

New plan to make Britain global leader in innovation-focused digital regulation

- Aim is to back Britain's innovators and minimise burdens on business
- Country's tech leaders asked to have their say on delivering coherent vision
- Set of guiding principles laid out to inform policymakers' work

A new plan to boost economic growth and help the country seize the potential of digital technology will be launched.

The government's [Plan for Digital Regulation](#) aims to reduce red tape and cut down on cumbersome and confusing policy so businesses are freed to come up with new ideas, grow their firms and create new jobs and prosperity.

The vision is to drive prosperity through pro-innovation regulation of digital technologies while minimising serious harms to the country's economy, security and society.

The digital sector is one of the UK's most dynamic and important industries. It contributed £151 billion to the economy in 2019, attracted more venture capital funding (£11.2 billion) than Germany and France combined in 2020, and employs more than two million people.

The new plan sets out three guiding principles policymakers must follow and states that the government should only regulate when absolutely necessary and do so in a proportionate way. They should:

- **Actively promote innovation.** Policymakers must back innovation wherever they can by removing unnecessary regulation and burdens and considering non-regulatory measures such as technical standards first.
- **Achieve 'forward-looking and coherent outcomes'.** Digital technologies are evolving fast and transforming traditional sectors across the economy, so policymakers must make sure new regulation complements, rather than contradicts, existing and planned legislation. □
- **Exploit opportunities and address challenges in the international arena.** Digital technologies are borderless and policymakers must take a global view. They must always consider the international dynamics of proposed regulation – from our existing international obligations including trade deals, expected future agreements, and the impact of regulations developed by other nations.

Digital Secretary Oliver Dowden said:

How we govern digital technologies is one of the most pressing issues of our age. Today we are setting out a pro-growth vision to shape the future.

Our principles-based approach will ensure innovation is embedded in any new regulation, and we will look to reduce red tape to enable our vibrant tech sector to thrive.

Melanie Dawes, Chief Executive, Ofcom and Chair DRCF said:

The four members of the DRCF welcome publication of the government plan for Digital Regulation. With online services playing an increasingly critical role in all our lives, we created the DRCF to deliver a coherent, coordinated and clear approach to online regulation. We look forward to working closely with the UK government to create a regulatory environment in which business and innovation can continue to thrive, and where everybody can enjoy the enormous benefits of being online safely.

techUK CEO Julian David said:

Creating a framework for digital regulation that promotes innovation is a global challenge. If the UK can get this right, we can drive discussions at the international level and build on our reputation as a leading digital economy.

The Plan for Digital Regulation is a strong start and shows the government's commitment to creating a coordinated, proportionate and innovation-focused regulatory system.

We look forward to working with the government in making this plan a reality by building a partnership with the sector to dig into the detail and turn these strong core principles into a forward-looking framework that reinforces the UK's position as a top tier destination for technology companies.

To support the delivery of a joined-up approach to regulation, the government is working closely with the recently-established Digital Regulation Cooperation Forum (DRCF) – a voluntary forum comprising the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA), Financial Conduct Authority (FCA), Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) and Ofcom. □ The plan sets out practical proposals to support a more streamlined regulatory landscape. This includes options to improve information sharing between regulators to reduce duplicate requests on industry and looking at whether additional duties for digital regulators to consult and cooperate with each other are needed.

The plan marks the beginning of a new chapter for digital regulation and comes ahead of the Online Safety Bill being introduced into Parliament, the development of the UK's independent pro-growth data regime, the publication of a consultation on a new pro-competition regime for digital markets, and the UK hosting the Future Tech Forum in Autumn 2021 to discuss new approaches to tech governance.

It follows the UK's G7 Presidency to put technology at the heart of building back better from the pandemic, and builds on the Digital Secretary's [Ten Tech Priorities](#) that aim to fuel a new era of startups and scaleups, keep the UK safe and secure online, and ensure that the UK leads the global conversation on digital technology.

