

# Ministers seek to stamp out rip-offs with new consumer protections

- Government will protect consumers' hard-earned cash and stamp out exploitation of online consumers
- new powers for the competition regulator will improve enforcement and tackle subscription traps and fake reviews so people can spend with confidence
- Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng: The UK's economic recovery relies on the strength of our markets and consumers' faith in them

An arsenal of planned reforms to boost competition and shield the public from rip-offs as the UK builds back fairer from the pandemic have been unveiled by the Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng.

The government will change the law so prepayment schemes like Christmas savings clubs have to safeguard customers' money, protecting consumers' cash as they save for the holidays. The change will prevent scandals like Farepak happening again, where tens of thousands of people, many on low incomes, lost all they had saved for Christmas when the company went bust.

For the used car and home improvement sectors, where consumers often make large, important one-off purchases, the government will make it mandatory for businesses to take part in arbitration or mediation where disputes arise over a transaction. This means both sides won't get dragged through the courts and levels the playing field for decent businesses who are doing the right thing.

Government is also clamping down on subscription traps by requiring businesses to make it clear exactly what consumers are signing up for and letting them cancel easily, to ensure people can spend their hard-earned cash with confidence.

The consumer catfishes behind bogus online ratings will also be targeted by rules that make it automatically illegal to pay someone to write, or host, a fake review.

The government will help regulators stamp out other dodgy tactics used to dupe online shoppers. These include 'dark patterns' that manipulate consumers into spending more than they wanted to, and 'sludges', negative nudges such as when businesses pay to have their product feature highly on a trader's website while hiding the fact they paid for it.

Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said:

The UK's economic recovery relies on the strength of our open markets and consumers' faith in them.

By delivering on our commitment to bolster our competition regime,

we're giving businesses confidence that they're competing on fair terms, and the public confidence they're getting a good deal.

The proposals come in the new consultation on Reforming Competition and Consumer Policy, which delivers on the government's manifesto commitment to "give the Competition and Markets Authority enhanced powers to tackle consumer rip-offs and bad business practices."

Tough penalties for non-compliance are being put forward, with new powers for the CMA and similar enforcers to hit unscrupulous traders who breach consumer law with fines of up to 10% of their global turnover, and civil fines for businesses who refuse or give misleading information to enforcers.

Government is also considering several options – including introducing financial penalties – when firms breach the commitments given to enforcers that they will change their ways.

To speed up processes, the CMA will also be able to enforce consumer law directly rather than having to go through a court process that can take many months or even years – meaning consumers are protected more quickly.

Consumer and Small Business Minister Paul Scully said:

Business is built on trust. When consumers part with their hard-earned cash, they've got every right to expect they'll get their money's worth. Cowboy builders aren't welcome in 21st century Britain.

As we build back fairer, we will protect the UK public from being hoodwinked and help small businesses thrive.

With the vaccination programme helping end lockdown restrictions, creating a competitive, open and fair market is seen by government as fundamental to achieving its goal of enabling businesses to build back better, and in turn driving investment and creating jobs.

Competition in markets helps newer and smaller businesses get a fair shot, free of monopolists unfairly throwing their weight around, while a strong set of consumer rights means that the businesses offering the best service are rewarded with more market share.

The consultation also sets out new and enhanced powers for the competition watchdog to help drive innovation, productivity and growth. Under the plans, the CMA will be able to wrap up investigations faster and impose stronger penalties on firms that break the law or fail to cooperate with the regulator's work.

Competition supports firms by driving creativity and productivity as they compete against each other for business. And, because the customer is the focus of a competitive market, it gives ordinary consumers access to better

products, greater choice and lower prices.

Anti-competitive conduct – such as when companies collude to bump up prices – shuts out smaller businesses and can cost consumers billions.

Between 2014 and 2020, the CMA delivered benefits to consumers worth over £7 billion over the last 3 years, but recent studies including the Furman Review and Penrose Report have found that even more could be done to improve competition.

