

Grenfell Tower site update: summary and Q&A from 2 February 2021 online event

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Keeping you updated about the Grenfell Tower wrapping

The Grenfell Tower site is managed by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. It is the department's job to keep the site safe and secure until a decision is made about its future.

One of the things the department does is to keep the tower enclosed in two layers of protective wrapping. The outside layer of the wrapping needs to be updated once a year. Here we explain why, and how the rewrapping process is managed.

Foreign, Commonwealth & Development (FCDO) statement on the expulsion of the Head of the EU Delegation to Venezuela

Press release

UK response to Expulsion of Head of EU Delegation to Venezuela.



A Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office spokesperson said:

“The decision of the regime in Venezuela to expel the Head of the EU Delegation is unwarranted and deeply regrettable. The UK stands shoulder to shoulder with our EU partners.”

Newsdesk

Press and Digital Department | Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
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[Suriname signs CARIFORUM-UK EPA](#)

Press release

Suriname joins the UK and 13 other CARIFORUM States that have already signed.



The deal was signed on 4 March in Suriname by Surinamese Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation, Albert R.

Ramdin, witnessed in London by the United Kingdom's Minister for International Trade, Ranil Jayawardena.

Once applied, the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) will provide duty-free and quota-free access to the United Kingdom. The Agreement also includes the gradual liberalisation of tariffs on many UK exports to Suriname, including machinery, whisky and cars.

The EPA also provides generous market access for both sides on services trade, and has provisions on intellectual property, procurement, competition and other modern trade policy issues. This is important for the deepening of bilateral trade and investment relations between the United Kingdom and Suriname.

International Trade Minister Ranil Jayawardena said:

This agreement will be key to strengthening our bonds of prosperity, and will support jobs and livelihoods in both our countries as we look to build back better from Covid-19. I look forward to working in close partnership with Suriname and all CARIFORUM States as we continue to forge deeper trade and investment ties in 2021 and beyond.

UK Acting Non-Resident Ambassador to Suriname Ross Denny said:

That we have found a way for Suriname to sign the agreement, despite travel and other restrictions in the UK and Suriname as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, shows the deep commitment of both sides to this Agreement.

Total trade in goods and services between the United Kingdom and Suriname was £19 million in 2019. Suriname's exports to the United Kingdom include around £270,000-worth of fish and shellfish.

Suriname becomes the 14th CARIFORUM State to sign the CARIFORUM-UK EPA, securing continuity for trade and preservation of market access between the United Kingdom and 14 CARIFORUM States, providing vital assurance to businesses, consumers and investors.

Notes to Editors

- Further information about the UK-CARIFORUM Economic Partnership Agreement can be found [here](#).
- The Agreement will enter into effect between Suriname and the UK following the completion of relevant internal procedures in both countries.
- The UK government has agreed trade deals with 66 countries plus the EU, that account for £890bn of UK bilateral trade in 2019.
- Sources: ONS UK Trade: All countries, non-seasonally adjusted, Q3 2020;

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[New immigration rules provide boost for Scottish fishing industry](#)

News story

The Scottish fishing industry has received a major boost as new immigration rules make it easier to recruit skilled deckhands from abroad.



The Home Office has accepted the Migration Advisory Committee recommendation that deckhands on large fishing vessels, with three or more years of experience using their skills, should be included in the list of occupations eligible for Skilled Worker visas.

The decision was welcomed by UK Government Minister for Scotland David Duguid who said:

This is good news for the Scottish industry, particularly the demersal – or white fish – fleet, and represents the fruits of close co-operation between Government and industry.

We have listened to concerns that crewing problems have been particularly acute here with some boats unable to fish within 12 miles of the shore because of visa restrictions on their vital deckhands. The new arrangements should quickly ease these difficulties.

Mike Park, Chief Executive of the Scottish White Fish Producers' Association, said:

This is something we have been campaigning about for over four years and the industry will find it very useful and supportive. It is of particular significance for vessels operating in the remoter parts of the west of Scotland and helps those vessels who faced problems when forced to operate outside the 12-mile limit, and helps too with landing crew for essential rest periods.

The change means that although deckhands are not being added to the UK's Shortage Occupation List (SOL) – which specifies which jobs have insufficient resident workers – they will become eligible for Skilled Worker visas which should make recruitment from abroad easier.

To qualify, their sponsoring employer must be offering a salary of at least £25,600, in line with other non-shortage occupations. If the deckhand is a 'new entrant' (mainly those under the age of 26), a lower salary threshold of £20,480 will apply. In all cases, their pay must also be at least £10.10 per hour. The changes take effect from 6 April.

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