Notes to editors

- Contact the DCMS press office on 020 7211 2210.
- The plan considers the full range of regulatory tools which government, regulators, businesses and other bodies use to manage the impact digital technologies and activities can have on the economy and society. These include self-regulation, statutory codes of conduct, and rules in primary legislation.
- To ensure the approach is pro-innovation, the plan commits to considering the full range of non-regulatory measures, including industry-led technical standards to complement or provide alternatives to 'traditional' government action.□
- The government welcomes views from industry, civil society, academia and the general public on how it can ensure the best possible environment for tech to flourish in the UK.
- Contact digitalregulationplan@dcms.gov.uk for more information.

[Lord Wolfson speech: UK-Middle East Legal Services Week](#)

Welcome, Ahlan Wa Sahlan, Broochim Habaim. I would like to start by saying how pleased I am to host the UK-Middle East Legal Services Week,

It's a pleasure be able to address so many esteemed colleagues representing law firms, chambers and international businesses from here in the UK and all over the Middle East, including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Qatar and beyond.

I would particularly like to give a warm welcome to Derek Sweeting QC, Chair of The Bar Council and I.Stephanie Boyce, President of The Law Society of England and Wales, who will both be speaking to you during the course of the UK-Middle East Legal Services Week.

As minister, I have responsibility for the Ministry of Justice's international trading interests, including promoting the UK's legal services around the world. This brings me to the focus of this event – the Middle East legal market. Over the past year the region has seen rapid acceleration in multiple areas such as construction arbitration, TMT, financial services, litigation and project finance.

In short, the pipeline of opportunity remains buoyant and here, today, there are many exciting opportunities for us all to seize, all of which hold the promise of mutual future prosperity.

We have, through this forum, an opportunity to deepen the relationship between the UK and countries across the Middle East, by connecting businesses in our respective nations to potential new partners – whilst exposing ourselves to new ideas and perspectives along the way.

This year will see the rescheduled Dubai Expo 2020 come to life. Our colleagues at the Department for International Trade and in the GREAT campaign team are leading on the UK's involvement, including a country pavilion that will host a 6-month programme of business, cultural, educational and tourism activity.

Expo will put Dubai and the rest of the UAE in the global spotlight and set the pathway forward in terms of economic recovery and renewal post pandemic.

That's why we intend to take our campaign to Dubai in November with an in-person presence at the UK Pavilion within the Expo site. I know this will be a fantastic opportunity for the legal sector and one that I hope you can all get involved in.

Beyond the UAE, there are exciting mega projects taking place in Saudi Arabia as it strives to achieve its 2030 vision of diversifying the economy and reducing its dependence on oil and seeks to establish a global financial centre in the region.

With the World Cup on the horizon, Qatar has risen in international prominence and with that comes a greater demand for legal expertise. It's little wonder the likes of Allen & Overy, Dentons and Eversheds Sutherland have well established offices in Doha.

And the signing of the Abraham Accords has spurred a new wave of expanded business opportunities in and between Israel and the UAE in a wide range of sectors which rely on legal services.

Over the next few days, I would like you to sit back and enjoy what I expect will be some very lively discussions and personal anecdotes that are drawn from those experiences that have both challenged and shaped our legal careers.

It's an opportunity for colleagues across the UK to better understand the practicalities of working in jurisdictions across the Middle East and for in-country counterparts to hear more about the UK legal sector and the important role it plays at international level.

Before joining the government, my work at the Commercial Bar took me to many parts of the world, but few were as exciting, or filled with as much opportunity, as the Middle East. I acted for and against companies and investment funds throughout the region, straddling cultural, religious and political divides.

Many of you will have started your law career at a university here in the UK – I was fortunate to begin my journey at Selwyn College, Cambridge – where I, among my fellow scholars, made lasting connections that later played out in our professional lives as barristers, lawyers, solicitors and in-house counsel.

It's those networks, whether through our studies or our careers, that allow us to explore opportunities for collaboration and enable us as legal professionals to flourish within a highly competitive global market for collective economic benefit.

If the global pandemic has taught us anything, it's that we should continue to grow those networks, while defining where we can have the most impact and navigating the best course of action.

