.

The Act requires certain acquisitions of entities in the 17 most sensitive areas of the economy to be notified and approved before they are completed.

The Act intentionally gives businesses and investors a clear and predictable screening process so that they can plan with confidence the maximum time it will take until they can expect a decision. My department, the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), hosts the Investment Security Unit and the decision maker on all cases will be the Secretary of State for BEIS. We have published the [Section 3 Statement](#) which can be used to help understand how government expects to use the call-in power, which allows government to call-in and assess qualifying acquisitions, within the legislation.

Businesses and investors are urged to get ready for the changes, and we have published [guidance to ensure a smooth transition to the new rules](#).

To help you prepare for the Act I have set out the following steps:

1. Check if the rules will apply to your acquisition. This will depend on what you are acquiring and how much control you have over it.
2. Check if you will need to tell the government about your acquisition. You will be legally required to inform the government about certain acquisitions of entities if your acquisition is in a [sensitive area of the UK economy](#) from 4 January 2022.
3. Tell the government about your acquisition. You can do this online by submitting a notification from 4 January 2022.
4. The government will review your acquisition. It can either clear your acquisition, impose certain conditions, or block or unwind it.

We will publish further guidance 6 months after the new Act commences. This will be written in light of the experience once the Act is in operation, and we hope to give some indication of types of acquisitions that do not need to be notified. This should give further reassurance to businesses and maintain the UK's lively and competitive economy.

Similarly, the ISU is available to be contacted by their email address (investment.screening@beis.gov.uk) and I encourage you to get in touch if you have any questions about the Act or any notifications.

Yours faithfully,

Lord Callanan
Minister for Business, Energy and Corporate Responsibility

[Icarus advances armoured vehicle protection](#)

Delivered in collaboration through an industrial partnership led by Leonardo, the Icarus Technology Demonstrator Programme has developed and proven the Modular Integrated Protection System (MIPS) architecture.

This is designed to enable the flexible teaming of a range of technologies to

create a suite of Active Protection Systems (APS). APS combine both sensors to detect and counter-measures to disrupt threats and forms a protective electronic 'bubble' around the vehicle.

The MIPS architecture enables the development of best of breed APS capabilities with a view to harmonising modular hardware and software components that can then provide protection across the close combat vehicle fleet and future [robotic and autonomous systems](#) platforms.

Further, as a generic safety critical 'sense to effect' system, MIPS can also support a wider range of threat defeat capabilities such as countering uncrewed air systems (UAS), counter-surveillance and even ground-based air defence activities. By developing these implementations using common principles, support for future information interoperability and the digital battlespace is being designed in from the start.

The different technologies are being developed under Modular Open System Architecture principles to design and connect interoperable sub-systems that can be deployed across different land platforms.

While MIPS-enabled systems can exploit current generation, high maturity technologies to give near-term systems at low risk, MIPS will also enable the UK to develop more advanced capabilities in the future. Advances to 2040 are expected to include:

- improved sensors – in which multi-spectral devices are combined with increasingly sophisticated but affordable fast signal processing
- enhanced information processing, such as data fusion and artificial intelligence
- improved effectors – in which current counter-munition and directed-energy technology projects deliver more precise effects with accurate timing and smaller collateral effect
- improved high-speed directors – compact and affordable energy storage and motor drive technologies
- improvements in electronic infrastructure component technologies – where safety and security features developed for industrial robotic and autonomous systems support dependable networked active protection implementations

Research and verification of the core architecture has been completed with the next step being to progress the implementation of MIPS-compliant systems to higher technology readiness levels. Depending on the speed of the development, MIPS could be brought into service from 2027.

Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) Programme Manager, Richard Hooper, said:

MIPS will help preserve the lives of UK forces by providing agility and flexibility in APS capability, allowing us, and our NATO partners, to tailor solutions to the evolving threat environment and react to changes in operationally-relevant timeframes.

Tier 1 companies supporting the Leonardo research include Roke, BAE Systems, Ultra Electronics, Frazer Nash Consultancy, Lockheed Martin, Abstract Solutions and CGI. Other suppliers included MOOG, RADA and Rheinmetall.

