

[Interim general licensing regime for releasing gamebirds](#)

News story

General licence allows an authorised person to release common pheasants and red-legged partridges within European sites and a 500 metre boundary in England.



From 31st May 2021, any release of common pheasants (*Phasianus colchicus*) or red-legged partridges (*Alectoris rufa*) into the wild on European sites in England or within 500 metres of their boundary will only be lawful under the authority of a licence issued under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Defra has developed a [general licence](#) (GL43) that allows an authorised person to release a specified number of common pheasants or red-legged partridges into the wild in these areas providing the conditions of the licence are met. This follows a [Defra-led consultation](#) in early 2021.

Anyone unable to use the general licence can still [apply to Natural England for an individual licence](#).

An [online advice service](#) is available to check whether the general licence can be used, or an individual licence is needed.

Published 31 May 2021

[Over 40 contemporary artists supported](#)

by Government Art Collection response to Covid-19 pandemic

- £230,000 acquisition project supported artists throughout the Covid-19 pandemic
- 90 pieces by 45 contemporary visual artists celebrate and support diversity of creativity across the UK
- Works will be displayed in Government buildings around the country, and internationally in British Embassies and Residences

In response to Covid-19, the Government Art Collection (GAC) has acquired works by 45 contemporary visual artists from across the UK. The X-UK project celebrates the diversity of creativity around the country, and has supported artists directly during the pandemic.

Government Art Collection collaborated with national networks in England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland on the £230,000 acquisition project which was organised in response to the impact of the pandemic on the visual arts sector.

Visual arts networks from across the UK were asked to nominate outstanding artists in their area to take part in the project which has supported 45 artists and resulted in over 90 works entering the Government Art Collection.

The newly-acquired pieces will join the 14,500 other works in the Government Art Collection which are displayed in Government buildings across the UK, including in No.10 and No.11 Downing Street, and internationally in British Embassies and Residences in a total of 130 countries around the world.

Culture Minister Caroline Dinenage said:

The past year has been challenging for the UK's many brilliant artists. I am grateful that the Government Art Collection has been able to support a diverse range of artists from every corner of the country.

Northern Ireland Secretary Brandon Lewis said:

This is a fabulous initiative and I am delighted that four artists from Northern Ireland, and their work, are among those to be supported by the Government Art Collection. This is a tremendous boost for the industry as we continue to move out of the pandemic, allowing artistic talent from across the UK to be showcased to a wider audience.

UK Government Minister for Scotland Iain Stewart said:

The past year has been extremely difficult for the creative community, so we're delighted to support these four outstanding Scottish artists by acquiring their works for the UK Government Art Collection. The pieces provide a creative snapshot of the times we're living through, reflecting a rich variety of voices from right across the UK.

The UK Government has worked hard to support Scotland's arts and culture sector throughout the pandemic, providing the Scottish Government with £97 million to sustain the country's arts organisations and backing the Edinburgh Festivals with £1 million of funding.

Leslie Thompson, an artist based in Manchester and supported by charity Venture Arts supporting people with learning difficulties, is one artist whose work has now been acquired by the Government Art Collection. Conflating personal memories with wildlife documentaries, his ink drawing *Animals from Memory* is based on a trip he took to the zoo with his late mother in his childhood.

A constructed box titled *The Kiss* by Northern Irish artist Graham Gingles has also been bought by the Government Art Collection. Gingles has works displayed in major collections, such as The Ulster Museum and The Arts Council of Northern Ireland and is well known for his constructed boxes, which he's been making since 1969. Like miniature theatre sets, these intricate constructions incorporate objects made by the artist.

Four works by Nilupa Yasmin, a visiting lecturer at Coventry University, will also join the Government Art Collection. Yasmin uses photographs which she cuts by hand and then weaves together to create her *Where can I find this?* series which has been acquired as part of Government Art Collection X-UK. In this series, Nilupa Yasmin engaged with market communities across Sandwell, celebrating how the markets bring people together. The pieces are colourful and complex, patterned images that reflect people, and the products for sale in the markets.