That is our gift as legal professionals and we should not take it for granted.

Finally, I want to thank you all for taking the time to attend our UK-Middle East Legal Services Week. I hope you find it as informative as you do useful, and I look forward to the prospect of meeting some of you in person over the coming months.

Thank you and enjoy!

[97th session of the Executive Council of the OPCW](#)

Mr Chairperson,

Mr Director-General,

Distinguished Delegates,

Let me start by extending my congratulations to Ambassador Bellouki on his new role as Chairperson of this Council. Mr Chairperson, you can be confident of the United Kingdom's full support. I would also like to welcome the new members of the Executive Council.

The Chemical Weapons Convention and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons make vital contributions to our collective security. The United Kingdom is proud to be part of that global effort and we are determined to continue to uphold the provisions of the Convention. All States Parties share that responsibility.

Mr Chairperson,

In April, the 25th Conference of the States Parties agreed decisively to act in response to repeated chemical weapons use by the Syrian Arab Republic. The measures taken were a justified and reasonable response to grievous breaches of the Convention. The United Kingdom once again calls on the Syrian Arab Republic to come into compliance with the Convention as soon as possible.

The United Kingdom welcomes the continued professional work of the OPCW's special missions on Syria. Their role is to provide technical support for Syria and get to the facts. They must be allowed to fulfil their role. The second report by the Investigation and Identification Team issued on 12 April 2021 found there were reasonable grounds to believe the Syrian Arab Republic carried out a chlorine attack in Saraqib on 4 February 2018. Specialist international investigations have now confirmed eight separate cases of Syrian regime use of chemical weapons. That is an appalling and unparalleled record.

The Syrian Arab Republic is not the only State Party with serious questions to answer. The Russian Federation has still to provide a clear explanation for how a prominent opposition figure came to be attacked with a nerve agent from the novichok group on Russian soil last August.

The approach of the Russian Federation has instead been to obfuscate, to sow confusion, to discredit and to avoid scrutiny. That is, exactly the same as its response to the deadly attack in the United Kingdom in 2018. The United Kingdom calls on the Russian Federation to come clean about its novichok programme, to come clean about the 2018 attack in Salisbury, and to come clean about the attack on Mr Navalny.

Mr Chairperson,

Continuing to deliver during a global pandemic has presented real challenges to the Organisation. The United Kingdom is very grateful to the Director-General for his leadership during this difficult time and to all staff of the Technical Secretariat for their professionalism and commitment. We must continue to strengthen business continuity provisions for the future. The UK welcomes progress with the construction of the Chem Tech Centre and looks forward to starting to develop a needs based programme of activities at the new facility.

As we start discussions on the biennial budget for 2022 and 2023 we must remain cognisant of the challenging global context and the long-term priorities of this Organisation. In that regard, as Chair of the Global Partnership against the spread of weapons and materials of mass destruction, the United Kingdom welcomes the considerable support that Global Partnership members continue to provide to help the OPCW to deliver its objectives on behalf of all States Parties.

The United Kingdom is pleased to announce new voluntary contributions for 2021, including funding for the Africa Programme under Article X, additional support for widening the pool of Designated Laboratories, and support to the vital work of the Syria missions. We will also make another sizeable donation to support the upgrade of the OPCW's cyber security.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

[Update on the pandemic and the roadmap to freedom](#)

Mr Speaker, I'm extremely grateful to you for accommodating the timing of this statement today. I'd like to update the House on the pandemic, and our roadmap to freedom.

Mr Speaker, this morning I joined some of the remarkable people who have been at the heart of our pandemic response at a service to mark the NHS's 73rd Birthday at St Paul's Cathedral. Together we reflected on a 'year like no other' – for the NHS and for our country.

I know Honourable Members on all sides of this House will join me in celebrating the decision by Her Majesty the Queen to award the NHS the George Cross. I can think of no more fitting tribute to the NHS. I know that everyone in this House – indeed, everyone in this country – will celebrate this award.

