

# Treasury Minister commends energy innovations towards Net Zero

- Treasury Minister Kemi Badenoch sees government and private investment in the Green Recovery paying off during visit to the Midlands.
- Severn Trent's Innovative waste process is working to combat emissions and creating green jobs.
- Government's Plan for Jobs in action as Severn Trent offer additional 500 young people placements and opportunities this year.

Kemi Badenoch toured Severn Trent's new state-of-the-art thermal hydrolysis plant, just outside Coventry, which creates green energy from waste and supplies gas straight to the grid.

The Minister heard how the company will also be investing £566million in a Green Recovery programme to help create up to 2,500 new jobs in the region.

These proposals include producing enough zero carbon water to supply a city the size of Leicester, creating bathing rivers close to one million homes and reducing the risk of flooding for 90,000 properties using nature-based solutions.

During her visit, she also met some of the new engineering graduates and summer interns and saw the Government's Kickstart programme in action at Severn Trent's brand-new technical training academy when she met some of the young people the water company has created job placements for through the scheme.

## **Speaking after the visit, Treasury Net Zero Minister Kemi Badenoch said:**

I was delighted to visit Severn Trent and see the innovation to stop pollution and deliver Net Zero is already taking place.

They are also leading the way out of the pandemic by delivering their Green Recovery programme which supports their ambitious net zero plan by 2030 and creates new jobs and world-class training via the government's Kickstart scheme.

Severn Trent's state of the art training facility is part of the company's wider £10 million investment in skills and training for its people and communities.

The company is aiming to create 500 placements this year, to provide useful training and experience to help young people with securing permanent jobs in the future.

**Liv Garfield, Severn Trent CEO, said:**

We know that across our region, coronavirus has affected peoples careers and jobs, so we're really excited to be able to share our brand new Academy, so we can do our bit to help provide valuable skills and opportunities to support our customers and communities.

It's one of the key ways we, as a responsible company, can help make a real difference.

Whether it's through joining our Kickstart or apprentice programme, or helping us to deliver our ambitious Green Recovery programme- we're absolutely committed to supporting our people, our customers and their communities however we can by providing opportunities for people to develop skills and careers.

So far, 50,000 Kickstart jobs have been started by young people across the country in a range of different sectors, including construction, creative and media, and health and social care.

The landmark scheme, which gives 16-24-year olds at risk of long-term unemployment a future of opportunity and hope by creating high-quality, government-subsidised jobs across Great Britain, was launched last September as part of the Government's Plan for Jobs.

**Magdalena Nenova, Junior Designer and Marketing assistant on the Kickstart programme said:**

My Kickstarter placement has allowed me to develop the skills, knowledge and experience I need to help me with my career, as I aspire to work in the creative industry in advertising and marketing.

Through my placement I'm responsible for developing and creating storyboards for social media content, supporting our marketing team.

Since joining, I've loved the challenge of a new job and being part of a company like Severn Trent. There's been great support within my team, and I've learned so many new skills, and gained so much experience that will really help me as I develop my career.

**Further information**

Pictures from the visit are available on [HMT's Flickr Page](#)

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# Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy

Dear General The Lord Dannatt,

The Prime Minister and whole Government shares the concern expressed by the signatories of the open letter about former Locally Employed Staff (LES) in Afghanistan. We owe a huge debt of gratitude to interpreters and other staff who risked their lives working alongside UK forces in Afghanistan.

There has been considerable misreporting of the scheme in the media, feeding the impression the Government is not supporting our former and current Afghan staff. This could not be further from the truth and since the US announced its withdrawal we have been at the forefront of nations relocating people.

As announced on 31 May, we have greatly expanded and accelerated the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) in parallel with the military withdrawal to bring as many people as possible to the UK as quickly as possible, prioritising within the programme all those who are judged to be at most serious risk.

Since 2014 we have relocated almost 1,400 LES and their families to the UK. In the past weeks alone we have relocated nearly another 1,400, but more must and is being done. In fact, we have now committed to relocate a further 500 families, or 2,500 people, as soon as possible and the scheme will remain open indefinitely thereafter for all those who qualify – there is no quota or cap on total numbers.

We have already made several important changes and enhancements to the eligibility guidelines to address particular concerns. Interpreters who supported military operations as contractors are now eligible for relocation. We are no longer excluding people who were dismissed for minor administrative offences, and we have recently published updated guidance setting out the circumstances under which additional family members may accompany LES to the UK.

We are pleased to confirm that we are making further changes to the rules to permit LES and their family members to make applications from outside Afghanistan. This will mean that those who have already left Afghanistan, or choose to do so in future, will automatically be eligible for relocation to the UK, rather than having to rely on exceptional circumstances and procedural fixes, as hitherto. We will do this by making changes to the Immigration Rules this Autumn, but will publish guidance imminently which will enable it to take effect immediately.