Additional quotes

Sir David Verey, Chair, Advisory Committee to the Government Art Collection, said:

There is no better way to support artists in this terrible time than to buy their art. The Advisory Committee of the Government Art Collection is very proud to have been part of this effort.

Paula Orrell, National Director, Contemporary Visual Art Network, said:

The Government Art Collection partnership has enabled an incredible opportunity for artists across England. Our nine regions from

Cornwall to Cumbria put forward artists that perhaps are not well represented by major collections and institutions. It has been an honour that CVAN could provide this platform and work with GAC to support artists during such a critical time.

Alfredo Cramerotti, Visual Arts Group Wales and Director, Mostyn contemporary art gallery, said:

Working with the Government Art Collection to identify the next Wales-based artists to enter the collection was a pivotal moment for our devolved nation. The acquisition comes at a key moment in the career of Adéqlá Dewis, Rabab Ghazoul, Jake Grewal and Gareth Griffith enabling them to further their practice and maximise the impact of their work with audiences and professionals alike. The partnership with GAC has established an important precedent for the Welsh visual arts and cultural sector and VAGW fully supports such endeavour.

Moira Jeffery, Director, Scottish Contemporary Art Network, said:

We're so proud to have played our part in a scheme that will share the work of brilliant artists from Scotland, Atelier E.B, Rabiya Choudhry, Jamie Crewe and Alberta Whittle, with audiences across the world. This Government Art Collection initiative is supporting artists through the pandemic and telling a richer story about who is making art today, where, how and why.

Peter Richards, Chair, Belfast Visual Art Network, said:

The BVAf was delighted to be invited by the UK Government Art Collection to join with Contemporary Visual Art Network regions across England, Scottish Contemporary Art Network, and Visual Arts Group Wales to introduce artists from Northern Ireland for consideration for its 2020 collection acquisitions. It was a wonderful opportunity for us to share examples of the breadth and quality of work being undertaken by contemporary artists here at this time.

Notes to editors

The Government Art Collection has an annual acquisitions budget and the Advisory Committee on the Government Art Collection meets three times a year to view potential acquisitions and agree which works enter the Collection.

[More information about the the X-UK pieces](#)

List of artists

- Bruce Asbestos (CVAN East Midlands)
- Simon Bayliss (CVAN South West)
- Rabiya Choudhry (Scottish Contemporary Art Network)
- Donna Coleman (Yorkshire and Humber Visual Arts Network)
- Jamie Crewe (Scottish Contemporary Art Network)
- Paul Crook (New Art West Midlands)
- Adéola Dewis (Visual Art Group Wales)
- Lisa Fielding-Smith (Yorkshire and Humber Visual Arts Network)
- Michael Forbes (CVAN East Midlands)
- Naomi Frears (CVAN South West)
- Atelier E.B (Scottish Contemporary Art Network)
- Kathryn Elkin (CVAN North East)
- Leo Fitzmaurice (CVAN North West)
- Joy Gerrard (Belfast Visual Arts Network)
- Rabab Ghazoul (Visual Art Group Wales)
- Graham Gingles (Belfast Visual Arts Network)
- Jake Grewal (Visual Art Group Wales)
- Gareth Griffiths (Visual Art Group Wales)
- Sunil Gupta (CVAN London)
- Manish Harijan (Yorkshire and Humber Visual Arts Network)
- Joey Holder (CVAN East Midlands)
- Mahtab Hussain (CVAN South East)
- Elsa James (East CVAN)
- Samson Kambalu (CVAN South East)
- Jasleen Kaur (CVAN London)
- Susan MacWilliam (Belfast Visual Arts Network)
- Lindsey Mendick (CVAN London)
- Jade Montserrat (Yorkshire and Humber Visual Arts Network)
- Harold Offeh (East CVAN)
- John Rainey (Belfast Visual Arts Network)
- Antonio Roberts (New Art West Midlands)
- Freddie Robins (East CVAN)
- Christopher Samuel (CVAN East Midlands)
- Lindsay Seers (CVAN South East)
- Libita Sibungu (CVAN South West)
- Nicola Singh (CVAN North East)
- Emily Speed (CVAN North West)
- Lucy Stein (CVAN South West)
- Matt Stokes (CVAN North East)
- Leslie Thompson (CVAN North West)
- Romily Alice Walden (CVAN London)
- Alberta Whittle (Scottish Contemporary Art Network)
- Aaron Williamson (CVAN South East)
- Everton Wright (East CVAN)
- Nilupa Yasmin (New Art West Midlands)