Mr Speaker, there's no greater demonstration of our high regard for the NHS than the manner in which we all stepped up to protect it. Now it is thanks to the NHS and many others that we are vaccinating our way out of this pandemic – and out of our restrictions.

86% of UK adults have had at least one jab, and 64% have had two. We're reinforcing our vaccine wall of defence further still.

I can tell the House we are reducing the dose interval for under 40s from 12 weeks to 8... which will mean every adult should have the chance to be double jabbed by mid-September.

And those vaccines are working. The latest data from the ONS shows that 8 in 10 adults have the COVID-19 antibodies that are so important in helping our body fight the disease. When we look at people over 50 – the people who got the jab earlier in the programme – that figure rises to over 9 in 10.

Mr Speaker, allow me to set out why all of this is so important. Before we started putting jabs in arms, whenever we saw a rise in cases, it would inevitably be followed by a rise in hospitalisations and, tragically, a rise in deaths too. Yet today, even though cases are heading upwards in line with what we expected, hospitalisations are increasing at a much lower rate and deaths are at a low level at just 1% of the figure we saw at the peak.

Our vaccines are building a wall of protection against hospitalisation – and jab by jab, brick by brick – that wall is getting higher.

And for those people who sadly do find themselves having to go to hospital, we have better treatments than ever before. Last week, on my visit to St Thomas' Hospital, clinicians were telling me just how transformative dexamethasone has been for their live-saving efforts. Taken together, the link between cases, hospitalisations and deaths is being severely weakened – and this means we can start to learn to live with COVID-19.

As we do that, Mr Speaker, it's important we're straight with the British people. Cases of COVID-19 are rising – and will continue to rise significantly. We can reasonably expect that, by the 19th of July, the number of daily cases to be far higher than today.

Against this backdrop, I know that many people will be understandably cautious about easing restrictions. After many months of uncertainty, this is entirely natural.

But we can now protect the NHS without having to go to the extraordinary lengths we've needed to in the past. That's not to say this is going to be easy, Mr Speaker. Of course the pandemic is not over. The virus is still with us, it hasn't gone away – and the risk of a dangerous new variant that evades vaccines remains real.

We know that with COVID-19, the situation can change – and it can change quickly. But we cannot put our lives on hold forever.

My responsibility as Secretary of State for Health and Social Care includes helping to us turn and face the other challenges that we know we must also address, from mental health to social care to the challenges of long-COVID.

I'm also determined to get to work on busting the backlog this pandemic has caused – a backlog we know is likely to get worse before it gets better.

As I set out to this House last week, Mr Speaker, I remain confident we can move to Step 4 in England on the 19th of July and the government will make its final decision on this on the 12th of July.

Today, Mr Speaker, I wish to set out further details of what Step 4 will look like.

In essence, our national response to COVID-19 will change, from one of rules and regulations, to one of guidance and good sense. We will revoke all social distancing guidance, including the 2-metre rule, except for in some specific settings, such as ports of entry and medical settings, where it makes sense for those to continue.

It will no longer be a legal requirement to wear face coverings in any setting, including on public transport – although we advise this as a voluntary measure for crowded and enclosed spaces.

It will no longer be necessary to work from home. There will be no limits on the number of people you can meet. There will be no limits on the number of people who can attend life events, like weddings and funerals – and no restrictions on communal worship and singing.

We will remove legal requirements on how businesses operate. Capacity caps will all be lifted, and there will no longer be a requirement to offer table service. All businesses forced to close their doors because of the pandemic will be able to open them once again.

And we will lift the cap on named care home visitor numbers, so that families can come together in the ways they want to once again.

Mr Speaker, ministers will provide further statements this week on self-isolation for fully vaccinated people, including for international travel, and on restrictions in education settings – including the removal of bubbles and contact isolation.

Today, I can also confirm to the House that we have completed our review of certification. While already a feature of international travel, we have concluded that we do not think using certification as a condition of entry is the way to go.

For people who haven't been offered a full course of vaccination, and for businesses, we felt the impact outweighed the public health benefits.

