

# UK Government announces business measures over Xinjiang human rights abuses

Today (12 January) the Foreign Secretary has announced a package of measures to help ensure that British organisations, whether public or private sector, are not complicit in, nor profiting from, the human rights violations in Xinjiang.

Evidence of gross human rights violations including extra-judicial detention and forced labour has been growing, including proof from the Chinese authorities' own government documents. The UK Government has repeatedly called on China to end these practices, and uphold its national laws and international obligations.

The measures are designed to send a clear signal to China that these violations are unacceptable.

The UK Government is announcing a review into which UK products can be exported to Xinjiang and the introduction of financial penalties for businesses that do not comply with the Modern Slavery Act. Further measures include increasing support for UK public bodies to exclude businesses complicit in human rights violations from their supply chains. Together these measures will help UK organisations ensure that they are not contributing to the abuse of the Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang.

Coordinated international action is needed to address the risk of forced labour entering global supply chains, and the UK is working closely with its partners on this issue. Today, Canada will make a parallel announcement of measures to help ensure Canadian businesses are not complicit in forced labour in Xinjiang.

The Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

The evidence of the scale and severity of the human rights violations being perpetrated in Xinjiang against the Uyghur Muslims is now far reaching. Today we are announcing a range of new measures to send a clear message that these violations of human rights are unacceptable, and to safeguard UK businesses and public bodies from any involvement or linkage with them.

This package will help make sure that no British organisations, Government or private sector, deliberately or inadvertently, profit from or contribute to the human rights violations against the Uyghurs or other minorities in Xinjiang.

The Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

Britain will always stand up for those suffering dreadful human rights abuses and today we are bringing forward measures which will help protect the minority populations in Xinjiang.

Businesses and public bodies must be more vigilant than ever before and ensure they are not inadvertently allowing forced labour in their supply chains.

The Trade Secretary Liz Truss said:

These new measures demonstrate that we will not turn a blind eye nor tolerate complicity in the human rights abuses taking place in Xinjiang.

Forced labour, anywhere in the world, is unacceptable. This Government wants to work with businesses to support responsible practices, and ensure British consumers are not unwittingly buying products that support the cruelty we are witnessing against the Uyghurs and other minorities in Xinjiang.

Specifically, the measures include:

- A review of export controls as they apply to Xinjiang to ensure the Government is doing all it can to prevent the exports of goods that may contribute to human rights abuses in the region. This review will determine which additional specific products will be subject to export controls in future.
- The introduction of financial penalties for organisations who fail to meet their statutory obligations to publish annual modern slavery statements, under the Modern Slavery Act.
- New, robust and detailed guidance to UK business setting out the specific risks faced by companies with links to Xinjiang and underlining the challenges of effective due diligence there.
- The Government will provide guidance and support for all UK public bodies to use public procurement rules to exclude suppliers where there is sufficient evidence of human rights violations in supply chains. Compliance will be mandatory for central government, non-departmental bodies and executive agencies
- A Minister led campaign of business engagement to reinforce the need for UK businesses to take action to address the risk.

The UK, working with partners including Canada, has led international action to hold China to account for their actions in Xinjiang, supported research which has built the evidence base for action, and urged UK business to conduct robust due diligence to ensure its supply chains are free of forced labour. The UK has led international joint statements on Xinjiang in the UN General Assembly Third Committee and the UN Human Rights Council, including bringing forward the latest statement which was supported by 39 countries, together with Germany, in October last year. The UK was also the first country to require companies by law to report on modern slavery in their

supply chains. Canada and the UK's approach will help to defend the rights of Uyghurs.

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## [Chief Executive's blog – January 2021](#)

On 4th January 2021 the Prisoners (Disclosure of Information About Victims) Act 2020 was brought into law.

The Parole Board has welcomed the implementation of the Act which puts on a statutory footing guidance that was first issued by the Board in 2017. It is important for victim and public confidence to be clear that the Board will always consider failure to disclose information about victims.

The Board has immense sympathy for families that find themselves in this tragic situation and recognises the distress that a parole review of the offender is likely to cause. The Parole Board guidance which has been reissued and advises panel members to carefully consider any failure or refusal by an offender to disclose the whereabouts of a victim's remains when assessing suitability for release.

The Act will have an impact on our decisions, making it a legal duty for the Parole Board to take into account an offender's failure to disclose the location of their victim's remains when considering them for release. Having a statutory obligation is stronger than internal guidance which cannot be binding on members. If a panel fails to take the failure to disclose information into account, and set out their assessment of the reasons in their decision, the Secretary of State for Justice would have a strong case for seeking a reconsideration of the Board's decision.