Government is therefore proposing a package of reforms to ensure the UK has a 'best in class' competition regime in line with the ambition set out in the Plan for Growth. The plans would allow the CMA to:

- impose stronger penalties for companies that don't comply with its investigations or orders, with new powers for fixed penalties of up to 5% of annual turnover and additional daily penalties up to 5% of daily turnover while non-compliance continues
- disqualify company directors who make false declarations to the regulator
- accept voluntary binding commitments from businesses at any stage in its investigations, rather than having to wait till the end – leading to quicker outcomes and reduced costs for both businesses and the regulator
- block a wider range of harmful mergers, including so-called 'killer acquisitions' where big businesses snap up prospective rivals before they can launch new services or products

Government is committed to a competition regime which is efficient and predictable. Harms to consumers should be remedied quickly, and costs and uncertainty for business should be reduced.

Andrea Coscelli, Chief Executive at the CMA, said:

Competitive, well-functioning markets are the cornerstone of a thriving economy, and they require constant vigilance to maintain.

These proposals take forward many of the CMA's suggestions for a swifter, stronger and more flexible competition and consumer protection regime, which will protect consumers and enable businesses to grow and thrive.

We will respond to the consultation in due course.

Rocio Concha, Which? Director of Policy and Advocacy, said:

It is positive that the government is moving to give the competition and consumer regulator greater powers to take strong enforcement action which will address issues with the current system and help tackle business practices that harm consumers.

The pandemic has highlighted weaknesses in UK consumer protections that have allowed unscrupulous businesses to exploit customers, while our competition regime has been in need of an update to deal with the challenges of digital markets.

The government must now ensure that these proposals are swiftly implemented, and are underpinned by the right resources at a local and national level, so that consumer protection is strengthened.

On mergers, to keep the burden on smaller businesses to a minimum, government proposes that mergers between small businesses – where each party's turnover is less than £10 million – be removed from the CMA's merger control altogether.

Going forward, government will provide the CMA with more regular steers on which areas of the economy to focus its investigations on. The CMA will also need to produce regular 'State of Competition' reports looking at the vibrancy of competition in the UK's markets.

Government believes that competition policy can do more to support the [Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution](#), and has therefore asked the CMA to prepare advice on how competition law can better support the UK's transition to a net zero economy.

Matthew Upton, Director of Policy at Citizens Advice, said:

Consumers face a constant barrage of tricks designed to make them spend more money than they wanted – and often more than they can afford.

In particular, we have long called for an overhaul to stop people from being trapped in subscriptions they no longer need, want or possibly even knew they had.

We welcome protections that will help consumers navigate the ever-changing landscape of how they buy goods and services. The proposals to give the Competitions and Markets Authority more powers to crack down on businesses that don't play fair are essential to this.

The government has today also launched a consultation seeking views on the objectives and powers of the Digital Markets Unit. Proposals include placing a mandatory code of conduct on tech giants with deep-rooted market power to drive up competition and new powers to issue fines of up to 10% of turnover for serious breaches. The proposed new measures are expected to help British start-ups and scaleups compete more fairly against those big tech firms with powerful positions in the market.

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# Smart technologies and data to future-proof UK energy

- Government and Ofgem announce plans for smart technologies to help consumers cut their bills and boost energy efficiency
- unleashing smart technology across the grid could create up to 24,000 UK jobs and boost exports
- plans could also reduce cost of managing the energy system by up to £10 billion a year by 2050

Cutting-edge smart technologies will ensure the lights stay on and energy bills are cut, as demand for electricity intensifies and fossil fuels are phased out in the UK, in new plans laid out by the UK government and Ofgem today (Tuesday 20 July).

Smart and flexible energy systems will be needed if the UK is to meet its world-leading commitments to tackle climate change by 2050. Meeting an increasing demand for electricity, as fossil fuels are phased out, will require a system which ensures the supply of clean energy from renewable sources is guaranteed even when the wind is not blowing or the sun is not shining.

Published jointly by the government and Ofgem today, the Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan and Energy Digitalisation Strategy deliver on the commitments made by the government in the [Energy White Paper](#) and represents a significant step forward on the path to providing flexibility for our energy network.

Unleashing the full potential of smart systems and flexibility in our energy sector could reduce the costs of managing the system by up to £10 billion a year by 2050, as well as generate up to 10,000 jobs for system installers, electricians, data scientists and engineers.