Of course, Mr Speaker, businesses can use COVID-status certification at their own discretion..... and from Step 4 onwards, the NHS Covid Pass will be accessible through the NHS app and other non-digital routes.

This will be the main way people can prove their COVID-19 status – a status they will achieve once they have completed a full vaccine course, a recent negative test, or by some other proof of natural immunity.

Mr Speaker, taken together, Step 4 is the biggest step of all. A restoration of so many of the freedoms that make this country great.

We know that as a consequence, cases will rise – just as they have done at every step on our roadmap. But this time, our wall of protection will help us. While Step 4 will be the moment to let go of many of restrictions, we must hold on to those sensible everyday decisions that can keep us all safe.

The responsibility to combat COVID-19 lies with each and every one of us. That means staying at home when you're asked to self-isolate. It means considering the guidance that we're setting out. And it means getting the jab – both doses – when you're offered it, something that is still the single biggest contribution anyone can make to our national effort.

And it may even mean three jabs in a single year for some of us. Last week, the JCVI provided interim advice on who to prioritise for a third dose – and our most vulnerable will be offered booster COVID-19 jabs from September, in time for the winter.

And preparing for the winter ahead is not just about COVID-19, but flu as well.

Because of the measures in place this winter, almost nobody in the UK has had flu for 18 months now. That's obviously a good thing, but it means our

immunity will be down.

This winter's flu campaign will be more important than ever – and we're currently looking at whether we can give people their COVID-19 booster shot and the flu jab at the same time.

Mr Speaker, Step 4 is the next step on our country's journey out of this pandemic.

I know that after so many difficult months, it is a step that many of us will look upon with a great deal of caution. But it is one we will take together, with a growing wall of defence against this virus – a wall that each and every one of us can help to build higher.

It's vital that each of us plays our part – to protect ourselves and to protect others – into better days ahead.

I commend this statement to the House.

[Reappointment of the Independent Assessor of Compensation for Miscarriages of Justice](#)

News story

Dame Linda Dobbs DBE, a former high court judge with 35 years of legal experience, has been reappointed as Independent Assessor for Miscarriages of Justice.



The Secretary of State for Justice has re-appointed Dame Linda Dobbs DBE as Independent Assessor for Miscarriages of Justice (the Assessor) for a term of 5 years from 8 April 2021.

Appointed by the Secretary of State for Justice, under section 133 of the

Criminal Justice Act (the Act) 1988, the Assessor's role is to gauge the amount of compensation to be paid once the Secretary of State has decided that the eligibility criteria is met.

In line with paragraph 3 of Schedule 12 to the Act, the Secretary of State will review the appointment when Dame Linda attains the age of 72.

Neither Ministers nor officials play any role in the assessment of compensation and the Secretary of State for Justice is required by section 133 (4) to accept the award made by the Assessor.

The Assessor plays no role in deciding whether an applicant is eligible for compensation, which falls solely to the Secretary of State under Section 133(3).

Biography

In October 2004, following a successful career at the Bar where she was a member of and chaired a number of Bar committees (including Race Relations, Equal Opportunities, International, Professional Conduct and Professional Standard Committees and Criminal Bar Association), Dame Linda became the first non-white judge in the senior judiciary. Whilst on the High Court Bench she was the Senior Liaison Judge for Diversity, Chair of the Magisterial Committee of the Judicial Studies Board and Chair of the International Committee of the Judicial College.

Dame Linda is a Judicial Commissioner at the Investigatory Powers Commissioner's Office, an editor of a number of legal publications and a mediator. She has been involved in the training of lawyers and judges in the UK and internationally for over 25 years and is the Director of Training at the Judicial Institute for Africa, at the University of Cape Town where she is an honorary professor. Dame Linda was appointed as Independent Assessor for Miscarriages of Justice in April 2016.

Dame Linda holds seven honorary doctorates; she is a patron of a number of charities which work in Africa. She has been named one of Britain's most powerful black women and one of the 100 Great Black Britons and she has featured regularly in the Power 100 List of Influential Black Britons.

Dame Linda has not declared any political activity.

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