Whilst the Act is not a bar on release, and does not, and could not legally amount to "no-body no parole" it does have real meaning. Practically, in my experience, any deliberate failure to disclose what has happened to a victim will almost always lead to a prisoner spending longer in prison. A prisoner who fails to disclose information, or assist the authorities, is at the very least showing a lack of victim empathy, and may also demonstrate an attempt to exert power over their victims. Such behaviour is unlikely to assist a prisoner in demonstrating a reduction in risk. It is also much harder for a prisoner to demonstrate change in behaviour, reform and a reduction in risk of harm if they have not admitted their offence or co-operated with authorities.

The 2020 Act represents a further step in improving the parole system's responsiveness to victims. Since 2018 I have welcomed the steps that have been taken to improve the transparency of the parole system and victims access to information. Whilst understandably, victims will voice disquiet and concern when a prisoner who has caused real harm is considered for parole, I am always impressed by the dignity they show. I am convinced that providing

clearer and timely information to victims, including better explanation of the sentence itself, will reduce the concerns that they have. More than 4,000 summaries of our decisions have been issued.

The Board has also implemented a transparent reconsideration mechanism that has provided an important and speedy avenue to ensure decisions are rational and fair, in the light of the evidence presented. I am convinced that with the right safeguards further increasing transparency would be a positive step.

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## [New NHS maternity leadership training to address Ockenden Review recommendations](#)

- Patient Safety Minister Nadine Dorries announces a £500,000 fund for innovative NHS maternity leadership training
- Senior maternity and neonatal leaders from around 126 NHS trusts and 44 local maternity units will benefit
- The training will aim to apply lessons learned both from the pandemic and maternity safety inquiries, including the Ockenden Review – and help overcome disconnect between ‘ward and board’

Hundreds of NHS maternity and neonatal leaders in England will benefit from a new £500,000 maternity leadership programme to train staff across 126 Trusts and 44 local maternity systems.

The programme will be rolled out later this year and will equip maternity leaders with the skills and knowledge to improve workplace culture and facilitate greater collaborative working between nurses, doctors, midwives and obstetricians.

The issue of leadership was identified as a key factor in [Donna Ockenden's independent review](#) into cases of neglect and preventable baby deaths at Shrewsbury and Telford NHS Trust.

The review highlighted the issue of disconnect between ‘ward and board’ in maternity services and the importance of multi-disciplinary training, escalating concerns to senior leaders, and applying lessons learned from serious incidents.

Patient Safety Minister Nadine Dorries said:

The shocking and tragic findings of the Ockenden Review highlighted the importance of strengthening maternity leadership and oversight

as well as fostering more collaborative approaches within maternity and neonatal services.

I'm pleased to announce a new training programme for NHS maternity leaders, which will empower nurses, midwives and obstetricians to get the best out of their teams, and deliver safe, world-class care to mothers and their babies.

Midwifery leadership has already been strengthened with the appointment last year of 7 regional chief midwives who will work with local maternity services to provide safer and more personal care for women, babies and their families.

This is in addition to frontline maternity safety champions in every trust, including one obstetrician, midwife and neonatologist, who work closely with a board maternity safety champion to promote seamless communication across disciplines.

The new leadership programme will provide training and ongoing support for 700 people including NHS trust board safety champions, heads of midwifery, clinical directors of neonatal and clinical directors of midwifery, leaders of local maternity systems and regional chief midwives.

The programme training sessions will help maternity leaders to develop a number of skills, including:

- effective engagement with service users and families
- providing a deep understanding at trust board level of the support required for safe and personalised maternity and neonatal services
- enabling effective clinical leadership at all levels across the system, supporting and enabling leaders to identify and address potential improvements
- how to support local systems to not only react but also anticipate risk and support the improvements required
- knowledge and understanding of the critical components of a learning system:
  - leading the learning system
  - psychological safety
  - accountability and negotiation
  - continuous learning
  - reliability
  - transparency
  - quality improvement methodology and measurement
- developing the capability for safety and quality improvement across organisations and the local system drawing on tools, methodologies and case studies
- effective utilisation of learning from episodes of error, excellence and near misses

Alongside the programme, a new core curriculum for professionals working in maternity and neonatal services is being developed by the Maternity Transformation Programme in partnership with professional organisations,

clinicians and service users to address variations in skills and safety training across England.

A single core curriculum will help the workforce to bring a consistent set of updated safety skills as they move between services and trusts.

Professor Jacqueline Dunkley-Bent, Chief Midwifery Officer for England, also [wrote to NHS trusts yesterday](#) detailing a new network of advocates who will ensure the voices of mothers and families are heard.

The independent Ockenden review published at the end of last year was established to ensure families get the answers they deserve, and lessons are learnt from every tragic case, so no family has to suffer the same pain in future.