However, as the signatories acknowledge, the Government has a duty to protect the security of the UK and its citizens, and it would be wrong to make a blanket offer of sanctuary to those who may have committed offences that would be crimes in the UK or pose a security threat to this country.

Officials carefully monitor the outcome of applications and the reasons for rejections, in order to ensure this balance between generosity and security is maintained and all eligible applicants are approved. Analysis has recently been conducted on the personnel records of all former interpreters and other LES previously employed by the MOD who have applied for relocation under the ARAP. The records we hold, since 2006, show that of all the LES employed 1,345 people were dismissed from service, of whom 679 were in what we have termed 'exposed enabling roles', such as interpreters.

Of these dismissals, 119 (18%) were for activities that would be criminal offences in the UK. A further 296 (44%) were for a range of activities or offences which either had, or could have had, serious consequences. These include refusal to follow orders or rules for which the consequences were judged to pose a serious risk to UK forces. We now offer relocation for the remaining 264 (38%) who were dismissed for what are recorded as relatively minor administrative offences. Since May we have offered relocation to the 121 people in this category who have so far applied.

However, we will continue to exclude those whose dismissal was based on serious security concerns at the time, often due to links with the Taliban, as well as those whose dismissal was for offences that constitute a crime under UK laws, such as sexual harassment or sexual assault, violent assault on British troops or fellow LES, theft, and drug abuse. We also exclude those whose dismissal was for non-criminal but serious offences, including breaches of operational security and aggression towards British or Afghan troops.

All applications are subjected to security checks carried out across government departments and with the same criteria applied. We will continue to examine all new applications, and appeals against enquiries that have been rejected where new evidence is presented, but will prioritise for relocation those who were not dismissed from service, and those who were dismissed for minor administrative reasons. Furthermore, the Defence Secretary is reviewing all rejections due to dismissal for non-criminal offences to ensure that ministers are content with the justification for those decisions.

As the signatories of the letter note, relocation is offered to those who served in exposed enabling roles. These were roles that made a direct and material difference to the delivery of the UK mission, without which the execution of operations would have been adversely affected. The LES assessed to be most at risk are those who supported international forces in capacities that required them to engage openly with the local population, such as interpreters, and those who were instrumental in offensive operations and in investigating and prosecuting the Taliban for their crimes, such as case officers involved in counter terrorism investigations and operations.

The MOD alone directly employed several thousand local staff during the UK's military campaign in Afghanistan, the majority in roles that were behind the wire in military bases, including in cooking, cleaning, maintenance and administrative support functions. Recent and regular intelligence assessments on this subject do not indicate intent on the part of the Taliban to conduct reprisals against Afghans who conducted low-level support roles for international forces. We do not therefore support the view that all Afghans

who performed roles in support of international forces in Afghanistan are at risk of reprisals from the Taleban.

However, the ARAP policy does also allow for priority relocation for anyone assessed to be at high risk of harm as a result of their work for HMG, regardless of their role, so no former LES are excluded by default.

Furthermore, we have recently expanded the criteria for eligibility by default to include those who are employed as contracted military interpreters, but we also conduct risk assessments of all former employees who claim to be at risk. We will continue to prioritise for relocation those whose contribution was deemed to be most significant and placed them at higher risk, and cases where we have evidence that any current risk is directly attributable to that service.

We are monitoring the situation on a daily basis to ensure that if conditions on the ground deteriorate we can change our processes accordingly. Where cases are contentious they will personally be reviewed by the Defence Secretary. And unlike some other countries our scheme will remain open indefinitely.

The whole Government is committed to ensuring we honour the risks and sacrifices that brave Afghans made to support this country and we will ensure that all those eligible are supported in finding sanctuary at the earliest possible opportunity.

The Rt Hon Priti Patel MP and The Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP

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## **Student Loans Company appoints new Chief Financial Officer**

News story

Audrey McColl appointed as Chief Financial Officer at the Student Loans Company



The Student Loans Company (SLC) has appointed Audrey McColl to its Executive Leadership Team and Board as Chief Financial Officer (CFO). The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the Finance, Commercial and Enterprise Risk and Compliance teams to ensure that SLC operates within its agreed budget, has robust risk management and compliance procedures and that expenditure delivers best value for the taxpayer.

Audrey has extensive experience in financial roles including 12 years with NHS Education Scotland (NES) where she acted as Director of Finance, and as Acting Deputy CEO from November 2019 until January 2021. She has also held previous financial roles with organisations including the Scottish Legal Aid Board and Adobe Systems Europe. Audrey is also an Associate Member of the Chartered Institute of Management Accounts (CIMA).

