

UKAEA staff helping the national COVID-19 effort

News story

Project Manager Marta Barrabino is one of several UKAEA employees to boost the Government response to the pandemic



UKAEA's Marta Barrabino

Four UKAEA employees have been supporting the national effort on COVID-19 through secondments to the UK Government during the pandemic.

One of them is UKAEA project manager Marta Barrabino, who spent three months with the [Government Office for Science](#) between November 2020 and January 2021, working at the very forefront of the Government's response to the rapidly evolving COVID-19 situation.

Marta was positioned in the secretariat of the now very well-known Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies (or SAGE).

Her role had many aspects. Marta supported the preparation of the weekly SAGE meetings, attended by between 80 and 100 senior Government officials and scientific experts. She sifted through large numbers of scientific papers, reports and data to check their validity and rigour. Marta also helped with production of slides shown at the evening Government COVID media briefings. She contributed to the preparation of the Science and Technology Select Committee evidence session on the lessons of coronavirus pandemic in December 2020, and was responsible for an internal paper on international COVID-19 seroprevalence data, distributed across Government.

Marta also worked alongside the SAGE communications team (which linked directly to the Prime Minister's Office and Cabinet Office). This meant often having to respond quickly to requests for new information and data, sometimes whilst she was on call at weekends and over Christmas.

Marta commented: "I found the secondment demanding, but also satisfying.

“If you stopped to think about what you were working on, it could become quite emotional. I do have to commend the SAGE team for supporting their staff with emotional management techniques and plenty of wellbeing support.

“I feel I have learnt a lot that I can bring back to my project management role at UKAEA – especially the ability to depict complex data in a format that is easily comprehensible to the general public.”

Published 25 March 2021

[Environment Agency extends partnership with Angling Trust](#)

Press release

The Environment Agency’s contract with the Angling Trust has been extended until March 2023.



The Environment Agency extends partnership with Angling Trust to provide essential services. (Image taken prior to Covid-19 pandemic).

The Environment Agency has extended its contract with the Angling Trust to undertake essential angling services, including tackling illegal angling and encouraging more people to go fishing across the country.

The contract is funded by income from fishing licence sales and is worth £1.35 million a year. It will run until March 2023.

The services provided by the contract complement the Environment Agency’s regulatory work to protect and improve fisheries through monitoring and managing fish stocks. The work agreed over the next two years has carefully considered the ongoing effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on angling.

The Angling Trust has played a vital role during the pandemic in providing guidance to anglers and fisheries based on the latest Government advice.

Over 100,000 more people brought a licence and went fishing in 2020 compared to the previous year. Many felt the impact of the associated mental health and well-being benefits and the contract will focus on maintaining this renewed interest as well as efforts to continue to grow popularity for the sport.

The boost in licence sales over the last year has resulted in the Environment Agency reinvesting money in more projects that benefit anglers, fisheries and local clubs. A new initiative administered by the Angling Trust has been the [Get Fishing Fund](#) which is supporting clubs and fisheries to organise and run angling participation events in 2021.

Heidi Stone, Fisheries Partnership Manager, said:

This contract extension provides a range of vital services for anglers across the country. Over the past year, the Angling Trust has shown flexibility and innovation in helping us support the angling community through an extremely testing time. We are confident that by working together, angling will continue to flourish and provide a popular pastime for more and more people.

Jamie Cook, Chief Executive of the Angling Trust, said:

We are delighted that the Environment Agency is continuing to reinvest licence income on services provided by the Angling Trust that will be of great benefit to anglers. The past 12 months have shown the value of having a strong, united voice for angling and we are proud of the role the Angling Trust has played throughout the pandemic in highlighting the mental health and wellbeing benefits of angling and demonstrating how fishing can be conducted in a safe, Covid-compliant environment. We look forward to continuing to partner the Environment Agency over the next two years.

Published 25 March 2021

[HMRC provides tax and customs support to businesses that trade with Europe](#)

News story

VAT-registered businesses that trade with the EU are being offered further customs and tax support by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC).