[The Government Art Collection](#)

Works of art from the Government Art Collection (GAC) are displayed in UK Government buildings in nearly every capital city, making it the most dispersed collection of British art in the world. The role of the Collection

is to promote British art while contributing to cultural diplomacy. Dating from 1899, the Collection has expanded over the years and now contains over 14,000 works of art from the 16th century to the present day by British artists, in a broad range of media.

Works are displayed in varied environments: Government buildings in the UK including No10 and No11 Downing Street, and British Embassies and Residences internationally. The Collection is accessible to the public through loans to exhibitions, collaborative programmes, tours and digital platforms.

Regional Networks

[Contemporary Visual Art Network](#)

Operating across nine regions of England, the Contemporary Visual Art Network is a sector support and advocacy organisation, working regionally and nationally since 2012. A network that advocates for and represents a diverse community of artists, creative practitioners, arts organisations, institutions and art galleries across the whole of England's visual arts sector. www.cvan.art

[Scottish Contemporary Art Network](#)

Scottish Contemporary Art Network (SCAN) connects and champions Scotland's contemporary art community. Our 297 organisational and individual members work at the heart of communities from Shetland to the Scottish Borders and from East Lothian to the Western Isles. They include Scotland's leading galleries, artists' studios, workshops and production facilities and a highly skilled workforce of artists, art workers and creative thinkers. They sustain a network of free at the point of access galleries and venues, responsive and flexible institutions that anchor local communities and open their doors to their neighbours and visitors alike.

Belfast Visual Art Forum in Northern Ireland

The Belfast Visual Arts Forum was established in 2014 to promote and celebrate Belfast as "a city where visual arts can be embraced and enjoyed by all". The Forum currently has over 70 members with a broad range of interests plus key stakeholders, including us, Audiences NI and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland.

[Visual Arts Group Wales](#)

Visual Arts Group Wales (VAGW) is an independent, voluntary network that exists to strengthen the contemporary visual arts sector in Wales through partnership, advocacy and training.

Call for evidence launched on fur trade

Press release

Evidence will be used to consider future government policy in relation to the fur trade



A photo of fur coats on a clothes rail

- Call for evidence launched to understand views towards the fur trade
- Public, fashion industry and businesses encouraged to contribute
- Evidence will be used to consider future government policy in relation to the fur trade

A [call for evidence](#) to hear from both industry and the public to help inform future government policy on the fur trade in Great Britain has been launched today (31 May).

Now the UK's future relationship with the EU has been established, we have a unique opportunity to look at what more can be done to strengthen our world leading standards of animal welfare.

The call for evidence has been launched jointly alongside the Scottish and Welsh governments and will ask for views surrounding animal welfare as well as the social and economic impacts associated with the trade, both on our shores and overseas.

Environment Secretary George Eustice said:

We already have some of the highest animal welfare standards in the world and as an independent nation we are now able to re-examine some of our animal welfare laws, including the import of fur for use in fashion products.

The views, data and case studies we receive will be vital to

helping to inform future government policy in this area including by better understanding the trade both at home and abroad.

The call for evidence concerns the commercial trade in fur only and does not focus on non-commercial, private activity such as transactions and exchanges between private individuals and would also help the Government understand the case for any potential exemptions relating to future policies in this area.

Fur farming has been banned in England and Wales since 2000 and since 2002 in Scotland. Strict rules are already in place for certain skin and fur products, including from commercial seal hunts and domestic cats and dogs, prohibiting them from being imported into the UK.