NHS England and NHS Improvement will ensure the trust and wider maternity service learn from these cases of harm and give patients the reassurance that they will receive safe, high-quality care at all times.

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## [Creating a new opportunity for customers to have their say](#)

Honest and insightful feedback is key to creating a positive customer journey. That's why we are establishing a new customer panel; to receive regular, impartial opinions from our customers – past, present and future. The new panel will enhance our understanding of our customers' experience and identify where improvements can be made, as we drive forward our central commitment to deliver an outstanding customer experience that enables customers to invest in their futures.

We are always working to improve the student finance experience and have a number of significant changes planned for this year, including the introduction of our new Customer Engagement Management system. Our Corporate Plan, published at the end of last year, sets out how we will deliver our goals and strategy over the next three years.

[www.gov.uk/government/news/a-blog-on-slcs-corporate-plan-by-ceo-paula-sussex](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/a-blog-on-slcs-corporate-plan-by-ceo-paula-sussex)

Our ambition is that the panel will challenge our understanding of the complete customer journey, taking into account all the touchpoints that those who use our services experience throughout the student finance process, from pre-application to end of loan.

While we already work extensively with customers to research their needs, the introduction of this panel will allow us to facilitate open discussions with a small group that represents a cross section of the user journey. This group will provide invaluable insight into our processes and, most importantly, how

these can be improved to enable us to provide the best possible service for students and those who are repaying their student loans.

We are currently recruiting and looking for panel members with a willingness to share their stories of the student finance journey and participate in discussions and workshops that explore customer experience issues. The more diverse the customer panel is, the better understanding we will have to inform our future service development. Alongside customers of Student Finance England (SFE), Student Finance Wales (SFW), Student Finance Northern Ireland (SFNI) and the Student Awards Agency Scotland; we are also looking for members who are future student finance customers, and for members who are in repayment. We welcome applications from individuals, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic background, religion and / or belief to represent a cross section of our customers.

In return, panel members will receive training and support will be provided from the outset to give them the background information and skills required to be an effective panel member. Skills will be developed on an on-going basis and members will be paid for their time. Members will be appointed for one year with the option to continue for a further year and the panel will meet at least four times per year.

If you are interested in helping us improve the experience of our customers, then apply to join our Student Finance Customer Panel online. Applications close on 24 January 2021.

Application for future students –

[www.civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk/csr/jobs.cgi?vxsys=4&vxvac=92908](http://www.civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk/csr/jobs.cgi?vxsys=4&vxvac=92908)

Application for current students

–[www.civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk/csr/jobs.cgi?vxsys=4&vxvac=93134](http://www.civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk/csr/jobs.cgi?vxsys=4&vxvac=93134)

Application for graduates and those in repayment –

[www.civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk/csr/jobs.cgi?vxsys=4&vxvac=93135](http://www.civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk/csr/jobs.cgi?vxsys=4&vxvac=93135)

David Wallace is Deputy CEO & Chief Customer Officer at SLC.

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## **SLC recruits members for new Student Finance Customer Panel**

The new panel will enhance SLC's understanding of the customer journey – it will inform, shape and challenge SLC's customer experience strategy as the organisation strives to deliver on its ambition of providing an outstanding customer experience.

SLC's panel will consist of 16 members with representation from customers of Student Finance England (SFE), Student Finance Wales (SFW), Student Finance Northern Ireland (SFNI) and the Student Awards Agency Scotland, in addition to prospective students and those currently in repayment. Members will be appointed for one year with the option to continue for a further year and the panel will meet at least four times per year.

David Wallace, Deputy CEO & Chief Customer Officer at SLC, said: "We are committed to delivering the experience that our customers expect and the Student Finance Customer Panel has been created to focus exclusively on where we can make improvements in the customer journey.

"SLC already works extensively with customers to research user needs and to test the best ways of meeting these needs. This new panel will operate alongside that work to ensure that our customers are at the heart of all our engagement activity.

"We are particularly keen to recruit a broad and diverse range of future, current and former students and welcome applications from individuals, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, socioeconomic background, religion and / or belief to represent a cross section of our customers.

"The opinions of the new panel will ensure we consider our interaction with customers from every perspective and at every stage of the journey. Their contribution will be invaluable in helping us to deliver an outstanding experience for all customers."

Anyone interested in joining the Student Finance Customer Panel can apply online. Panel members will be paid for their time, dependent on participation in panel meetings, plus expenses in line with SLC's travel and expenses policy.

Application for future students –

[www.civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk/csr/jobs.cgi?vxsys=4&vxvac=92908](http://www.civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk/csr/jobs.cgi?vxsys=4&vxvac=92908)

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