

Government strikes deal to remove more Albanian prisoners

Press release

More Albanian criminals will be removed from the UK and transferred from prisons in England and Wales after Ministers signed a new agreement today (Monday 26 July).



- Deal agreed to remove more Albanian offenders from the UK
- There will be no early release after transfer, as prisoners will serve their full sentence in Albania
- Removed prisoners will be barred from ever returning to UK
- Albania will pay the costs of housing prisoners transferred from Britain

The deal means more offenders can be sent back to serve their full sentence in Albania, with victims assured they will still serve the full sentence imposed on them by a British judge.

Taxpayers will no longer have to pay to accommodate these offenders, and those transferred will be barred from returning to Britain, giving further peace of mind to victims.

UK and Albanian justice Ministers, Chris Philp and Etilda Gjonaj, formally approved the Prisoner Transfer Agreement in London this morning. The agreement works both ways and includes provisions for British criminals in Albanian jails to be returned to the UK.

Albanian nationals currently represent the highest percentage of foreign nationals in custody with more than 1,500 in prison in England and Wales – around 10% of overseas criminals in jail. The UK does not collect statistics on British prisoners in overseas jails, but the number imprisoned in Albania is thought to be extremely low.

Minister for Immigration Compliance and Justice, Chris Philp, said:

We are committed to removing foreign criminals who have abused our hospitality and inflicted misery on our communities.

Someone who commits a serious crime in the UK should be barred from returning so that the taxpayer no longer has to pay for them and victims can be confident justice has been done.

Since January 2019, the Government has removed 7,985 foreign national offenders from our prisons, immigration removal centres and the community.

The deal builds on an earlier agreement and means that offenders must spend at least the same amount of time in custody as they were sentenced to by a judge in the UK.

It also clarifies that prisoners can be transferred without their consent and outlines the information that receiving states need in an application – speeding up the process.

Notes to editors:

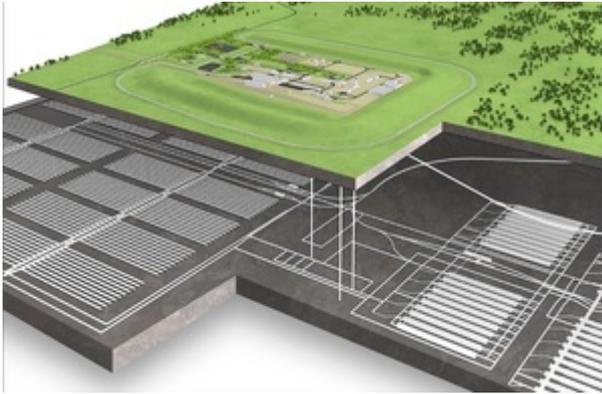
- The Agreement must be ratified by each state. The UK does not require new legislation and the Government hopes transfers will begin from the autumn.
- The cost of removing Foreign National offenders falls to the transferring state, while the remaining period of detention falls to the receiving state.
- Offenders are barred from returning to the UK through Home Office deportation orders.

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[RWM in early discussions with Lincolnshire County Council about GDF](#)

News story

GDF process requires community consent



Illustrative example of a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF)

RWM is in early-stage discussions with Lincolnshire County Council to see if they are interested in forming or joining a local Working Group as part of a national project to find a location for a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF).

A Working Group would begin discussions about the potential for hosting a deep geological facility for the safe and secure disposal of radioactive waste. The process to find a suitable GDF site requires a community to give its clear consent.

A GDF is a highly engineered facility constructed deep underground and will consist of a series of vaults and tunnels where radioactive waste can be disposed of safely, securely and permanently.

Steve Reece, Head of Siting at Radioactive Waste Management, said:

Radioactive Waste Management is in early discussions with Lincolnshire County Council, to see if they are interested in joining a local Working Group. Absolutely no decisions have been taken at this stage.

Two areas in Cumbria have already started this process by forming Working Groups and this could be an important further step for a significant national infrastructure project to find a location for a GDF – that's an underground facility designed to safely and securely dispose of the UK's higher activity radioactive waste.

This is an enormous infrastructure project, worth billions of pounds – one that would bring thousands of jobs for multiple generations as well as the significant investment needed for supporting infrastructure in the area where a GDF is built.

A GDF would be built up to 1,000 metres in the rock deep underground and it would contain the waste safely and isolate it over the very long term, until the radioactivity naturally decays and no longer poses a hazard to people or the environment.

In our discussions with Lincolnshire County Council the former Theddlethorpe gas terminal has been identified as a possible site

of interest, and in particular the geology deep below the seabed, a few miles off the coast, as one potential location. We would like to engage with the local community to hear their thoughts and views. And we recognise that there could be other potential locations for surface facilities that could lead out to the same geology deep beneath the seabed.

At this very early stage of the process, we're explaining the [Working With Communities](#) approach (the government's policy) and answering the council's questions so that they can see how the siting process could work.

The opportunity remains open for individuals and organisations in England and Wales to engage in discussions with RWM – without any commitment.

The process to find a suitable GDF site ultimately requires a community to give clear consent through a process called a Test of Public Support – this project is totally unique in that the local community will have the final say.

Working Groups, which will engage with local people, will be announced as they are formed. Two GDF Working Groups have already been formed in Cumbria.

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[Safe housing and support for rough sleepers experiencing violence and abuse](#)

- 12 local areas to share £3.7 million to fund safe housing pilot for vulnerable rough sleepers
- The Respite Rooms Trial Programme will create 140 bed spaces and support up to 1,100 people at risk of sleeping rough
- Victims to receive specialist support alongside accommodation

Rough sleepers experiencing violence and abuse will be provided with safe housing as part of a new pilot programme, Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing Eddie Hughes announced today (26 July 2021).