Paula Sussex, CEO at SLC commented, “On behalf of the Board and management of SLC, I am delighted to welcome Audrey to our Executive Leadership Team at this pivotal point as we continue to transform SLC to become a modern, responsive, and sustainable organisation. Her extensive background in public finance and compliance will strengthen the team and ensure that taxpayer monies are always effectively and safely managed.”

Audrey McColl said, “SLC plays an essential role in enabling the educational and career aspirations of students which of course contribute positively to the UK economy. I am very pleased to join SLC at such an exciting time, with more students than ever before taking the opportunity to learn and fund their studies through the Student Loans Company.”

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## [Call for bids: Supporting ASEAN to address vaccine hesitancy](#)

World news story

The British Embassy Hanoi is inviting proposals for the ASEAN vaccine hesitancy project (financial year 2021-2022). Deadline is 26 August 2021.



Immunisation is a key component of primary health care and an indisputable human right. Vaccines are critical to the prevention and control of infectious-disease outbreaks. In the time of COVID19 pandemic, vaccines are the best way to protect people and prevent the emergence of new variants.

As part of our commitment to global health security and vaccine equity for all and in recognition of the important partnership with ASEAN, the UK would like to work with civil society, research-based organisations and other not-for-profit stakeholders to expand vaccination coverage in ASEAN countries by addressing vaccine hesitancy among citizens.

## **Background**

Today every country in the world has a national Expanded Programmes on Immunisation (EPI). The addition of new vaccines to EPIs has increased the breadth of protection provided by immunisation, to include vaccinations for protection of older children, adolescents and adults.

Despite impressive achievements, the EPIs in some ASEAN countries face chronic challenges to reach communities with low immunisation rates. Most of these districts are in hard-to-reach and ethnic minority-populated areas.

## **Objectives**

The ultimate goal of this project is to increase vaccine confidence and vaccine uptake of vulnerable ethnic minority groups in remote areas, where the immunisation rates are lowest in ASEAN countries.

In reference to a theory of change, valid public health models and latest evidence in the region, the project will:

- Rapidly identify and assess barriers that prevent ethnic minority communities in Vietnam and at least two other ASEAN countries from the confidence in and uptake of vaccines, including but not limited to COVID19 vaccines.

- Implement innovative, feasible and soft public health interventions, without involving hardware investment (e.g. investment in infrastructure, facilities, equipment and the like) in those countries to overcome most impactful identified barriers and make transformational changes.
- Provide a light touch evaluation of effectiveness and lessons learnt from the interventions.

## **Assessment criteria**

- Alignment with the above mentioned objectives and Official Development Assistance (ODA) eligibility;
- Project design with clear outcomes and monitoring and evaluation procedures;
- Feasibility of project delivery under COVID19 circumstances with some potential restrictions;
- Outcomes achievable within the funding period (from beginning of October 2021 till the end February 2022);
- Risk and financial accountability procedures;
- Evidence of government support and engagement;
- Value for money;
- Sustainability;
- Gender and climate impacts (evidence of positive impacts or no harm);
- Communication approach to raise visibility of the project in the recipient countries;
- Track records of implementing organisations.



## **Funding**

- The budget for this project shall not exceed £120,000 (including management and administration costs, and any relevant local taxes).
- Management and administrative costs shall not be more than 10% of the overall budget.
- Expenditure shall adhere to rules set out in the existing donor (UK or UN-EU) cost norms in each host country.
- Exchange rates if applied will be FCDO's exchange rates.
- Funding can only be granted to not-for-profit organisations.

## **Further information**

- Successful bidder will be notified during the week commencing 6th September 2021.
- Project activities should be ready to start from October 2021 or as soon thereafter as the grant agreement has been signed.
- Project must be completed by 28 February 2022.
- Template of the agreement is attached below for your reference. Clauses in the grant agreement are non-negotiable. Please make sure that you are content with the terms before applying for this work.

## **How to submit proposals**

Send your proposal using Project proposal form and Activity based budget (ABB) to [nguyen.thuygiang@fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:nguyen.thuygiang@fcdo.gov.uk) and [nguyen.thuygiang@fcdowebmail.fcdo.gov.uk](mailto:nguyen.thuygiang@fcdowebmail.fcdo.gov.uk) by 12pm (local Hanoi time) on 26 August 2021.

## **Documentation**

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# Neil talks about social mobility

Neil McNulty is a Research Officer at the Office for National Statistics (ONS). He is a member of the ONS Social Mobility Network and of the Analysis Function Diversity and Inclusion working group. Prior to joining the ONS, and twelve years after leaving school with no A-levels, he obtained a Ph.D and then worked in Higher Education.