[Foreign Secretary issues joint statement with international partners on Hong Kong elections: 20 December 2021](#)

Press release

The UK along with the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand issued a statement following the Hong Kong legislative council elections.



We, the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom, and the United States Secretary of State, noting the outcome of the Legislative Council elections in Hong Kong, express our grave concern over the erosion of democratic elements of the Special Administrative Region's electoral system. Actions that undermine Hong Kong's rights, freedoms and high degree of autonomy are threatening our shared wish to see Hong Kong succeed.

Since handover, candidates with diverse political views have contested elections in Hong Kong. Yesterday's election has reversed this trend. The overhaul of Hong Kong's electoral system introduced earlier this year reduced the number of directly elected seats and established a new vetting process to severely restrict the choice of candidates on the ballot paper. These changes eliminated any meaningful political opposition. Meanwhile, many of the city's opposition politicians – most notably the majority of the "NSL 47" – remain in prison pending trial, with others in exile overseas.

We also remain gravely concerned at the wider chilling effect of the National

Security Law and the growing restrictions on freedom of speech and freedom of assembly, which are being felt across civil society. NGOs, trade unions and human rights organisations not supportive of the government's agenda have been forced to disband or leave, while media freedoms are being curtailed at pace.

Protecting space for peaceful alternative views is the most effective way to ensure the stability and prosperity of Hong Kong. We urge the People's Republic of China to act in accordance with its international obligations to respect protected rights and fundamental freedoms in Hong Kong, including those guaranteed under the Sino-British Joint Declaration.

ENDS

Published 20 December 2021

[November 2021 Transaction Data](#)

News story

This data provides information about the number and types of applications that HM Land Registry completed in November 2021.



Image credit: NicoElNino/Shutterstock.com

Please note this data shows what HM Land Registry has been able to process during the time period covered and is not necessarily a reflection of market activity.

In November:

- HM Land Registry completed more than 1,840,700 applications to change or query the Land Register

- the South East topped the table of regional applications with 424,106

HM Land Registry completed 1,840,720 applications in November compared with 1,771,848 in October and 1,710,237 last November 2020, of which:

- 345,740 were applications for register updates compared with 341,065 in October
- 973,605 were applications for an official copy of a register compared with 952,922 in October
- 241,525 were search and hold queries (official searches) compared with 223,284 in October
- 16,310 were postal applications from non-account holders compared with 16,368 in October

Applications by region and country

Region/country	September applications	October applications	November applications
South East	383,237	416,242	424,106
Greater London	292,204	318,722	339,450
North West	196,939	204,223	210,391
South West	162,228	174,735	179,377
West Midlands	141,022	147,428	153,843
Yorkshire and the Humber	133,245	141,442	145,836
East Midlands	119,935	128,444	133,801
North	83,033	85,165	89,629
East Anglia	70,143	74,178	79,696
Isles of Scilly	47	55	42
Wales	77,548	81,121	84,468
England and Wales (not assigned)	99	93	81
Total	1,659,680	1,771,848	1,840,720

Top 5 local authority areas

November 2021 applications

Top 5 local authority areas November applications

Birmingham	26,401
City of Westminster	22,426
Leeds	20,943
Buckinghamshire	19,191
Cornwall	18,751

October 2021 applications

Top 5 local authority areas October applications

Birmingham	25,637
City of Westminster	22,426
Leeds	19,870
Buckinghamshire	18,390
Cornwall	18,150

Top 5 customers

November 2021 applications

Top 5 customers	November applications
Infotrack Limited	117,295
Enact	41,912
O'Neill Patient	33,107
Optima Legal Services	31,739
HBOS PLC Bank	18,556

October 2021 applications

Top 5 customers	October applications
Infotrack Limited	114,963
Enact	41,978
O'Neill Patient	33,468
Optima Legal Services	33,095
TM Group (UK) Ltd	20,939

Access the data

[Access the full dataset on our Use land and property data service.](#)

Next publication

We publish Transaction Data on the 15th working day of each month. The December data will be published at 11am on Monday 24 January 2022.

Published 20 December 2021