The Respite Rooms Trial Programme – first announced by the Chancellor in the Budget – will see 12 local areas across England share £3.7 million to fund accommodation and expert support for victims of violence and abuse.

Under this pioneering initiative, safe housing will be offered to victims of domestic abuse, rape or sexual assault, sex workers, victims of exploitation, or violence who are sleeping rough or at risk of rough sleeping.

The funding will create a total of 140 bed spaces and support an estimated 1,100 people over a 12 month trial period.

The programme will provide a single gender spaces for victims alongside specialist support from homelessness and domestic abuse and violence against women and girls charities.

This will also include support those with multiple and complex needs such as substance misuse, migrant victims of abuse, and victims of sexual trafficking.

As part of the programme, victims will be offered advice and support to access suitable more permanent safe accommodation.

Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing, Eddie Hughes MP said:

Survivors of domestic abuse, sexual violence or physical violence need a safe place of refuge to escape these crimes and rebuild their lives.

These respite rooms will provide a safe space and ensure vulnerable people at risk of sleeping rough are supported in safe housing with expert advice and counselling.

This programme is part of the government's much wider action to help the most vulnerable in our communities, with £750 million investment this year to tackle homelessness and rough sleeping.

The 12 areas across England that will receive funding under the trial programme are: Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole, Birmingham, Bristol, Camden, Hastings and East Sussex, Exeter, Leicester, Liverpool, Manchester, Nottingham, Portsmouth and Westminster.

Today's announcement is part of the government's comprehensive plans to tackle domestic abuse and support victims of sexual violence and abuse, and to support rough sleepers off the streets for good.

Under the government's ground-breaking Domestic Abuse Act 2021, councils will be required to provide life-saving support in safe accommodation for domestic abuse victims and their children who require it, backed by £125 million of government funding.

This funding is part of the long-term strategy to provide comprehensive support to victims, and in addition to £40 million funding boost for victim support services announced earlier this year, as well as a cross-government victims strategy that works better for survivors.

A full breakdown of the allocations under the respite rooms trial programme is below:

- Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole: £357,185
- Birmingham: £355,404
- Bristol: £350,000
- Camden: £491,388
- Hastings: £310,650
- Exeter: £266,803
- Leicester: £334,956
- Liverpool: £211,462
- Manchester: £140,215
- Nottingham: £349,407
- Portsmouth: £117,991
- Westminster: £451,210

The programme is aimed at supporting rough sleepers or those at risk of sleeping rough who have experienced the following:

- domestic abuse
- sexual assault
- rape
- physical assault
- stalking/harassment
- exploitation by other rough sleepers
- sex work

[Motorway services access guides take the guesswork out of journey planning](#)

Highways England has partnered with AccessAble, the UK's leading provider of detailed accessibility information, to help motorists plan where to stop for a break at any one of the 114 motorway service areas across England, for better, safer journeys.

For many years, disabled people and carers using AccessAble have said how much they would value having access guides for motorway services, and what a difference comprehensive accessibility information would make to planning a trip.

The new guides, available online or via the free AccessAble app, are 100 per cent facts, figures, and photographs to help motorists plan their visit. They cover key areas including parking, toilets, petrol stations, shops, and restaurants, with detailed information on everything from staff training and hearing loops, to walking distances and Changing Places.

In addition, the two organisations have worked together to create virtual route guides. This new type of guide, which uses 360-degree imagery, will enable visitors to 'virtually' explore routes to key facilities like accessible toilets and Changing Places, so they can find out exactly what to expect when they arrive.

Highways England encourages everyone to plan their journeys before setting off and for some people this isn't as easy as for others. With disabled drivers representing five per cent of the driving population, the access guides are one of many new services Highways England is introducing to break down barriers and help people reliably plan and feel confident about their journeys.

Highways England Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager, Julian Horsler, said:

We're committed to ensuring our disabled customers can travel safely on our roads. We're making good progress to ensure our roads and services are more accessible and inclusive, and there's lots more to do.

Whatever the nature of your disability, the access guides for motorway service areas take the guesswork out of journey planning, giving you the information you need about facilities along your route.

Lucy Wood, also known as 'The Four-Wheeled Wonder Woman' visited the Roadchef services in Norton Canes to test out the access guides.

Dr Gregory Burke, Founder and Chair of AccessAble, said:

We're delighted to partner with Highways England on this ground-breaking initiative to deliver a world class standard of access information across England's motorway service area network.

It's clear that Highways England share our commitment to user-led service development and improving access and customer experience for the UK's 18 million disabled people and carers.

"The new access guides will not only give people all the information they need to plan a trip but also support Highways England and motorway service operators to see how facilities could be improved in the future."

Disability blogger and National Diversity Awards finalist, Kerry Thompson (pictured) shares her thoughts about the access guides [in this video](#).

In a joint statement, motorway service area operators said:

We have a mutual interest to improve the journey experience for all of our customers and remain passionate about helping customers who have accessibility requirements when visiting our facilities.

The access guides are key to achieving that. We've been delighted to work with Highways England and AccessAble to create a collaborative platform to allow us to engage with diverse customers and communities and further improve access for all.

Anthony Smith, chief executive of transport watchdog Transport Focus, said:

We know from our research looking at the experiences of disabled road users that journey planning is key. We're pleased to see the recommendations we made to Highways England result in this initiative.

These guides will mean road users can plan their journeys with greater confidence and help make England's motorway network more accessible.

All Access Guides are available free of charge on the [AccessAble website](#) and on the AccessAble App.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

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