A further 14,000 jobs could also be created by the export potential of these new technologies. For consumers, the benefits range from households being able to trade back their excess energy to reduce bills, through to knowing when the costs of running household appliances like washing machines and dishwashers are at their lowest.

Energy and Climate Change Minister, Anne-Marie Trevelyan, said:

We need to ensure our energy system can cope with the demands of the future. Smart technologies will help us to tackle climate change while making sure that the lights stay on and bills stay low.

The possibilities opened by a smart and flexible system are clear to see. They will not only allow households to take control of their energy use and save money but will ensure power is available when and where it's needed while creating jobs and investment opportunities long into the future.

Smart technologies and innovations will allow the energy system to cope with increased electricity demand from our homes and workspaces in the future. There is also significant potential to export these technologies abroad and help countries across the world to meet their climate change targets. Estimates suggest this export market could be worth as much as £2.7 billion a year to the UK economy by the middle of the century.

In a further move to help consumers take control of their energy use and reduce bills, the government has today published a call for evidence on the deployment of technologies that allow electric vehicles to export electricity from their batteries back on to the grid or to homes during times of higher demand. A separate call for evidence will look at enabling large-scale and long-duration electricity storage so that availability can be maintained during periods when renewables generate less energy

Energy Minister Lord Callanan said:

From looking at how something as simple as charging your electric car can cut your energy bill to making sure renewable energy can be stored for when it's needed, this plan shows how we are using innovative technologies to meet our commitments on carbon emissions.

Taking advantage of these smart technologies in our homes and businesses will not only help us tackle climate change, but will create thousands of jobs, unleash investment opportunities and cut costs as we build back greener from the pandemic.

In the Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan, the government and Ofgem are driving forward plans for innovative new systems that could allow electricity generated by clean renewable sources to be stored at large scale and over longer periods, so it is ready to meet the challenges of energy system decarbonisation. Such technologies include pumped hydro storage, compressed air energy storage and the conversion of power to hydrogen so it can be used to generate electricity.

In addition, the plan looks at how electricity interconnectors with other countries can help balance the system and decarbonise at least cost.

Jonathan Brearley, chief executive of Ofgem, said:

This plan is essential to hitting the UK's net zero climate goal while keeping energy bills affordable for everyone. It requires a

revolution in how and when we use electricity and will allow millions of electric cars, smart appliances and other new green technologies to digitally connect to the energy system.

As energy regulator, Ofgem will work with government and industry, to help consumers make the changes needed and ensure the transition to net zero is affordable, fair and inclusive for all.

Smart technologies already in development in the UK include:

- heat network projects in Gateshead and Milton Keynes that are supplying residents with affordable, low-carbon heat and electricity by pairing with battery storage to offer excess electricity back to the grid when it is needed
- a trial in the south-east of England that is demonstrating how electric car owners can combine the use of smart meters, a vehicle charger and electricity from renewable sources to save money on their bills so its charge can provide electricity to the grid at periods of peak demand
- new battery technologies being trialled in Oxford, Orkney and Perth in the UK, as well as in Australia, that are helping the transition from fossil fuels to green sources by delivering low-cost, low-carbon energy on demand in a reliable, safe and economic way by revolutionising how the energy is stored within the battery
- a community of 6,500 plus residential customers across the UK where domestic solar energy is being combined with battery technology and using data to forecast energy generation and demand in the wider electricity system to enable customers to trade excess energy to the grid and giving average savings of 70% on bills

The government, Ofgem and Innovate UK are today also publishing the UK's first Energy Digitalisation Strategy. This will examine how energy system data is used so that the full potential of cutting-edge technologies can be realised and consumers can gain maximum benefit from new digital products and services.

Rob Saunders, Challenge Director – Prospering from the Energy Revolution, UK Research and Innovation said:

Easy access to data, and digitalisation of the system will be at the heart of the transformation to net zero energy. Building on the progress made with the 'Modernising Energy Data Access' programme this strategy sets out the next steps towards an energy system that is fit for the future.

With opportunities to join up services more easily for customers, do more with existing infrastructure, and open up new digital business models right across the net zero economy, we envisage development of a thriving cohort of new digital businesses that help the nation decarbonise while serving customers better.