## **Neil's story**

The former Chair of the [Social Mobility Commission \(SMC\)](#) Alan Milburn, argued in 2009 that “there is not equality of opportunity” and that “many elite professions remained a ‘closed shop’” that were not doing enough to “open themselves up to a wider pool of talent”. Those who start out ahead in life are the ones most likely to succeed. Less than 20% of people in top, higher paying jobs come from working-class backgrounds. In contrast, half of those occupying these positions had parents who did similarly high-status work.

People with parents who are doctors are 24 times more likely to need a stethoscope in their future career than those whose parents did any other type of work. Children of lawyers are 17 times more likely to present cases in court in future. And those whose parents work in television and film are 12 times more likely to make it into these fields. My dad worked in the same factory as his dad, and my first job required me to wear a hard hat, steel-toe boots, and overalls. Downsizing following the 2007-08 financial crises prevented me from getting a job in the same factory and I instead worked on construction sites.

Even when those from disadvantaged backgrounds ‘get in’, research shows they struggle to ‘get on’. In other words, social mobility does not finish at the point of occupational entry. Evidence has found that those from working class backgrounds, having successfully entered an elite workplace, do not seek out leadership positions as readily as those from privileged backgrounds. They engage in a process of ‘self-elimination’. Those from disadvantaged backgrounds often do not apply for promotion because they believe that they do not belong in such positions.

Such inequalities are not confined to the private sector. A [recent report published by the SMC](#) (PDF) found that civil servants from lower socioeconomic backgrounds (SEBs) are underrepresented across the organization. This is most acute in the upper echelons of the Civil Service where fewer than one in five (18%) senior civil servants (SCS) derive from lower socioeconomic groups. The figure of SCS from lower SEBs in 1967 was 19%.

So, what can be done?

Evidence suggests that there is not one solution that will enhance social mobility. I believe several interventions are needed. This is reflected in

the [SMC's Action Plan](#) (ODF), which lists 14 action points required to improve social mobility in the Civil Service. I would like to highlight and discuss two action points, as well as work ongoing to support social mobility within the AF.

Action point four: "Use apprenticeships to drive your strategy".

Apprenticeships are a brilliant alternative to 'classic' university study and, I believe, should be more highly valued. Embracing the 'learn while you earn' pathway follows the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's recommendation to make 'better use of paths combining education and training'. There are several apprenticeships available across the AF and wider Civil Service in both professions and departments. The Government Statistical Service (GSS) offers two programmes – a Level 4 Data Analyst Apprenticeship and a Level 6 (degree level) Data Science Apprenticeship.

There are currently [42 Level 6 and 20 Level 4 apprentices working across government](#), with a new intake due to join both schemes in September. I would encourage all AF members to take a look at this [elevator pitch from Vondy Smith](#), a current data science degree apprentice, and consider whether there could be a role for an apprentice in their business areas. While un-targeted apprenticeships do not automatically boost socioeconomic diversity, resolving the data issues outlined in the Action Plan and adopting the Social Mobility Commission's soon to be released apprenticeship toolkit will help.

As a personal reflection, I was lucky to recently interview individuals for ONS Business Administration Apprenticeships and was greatly impressed by the calibre of candidates, none of whom had attended university. Each will add value to the Civil Service by providing new perspectives to improve decision-making.

Action point six: "Increase access to accelerator roles".

I'd like to highlight the [Civil Service Summer Diversity Internship Programme \(SDIP\)](#) and ask members of the AF to consider integrating SDIP roles into their business areas. The SDIP is open to lower SEB, disabled or ethnic minority candidates, and offers the opportunity to experience what a career in the civil service is like. Importantly, those who successfully complete the programme are invited to undertake Fast Pass, a quicker route to Fast Stream selection.

As the SMC's report highlights, certain roles can accelerate careers by increasing exposure to senior colleagues or giving access to high profile work or informal sponsorship opportunities. With four Fast Stream programmes in the AF, wider use of the SDIP would help support a more diverse talent pipeline into entry level roles across the function. The AF will be running an event for the current SDIP intake on 10 August. If you are an intern, or have an intern in your team, please contact [analysis.function@ons.gov.uk](mailto:analysis.function@ons.gov.uk) for more information.

The AF is committed to understanding the current make-up of our function to identify ongoing under-representation, including of analysts from lower SEBs.

The [AF Diversity and Inclusion Strategy](#) outlines how we will begin to achieve the function's vision to create a truly diverse and inclusive analysis community that is reflective of the UK society we serve. A key aspect of this is the annual [AF D&I Survey](#), launched last month by Professor Sir Ian Diamond ([read more from Sir Ian about why this is so important](#)). I would encourage you to participate in this survey, which will help shape the AF's approach to inclusion, inequality and opportunity going forwards.