The call for evidence is part of a series of plans as outlined in the Government's [Action Plan for Animal Welfare](#), which builds on our existing world leading standards by [recognising animals as sentient in law](#) and committing to a range of new game changing welfare measures to protect pets, livestock and wild animals.

To respond to the call for evidence, please [click here](#).

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[Over £1 billion savings for motorists as whiplash reforms come into force](#)

- car insurance premiums expected to be slashed by around £35 a year
- new online portal to make claims process simpler
- Medical evidence now mandatory under clamp down on exaggerated claims

The changes are designed to reduce the unacceptably high number of whiplash claims made each year, with more than 550,000 in 2019/20 alone, which will allow insurers to cut premiums for millions of drivers.

The reforms include a new user-friendly online portal for road traffic accident claims under £5,000 – simplifying the process and removing the need for expensive lawyers. They also introduce a ban on settling whiplash cases without medical evidence – a practice which has opened the door to fraudulent or embellished claims.

Insurers have pledged to pass on the savings these reforms will create to drivers – worth a total of £1.2 billion.

Despite the UK having some of the safest roads in Europe with fewer crashes

reported year-on-year since 2013, road traffic accident claims are more than 40% higher than in 2006. This has been fuelled by a reported increase in exaggerated and often disproportionate claims, driving up the costs of premiums for ordinary motorists. The Government is determined to clamp down on this behaviour and help reduce the cost of insurance for drivers.

The Lord Chancellor, Robert Buckland QC MP, said:

For too long the system for making whiplash claims has been open to abuse by individuals looking for an easy payday – with ordinary motorists paying the price.

Our changes, which come into force today, will put an end to this greedy opportunism and ultimately see savings put back into the pockets of the country's drivers.

Dominic Clayden, Chief Executive of Motor Insurers' Bureau (MIB), who operate the new Official Injury Claim online claims portal, said:

We are pleased to have delivered on our remit to build a service that meets the requirements of these important policy changes.

MIB's focus has always been about making sure the new legal process is as easy and straight forward as possible for anyone who might need to make a claim.

To make sure the service works well for everyone we will continue our work with the Ministry of Justice to listen to feedback and to make further enhancements.

Steve Gooding, director of the RAC Foundation, said:

There are almost as many lurid headlines about whiplash claims as there are claims themselves.

This new system should mean legitimate cases are easier and quicker to deal with, fraudulent claims are more likely to fail and all drivers benefit from decreases in their insurance premiums.

Key changes that have been introduced today include:

- A new digital portal to make a claim for any road traffic related personal injury valued at under £5,000, including claims for whiplash. This means claimants can settle their own claim without the use of a lawyer if they wish. It is anticipated that the majority of road traffic accident claims will use the portal in future.
- Increasing the small claims track limit for road traffic accident-related (RTA) personal injury claims from £1,000 to £5,000. Therefore

the majority of all RTA related claims will now proceed through the cheaper small claims track where legal costs are not recoverable.

- A new fixed tariff of compensation for whiplash injuries setting out how much can be claimed for an injury, depending on how long it impacted the claimant with the duration up to two years. It provides claimants with a clear guide to how much their injury would be worth when they make their claim.
- A ban on the practice of seeking or offering to settle whiplash claims without first obtaining medical evidence.

The reforms are part of measures contained in Part 1 of the Civil Liability Act 2018.

The new online portal will revolutionise how claims are made, creating a system that is simple and more efficient to use. It has been tested by professionals in the industry and reviewed to ensure it is easy to understand – with user-guides available to explain how to make and progress a claim at every stage. For those who require additional assistance, a helpline will also be available.

Meanwhile, the increase to the small claims track limit for road traffic accident injuries will mean that claimants whose compensation is valued at less than the £5,000 can use the new portal – in most cases sparing them court appearances, fees and legal costs.

The new whiplash tariffs will give claimants clarity, predictability, and certainty about how much their claim will be worth, while ensuring costs are controlled and that compensation is proportionate to the injury suffered.