## **Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan and Energy Digitalisation Strategy**

Today we are publishing the following documents:

- Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan
- Energy Digitalisation Strategy

This new Smart Systems and Flexibility Plan updates the previous plan launched in 2017.

We are also publishing a call for evidence on:

- electric vehicles exporting electricity to the grid and to homes.
- enabling large-scale and long-duration electricity storage

### **Future System Operator consultation and Energy Code Governance Reform consultation**

There are also 2 government consultations being published today on proposed reforms to the energy system that will ensure frameworks are in place to drive the UK's decarbonisation plans, while minimising costs to consumers and industry and maintaining resilience in the system.

The Future System Operator consultation is on proposals to create a new energy system operator separate from National Grid plc with roles in both the electricity and gas systems.

The challenges of meeting commitments to tackle climate change are creating the need for new technical roles and responsibilities in electricity and gas systems. New roles include planning and developing future energy networks and increasing competition so decarbonisation can be driven at the lowest cost to consumers and industry, and an impartial, single Future System Operator (FSO) – that covers both gas and electricity sectors – could be well-placed to meet these challenges.

To deliver the roles effectively, a body will be required that is independent of any perceived conflicts of interest within industry and this consultation will ensure it remains accountable to consumers and is resilient to challenges over the short, medium and long terms.

The FSO consultation follows the publication in January 2021 of the [Review of GB Energy System Operation](#) where Ofgem considered the effectiveness of previous system operator reform and whether there was need for further reform.

The government is also launching today, a consultation on proposals to reform the codes that govern gas and electricity markets.

The energy industry codes set out the commercial, operational, and technical rules of the energy system, but in the Energy White Paper, the government stated that they will need to be updated to allow the UK to transition to a

clean energy system and to meet climate change commitments.

This codes consultation will ensure that governance of the energy system is fit for purpose in a low-carbon future and builds on a previous consultation from 2019.

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## Lasting power of attorney service to be made safer, simpler and fit for the future

- New and improved safeguards to protect against fraud and abuse
- Process to be made simpler and easy to use
- Shift to predominantly digital service

The number of registered lasting powers of attorney (LPA) has increased drastically in recent years to more than five million, but the process of making one retains many paper-based features that are over 30 years old.

A 12-week consultation launched today will examine the entire process of creating and registering an LPA – with a view to boosting the Office of the Public Guardian’s (OPG) powers to prevent fraud and abuse while introducing a mainly digital service.

It will examine how technology can be used to reform the process of witnessing, improve access and speed up the service. The consultation will propose widening the OPG’s legal powers to check identities and stop or delay any registrations that raise concern. It will also look at making the process for objecting to the registration of an LPA simpler to help stop potentially abusive LPAs.

The proposed changes will fundamentally alter and update a process that has been in place for decades. While the service will become predominantly digital , alternatives such as paper will remain for those unable to use the internet.

Justice Minister, Alex Chalk MP, said:

A lasting power of attorney provides comfort and security to millions of people as they plan for old age. These changes will make the service quicker to use, easy to access and even more secure from fraud.

An LPA is a legal document which allows people to appoint someone else (an attorney) to make decisions about their welfare, money or property. They are

often used by older people to choose someone they know and trust to make decisions for them were they to lose capacity in the future – but can be made by anyone over the age of 18.

The consultation comes just over a year after the OPG launched a new digital service called 'Use a lasting power of attorney'. As the service allows attorneys to securely share details of their LPA with organisations online, it means they can quickly take action on their loved one's behalf.

Nick Goodwin, Public Guardian for England and Wales, said:

More people are taking the vital step to plan for the future by applying for lasting powers of attorney, and we want to make sure that it is as safe and simple as possible to do so.

This consultation puts forward proposals which will allow us to make the service fit for the modern world – one that can be accessed online, and which grants OPG the power to conduct thorough checks to protect against fraud while making it easier for people to raise concerns.

The consultation will look at:

- How witnessing works, and whether remote witnessing or other safeguards are desirable.
- How to reduce the chance of an LPA being rejected due to avoidable errors.
- Whether the OPG's remit should be expanded to have the legal authority to carry out further checks such as identification verification.
- How people can object to an LPA and the process itself, as well as when is the right time for an objection to be made.
- Whether a new urgent service is needed to ensure those who need an LPA granted quickly can get one.
- How solicitors access the service and the best way to facilitate this.