HMRC is offering advice about trading with Europe that will help businesses adapt to the changes to customs and tax rules, and avoid disruption when they move goods between the UK and Europe, or under the Northern Ireland Protocol.

The government department is [writing out to all UK based VAT-registered traders](#), as well as continuing to send weekly email updates to more than 170,000 customers.

[Katherine Green and Sophie Dean](#), Directors General, Borders and Trade, HMRC, said:

We know how challenging it is for businesses to adapt to so many changes, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. And we appreciate how much traders have done already.

Customs and tax rules are complex, and we understand customers working through them for the first time need more support. That's why we launched the new [SME Brexit Support Fund](#) that can pay up to £2,000 for training or professional advice about customs and VAT, for businesses that are new to the importing and exporting rules, and we've also announced a six-month delay to the introduction of full import border controls, giving our customers more time to prepare and get to grips with the changes.

We want our customers to know that HMRC is here to help. Our Customs and International Trade helpline has been expanded and we've extended our operating hours, while continuing to run [regular live webinars](#) that traders can join.

HMRC also recommend that traders:

- decide if they want to [delay import declarations](#) or duty payments on

goods moving between EU into Great Britain

- [appoint a specialist to deal with import](#) and export declarations. This is important, regardless of the amount or value of trade your business does with Europe. Most companies use a third party such as a freight forwarder or fast parcel operator to deal with this and do not make their customs declarations themselves
- find out whether they can claim the [preferential rates of duty](#) that were agreed in December's cooperation and trade agreement between the UK and the EU
- check what support is available for [moving goods through Northern Ireland](#)

All letters sent to businesses about the new trade arrangements with the EU are available on GOV.UK.

For further information on actions businesses must take, please see guidance on GOV.UK:

Published 25 March 2021

[Government extends business support measures](#)

News story

The Government has extended temporary insolvency measures providing further support to businesses during the pandemic.



Insolvency measures supporting businesses during the pandemic and helping them recover, are set to be extended till the end of June 2021.

The measures were introduced in the Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act in March 2020, including protecting businesses from aggressive creditor enforcement and removing personal liability on company directors, and have been [previously extended on a number of occasions](#).

The measures being extended till the end of June 2021:

- Statutory demands and winding-up petitions will continue to be restricted to protect companies from creditor enforcement action due to debts related to coronavirus (COVID-19).
- Small suppliers will not have to continue to supply a business in insolvency. However, larger suppliers will not be able to cease their supply or ask for additional payments while a company is going through a rescue process.
- Entry into a moratorium will remain relaxed and a company will be able to enter a moratorium if they have been subject to an insolvency procedure in the previous 12 months. These measures will be extended until 30 September 2021

Minister for Corporate Responsibility, Lord Callanan, said:

We're extending these important measures to give businesses the extra breathing space they need as we cautiously reopen the economy and look to build back better from the pandemic.

With the threat of aggressive creditor action and insolvency eased, companies will be able to focus all their efforts on their recovery.

Dr Roger Barker, Director of Policy & Corporate Governance at the Institute of Directors said:

During the pandemic, it has been essential to provide company directors with the means by which they can sustain inherently viable businesses. An important component has been the temporary suspension of the potential liability faced by directors if they continue to operate a company that is facing financial difficulties. During the exceptional circumstances of the pandemic, this has been an appropriate step for government to take in order to ensure that viable businesses survive and are in a position to contribute to a meaningful economic recovery.

- The temporary measures were introduced in the [Corporate Insolvency and Governance Act 2020](#)
- The temporary measures apply to England, Wales & Scotland. Insolvency in Northern Ireland is devolved and NI Ministers are considering a

corresponding extension of their legislation.

Published 25 March 2021

[**eAlert 23 March 2021 – more on Nature for Climate Fund**](#)

We use some essential cookies to make this website work.

We'd like to set additional cookies to understand how you use GOV.UK, remember your settings and improve government services.

We also use cookies set by other sites to help us deliver content from their services.