Notes to editors

- The online Official Injury Claim portal, developed on behalf of the Ministry of Justice by the Motor Insurers' Bureau (MIB), will guide users through the steps required to make their claim. A user guide, language support service and a telephone helpline are available to those who need further assistance. The new portal will be used for accidents that happen on 31 May 2021 or after.
- Fraudulent claims are limited by requiring all whiplash claimants to provide medical evidence of their injury before any settlement can be made. Currently claims can be settled without this. The portal itself does not seek to identify fraudulent cases but will require medical evidence to be submitted as part of the process for such claims.
- Neither the Guide, nor the telephone helpline, will provide any legal advice.
- The 'Guide to Making a Claim' is designed to support claimants when making a personal injury claim using the Official Injury Claim portal. The guide explains the key legal terms and procedures used in the legal framework that underpins this service – the RTA Small Claims Pre-Action Protocol. It also details what can be claimed for and describes the steps involved, as well as providing more information about the underlying legislation (for example, the Pre-Action Protocol).
- The guide has been developed in association with expert legal

practitioners and the voluntary and community sector to ensure that it is both accurate and clear about what needs to be done.

- Two further guides are also available for users to help them navigate the new online system and, where necessary, the court process. These are the Guide to Changes to the Small Claims Limit for Injury Claims (Referring to Part 26 of the Civil Procedure Rules); and the Guide to Practice Direction 27B.
 - The telephone helpline can also be used by those who are unable to use the digital system, for example if they do not have an internet connection.
 - The latest figures for 2020 show that there were 650,000 road traffic accident related claims of which 550,000 were whiplash related.
 - The new tariff which sets out the base level compensation for various injuries can be found here:
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2021/9780348220612>
 - The RAC Foundation is a transport policy and research organisation which explores the economic, mobility, safety and environmental issues relating to roads and their users.
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[New national flagship to promote British businesses around the world](#)

- Ship will be the first of its kind constructed in the UK, creating jobs and reinvigorating the shipbuilding industry
- Once built, the flagship will host trade events and promote UK interests around the world

British businesses will be given a new global platform to promote their products through a new national flagship announced by the Prime Minister today.

The ship, the first of its kind to be built and commissioned by the UK, will boost British trade and drive investment into our economy. The vessel will be used to host high level trade negotiations and trade shows and will sail all over the world promoting British interests.

A typical six month itinerary for the flagship might include docking at a port in a country where a British Prime Ministerial visit is taking place to accommodate parallel discussions between British and local businesses, hosting trade fairs to sell British products to an emerging market and providing the venue for an international ministerial summit or major trade negotiations between the UK and another government.

The ship, the name of which will be announced in due course, will be the first national flagship since 1997 when the HMY Britannia was decommissioned.

However, its role will be distinct from that of any previous national flagship, reflecting the UK's new status as an independent trading nation and helping us to seize the opportunities that status presents.

As well as being a resource for British firms looking to export globally, the ship will also be a tangible manifestation of British ingenuity and shipbuilding expertise. The Government's intention is to build the ship in the UK. This will create jobs, help drive a renaissance in the UK's shipbuilding industry and showcase the best of British engineering around the world.

The Prime Minister said:

This new national flagship will be the first vessel of its kind in the world, reflecting the UK's burgeoning status as a great, independent maritime trading nation.

Every aspect of the ship, from its build to the businesses it showcases on board, will represent and promote the best of British – a clear and powerful symbol of our commitment to be an active player on the world stage.

As well as promoting trade, it is expected that the flagship will play an important role in achieving the UK's foreign policy and security objectives, including by hosting summits and other diplomatic talks.

Construction of the ship is expected to begin as soon as next year and the ship will enter service within the next four years. The tendering process for the design and construction of the ship will launch shortly, with an emphasis on building a vessel which reflects British design expertise and the latest innovations in green technology.

The ship will be crewed by the Royal Navy and is expected to be in service for around 30 years.

Costs for the construction and operation of the ship will be confirmed following the completion of a competitive tendering process.