Any substantial changes will require amendments to the Mental Capacity Act 2005 which brought in the current system.

### **Notes to editors:**

- The consultation runs for the next 12 weeks until 13 October.
- Lasting power of attorney was introduced in 2007 as part of the Mental Capacity Act 2005. This replaced the previous system of Enduring Power of Attorney that had been in place since 1986.
- In parallel with the formal consultation, the Office of the Public Guardian will continue to carry out engagement through workshops and user research – gathering evidence from, and hear the experiences of, a diverse range of people and organisations.

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# Home Secretary opening speech for Nationality & Borders Bill

The British people have had enough of open borders and uncontrolled migration.

Enough of a failed asylum system that costs the taxpayer over a billion pounds a year.

Enough of dinghies arriving illegally on our shores, directed by organised crime gangs.

Enough of people drowning on these dangerous, illegal, and unnecessary journeys.

Enough of people being trafficked and sold into modern slavery.

Enough of economic migrants pretending to be genuine refugees.

Enough of adults pretending to be children to claim asylum.

Enough of people trying to gain entry illegally, ahead of those who play by the rules.

Enough of foreign criminals – including murderers and rapists – who abuse our laws and then game the system so we can't remove them.

The British people have had enough of being told none of these issues matter – enough of being told it is racist to even think about addressing public concerns and seeking to fix this failed system.

The British people have repeatedly voted to take back control of our borders.

They finally have a government that is listening to them.

Our priorities are the People's Priorities.

For the first time in decades we will determine who comes in and out of our country.

Our plan will increase the fairness of our system so that we can better protect and support those in genuine need of asylum.

It will deter illegal entry into the UK, and importantly break the business model of people smuggling gangs and protecting the lives of those they endanger.

And it will remove more easily from the UK those with no right to be here.

For years people have risked their lives to enter our country illegally.

Such as those crossing the Channel in dangerous small boats to claim asylum.

If there were simple or straightforward solutions, this issue would have been resolved by now.

But illegal entry to the UK and subsequent claims of asylum has become a very complex issue and nature of cases that arise.

I am clear that no one should seek to put the lives of their family and themselves in the hands of criminals to enter the UK illegally.

This Bill will finally address the issues that have resulted in the broken system of over a long period of time of illegal migration.

A system that has been abused for decades, allowing criminals to put the lives of the vulnerable at risk.

This Government is doing everything in its power to fix it.

A fair asylum system should provide safe haven to those fleeing persecution, oppression, or tyranny.

As a nation we have always stepped up to support refugees in need. This is a source of great national pride and will never change.

Since 2015, more than 25,000 refugees have been resettled in the UK from regions of conflict through formal schemes – more than any other European country.

In addition to that, more than 29,000 close relatives have also joined them in the UK in the last five years.

This country is not mean-spirited nor ungenerous towards asylum seekers, as some may claim, otherwise they would not be drawn to come to the UK.

Anyone claiming asylum in the UK receives accommodation, transportation, cash and subsistence support while their application is considered.

The system is generous – costing the taxpayer over one billion pounds each year – it's right we reform the system.

The very principle of seeking refuge has been undermined by those who pay their way to travel through safe countries to then come to the UK to claim asylum.

People should be claiming asylum in the first safe country they reach, and not using the UK as a destination of choice.

That is why our intention is to address this broken system so that we can support those in genuine need to resettle here.

We are strengthening the safe and legal ways in which people can enter the UK



– adopting a fair but firm approach.

From today I am granting indefinite leave to remain to refugees resettled under our world-leading resettlement schemes.

Giving them the vital freedom to succeed from the moment they arrive in our country.

And importantly offering certainty and stability to help them rebuild their lives from day one.

Because that is the right thing to do.

Building on our proud record to support those in need.

Like the brave Afghan nationals who worked alongside our brave military – who are now benefitting from a bespoke resettlement scheme.

In addition to British Nationals Overseas from Hong Kong whose liberties were restricted, who are now able to live freely in the UK with a full pathway to citizenship thanks to the route we opened this year.

We will always give people coming through safe resettlement schemes the support they need, of course that is the right thing to do.

From learning English to gaining employment and training – they will gain the essential skills to build a new life in the UK.

New pilots to support refugees into work are already happening.

Community Sponsorship Schemes are helping local communities support refugees directly.

We want to do more, and we are empowering more schemes like these every day.

I am announcing that those displaced by conflict and violence will now also be able to benefit from to access to our global points-based immigration system.

To enable skilled displaced people who have had to flee their homes to come to the UK safely and legally through established routes.

We will work with the charity Talent Beyond Boundaries and other partners on this pilot project.

Up to 100 refugees in Jordan and Lebanon will be supported first to gain sponsorship from a UK employer.

These are the type of schemes that we will build upon.

This is in addition to our world leading resettlement schemes.

Providing greater support to refugees arriving safely will reduce the incentive to enter this country dangerously and illegally.

Because the British people object to illegal entry, and they are absolutely right.

8,500 people arrived by small boat in 2020. 87% of them were men. 74% were aged 18 to 39.

Those who claim it is heartless to stop these illegal crossings have it the wrong way around.

It would be heartless and immoral to let them continue.

These journeys are dangerous. People have drowned in the Channel, and thousands have died in the Mediterranean.

It isn't just illegal sea journeys that are lethal.

One of my first and saddest tasks as Home Secretary was to respond to the devastating and preventable deaths of 39 Vietnamese people in a trailer found in Essex.

The judge described their deaths through suffocation as "excruciatingly painful".

This terrible crime was highly organised gang activity.

In recognition of the severity of this appalling crime, five members of the people smuggling gang were jailed, with the two ringleaders going down for 20 and 27 years respectively. Two lorry drivers were imprisoned on manslaughter charges, with sentences of 18 years and 13 years four months.

Such cases are not just heart-breaking.

They are truly evil and we have a moral duty to prevent them.

There is simply no justification for what is going on.

People smugglers are motivated by profit. They line their pockets with the takings – finance other crimes such as drugs and firearms trafficking.

They don't organise illegal entry by small boat or in the back of lorries out of kindness.

Three weeks ago, late at night, I received what I can only describe as a sickening call from Border Force officials at the Home Office.

They told me that there were reports of a family attempting to make their way across the Channel who had been separated.

They said people smugglers in Northern France had forced a mother and father to get into a small boat, at gunpoint.

They said they the family were told their two young daughters would be put into the next boat. As the parents refused to let their children be separated, the people smugglers threatened them again.

The anguish and distress of these parents is unthinkable.

Yet it is all too common for families to be put in these perilous situations by criminal gangs.

Organised gangs involved in exploiting and trafficking children and fuelling modern slavery.

Border Force is also hearing that facilitators use violence and the threat of violence – including rape – to control people. We are talking about unimaginable wickedness.

We cannot – in good conscience – fail to act.

We have a moral obligation to stop this vile trade. Because human beings are not cargo.

The status-quo is entirely unacceptable which is why we are considering all options to fix the system and save lives.

We are determined to smash the criminal gangs who cause such misery – and we will absolutely break their business model.

It is illegal to arrive in UK waters without permission. Those that bring them here and facilitate illegal entry will now face a life sentence.

This criminal and exploitative behaviour can now be punished with the severity it rightly deserves.

The maximum prison sentence for entering the country illegally will also rise from six months to four years.

We are sending a signal that there is increased risk to paying and propping up criminal gangs to get to the UK illegally.

This Bill will also give Border Force additional powers.

This includes the seizure of vessels used to facilitate illegal entry to the UK.

Border Force will also be able to search all freight for people suspected of seeking illegal entry.

To prevent illegal trafficking and facilitation, like the case of almost 50 minors who were recently found hidden in tiny crevices in the back of a lorry with no chance of escape.

This is what we are dealing with.

We are also making the border fully digital which will allow us to count people in and out, help us to stop dangerous people coming here.

Anyone who isn't a British or Irish citizen will need to provide more information about themselves before they travel, including any history of

criminality.

Electronic Travel Authorisations will be a major step up in our border security.

Carriers will check that passengers have this digital authorisation or another form of digital permission like a visa before they travel.

They will risk a civil penalty if they fail to deny boarding to those without permission.

We are also increasing the maximum penalty for hauliers caught entering the UK with an illegal migrant on board from two thousand to five thousand pounds.

In addition to the changes, we will introduce new accommodation and reception centres.

These are already used by many countries across Europe and elsewhere.

They will provide new accommodation for processing claims and speeding up claims. Asylum seekers will be allocated to accommodation centres by the Department and the Home Secretary, rather than dispersing people across the UK.

Currently detained appeals are subject to the same rules as non-detained appeals. There is no set timeframe in which decisions have to be made. This can result in appeals taking a long time.

We will reinstate an accelerated appeal process that is fast enough to enable claims to be dealt with from detention while ensuring that a person who is detained has fair access to justice.

This will expedite the removal of people without a legitimate need to claim asylum in the UK.

In recent years we have seen some of the most shocking cases of grown adults – mostly men – claiming asylum as children.

Through deception they have been able to access children's services and education – leading to the most worrying safeguarding issues.

This Bill will change how someone's age is assessed.

Many countries around the world and across the EU already employ safe scientific methods, and we will start doing so.

This will stop people falsely claiming to be children and protect genuine children from being moved into the adult asylum system.

The British people are incredulous that it is so hard to remove foreign criminals and failed asylum seekers from our shores.

We are therefore amending the Early Removal Scheme to help us remove foreign

criminals from the UK as early as possible.

The British people have also had enough of foreign criminals getting one over on us.

One Foreign National Offender first claimed asylum in 2001, choosing to leave the UK voluntarily in 2009. He re-entered in 2011 with his wife and child, claiming asylum for a second time.

He was deported in 2015 after a 15-month sentence for sexual assault on a child. He returned to the UK in breach of his deportation order in 2017 and was arrested and detained.

He then made a fresh asylum claim. He appealed that refusal and eventually exhausted his rights to appeal.

In detention he sewed his lips together, refused food or fluid and declined healthcare. In 2018 he was released on health grounds with electronic monitoring.

He appealed this decision through the Family Court, and a hearing was scheduled months later, acting as a barrier to removal.

In early 2018 he cut off his electronic tag.

In 2019, he was arrested on suspicion of murder after his estranged wife was found dead.

This is not justice.

Things cannot continue like this; we must change the law so that we can remove dangerous foreign criminals and ensure that justice is done.

This Bill raises the maximum sentence for any foreign criminal that returns to the UK in breach of a deportation order from six months to five years.

It speeds up appeals and stops the endless cycle of baseless claims.

People who are subject to removal action often wait until the very last minute to make a challenge, leading to cancelled flights and delayed removals.

Time and time and time again, we see murderers, rapists and child abusers launching numerous, new, last-minute claims to attempt to try and stay in the UK. This is simply not right.

These last-minute claims and appeals mean criminals can thwart removal from our country.

Even when they are on the tarmac ready to be removed from the UK. We have had to many cases like this and the British people are sick of this.

Through this Bill all protection-related issues will need to be raised upfront – in one go – including modern slavery.

This will stop the endless cycle of people raising repeated claims to frustrate their removal.

Our approach is of course, fair but firm.

The notice period of an intention to remove someone will be standardised.

And we will provide fair access to justice and legal advice for these individuals

Slavery is one of humanity's greatest evils – and it has never gone away.

We will continue to protect victims of modern slavery, by creating a statutory grant of leave for confirmed victims.

They need time to recover from their horrendous ordeals. And the authorities need time to bring perpetrators to justice.

But the law on modern slavery is being exploited.

There has been an alarming increase in the number of illegal entrants and Foreign National Offenders – including child rapists and people who pose a national security risk – seeking modern slavery referrals, to avoid immigration detention and frustrate removal from the UK.

One individual who was granted Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK had that leave revoked following persistent offending that led to prison sentences adding up to more than 12 months.

They were subject to a Deportation Order – a decision upheld by the courts.

On the day they were due to be removed, they made an asylum claim.

Once that was refused, they claimed to be a victim of modern slavery – in relation to incidents from several years before they came to the UK.

This was referred to the National Referral Mechanism, which rightly identifies and supports victims of modern slavery. Decisions on these cases currently take around 12 months, with a low bar for postponing removal.

This person was released from detention and their removal was postponed. They subsequently absconded and went on to commit further serious offences.

This Bill contains vital measures to ensure victims are identified as quickly as possible, while making it is easier to distinguish between genuine and non-genuine accounts of modern slavery.

Help and support will be available to someone when there are reasonable grounds to believe the person "is" a victim, rather than that they "may be" a victim.

People claiming asylum or human rights protections will be required to provide relevant information relating to being a victim of slavery or human trafficking within a specified period. If they provide information outside of

that period, they will need to provide a statement setting out their reasons for doing so.

It is right we pour all our resources into helping genuine victims of modern slavery, and not allow dangerous foreign criminals who fake it to push them aside and abuse the system for their own despicable means.

We maintain a list of safe countries that consistently adhere to international human rights laws, to stop people delaying removal by falsely claiming their human rights are at risk.

Every EU country will be on that list, as they are all safe countries. Furthermore, we are taking a power to allow us to remove as well as add countries so the list can remain relevant and appropriate to our needs as our assessment change.

If someone's human rights claim is clearly unfounded, there will no longer be a right to appeal.

Whether someone has complied with the asylum or removal process will also be considered when deciding whether to grant immigration bail.

And other countries must co-operate in taking back those citizens who have no right to be in the UK.

If countries do not co-operate in the return of their own nationals, their access to our generous, fast, and open visa system may be at risk.

Every effort will be made to remove those who enter the UK having travelled through a safe country in which they could and should have claimed asylum.

For first time whether how you arrive in our country will impact how your claim is progressed.

Those whom we cannot remove, but whose claims prevail, will only receive temporary status with limited entitlements.

Anyone who arrives illegally will be deemed inadmissible and either returned to the country they arrived from or a safe third country.

People who do make a successful claim after arriving via another safe country may receive a new temporary protection status, without the same benefits and entitlements. This will be reassessed periodically.

This Bill also makes it easier to remove someone to another safe country while their asylum claim is processed.

We will recover taxpayers' money from lawyers where their unreasonable behaviour wastes the court's and the other parties' resources.

And on this point, we are closing a loophole that prevented the defence of some immigration decisions on the grounds of national security.

I am resolute that we must fix the terrible injustice suffered by the Windrush Generation and others who were denied British citizenship unfairly across successive governments.

I have already overhauled the Windrush Compensation Scheme and urge colleagues in the House to help us encourage people to come forward.

What happened to them must never be repeated.

That means fixing outdated nationality laws.

This Bill gives the Home Secretary power to grant British citizenship to people who would have become British citizens if not for unfairness and exceptional circumstances beyond their control.

For example, in one case an individual had to be refused citizenship due to an absence from the UK on a given day, in spite of many years of previous residence, even though it was of course no fault of his own.

The Bill provides further flexibility to waive residency requirements, to help members of the Windrush Generation and others acquire British citizenship more quickly.

And it will finally mean children unfairly denied British Overseas Territories Citizenship will finally be able to acquire citizenship as well as British citizenship.

Laws must be clear and easy to understand.

The Windrush Lessons Learned Review by Wendy Williams said that immigration and nationality law is very complex.

The Bill gives the Home Secretary the power to simplify and consolidate immigration law so we can address citizenship anomalies.

The British people are generous and compassionate.

They give billions every year in overseas aid. They embrace those in genuine need and want to see people succeed.

They simply want a system that is fair and firm.

Fair to the British people, fair for those in genuine need, but firm against criminals and those who exploit our generosity by gaming the system.

This Bill is critical to delivering that new fair but firm system.

It is central to our New Plan for Immigration.

It addresses decades of failure and goes to address decades of failure.

Our borders will be secure. The rules will be easy to understand.

We want to slam the door on foreign criminals, put organised crime gangs out



of business and give more help to those in genuine need.

Everyone who plays by the rules will encounter a new system that is fair but firm.

As representatives of the British people, we will finally be in control of many of these challenging issues – this government is committed to fixing this broken system.