

Restating commitment to the JCPoA

Thank you, Mr President. I would like to start by joining others in welcoming the Secretary-General's tenth report on implementation of resolution 2231. I thank the Secretariat too for their continued professionalism and the support they provide to the Secretary-General in enabling production of this report. I would also like to thank Belgium for their role as 2231 Facilitator and for the latest Facilitator's report.

The UK remains resolutely committed to the JCPoA. We have frequently stated our unequivocal regret and concern at the US decision to leave the agreement and to re-impose sanctions on Iran. We understand the continued impact this has had in Iran and on the Iranian people. The Joint Statement by the JCPoA's remaining participants at yesterday's Ministerial Joint Commission meeting is the most recent expression of our commitment.

Since May 2018, we have worked tirelessly to preserve the JCPoA and have fully upheld our commitments. We have taken on the role of co-chair of the Arak Modernisation Project in order to bring about a proliferation-resistant facility, and we have developed INSTEX, which is ready to play an important role supporting legitimate trade with Iran. Recent Iranian criticism of the E3's approach is therefore regrettable.

It is also to our deep regret that since 2019, Iran has taken nuclear measures contrary to its JCPoA commitments. As the Secretary-General's report notes, the IAEA has confirmed that Iran has continued to install cascades of IR-2M centrifuges at Natanz and to expand its uranium enrichment programme and stockpile beyond the limits of the JCPoA. These actions seriously undermine the non-proliferation benefits of the agreement.

Along with our French and German colleagues, we are also deeply worried by Iran's recent announcement that it intends to install three cascades of advanced centrifuges at Natanz, and at the recent law passed by the Iranian Parliament, which – if implemented – would substantially expand Iran's nuclear programme and limit IAEA monitoring access. These measures would be incompatible with the JCPoA and Iran's wider nuclear commitments.

I would like to take the opportunity to welcome the Secretary-General's recognition in his report of the vital role of the IAEA, whose monitoring and verification is essential to securing international confidence in the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme.

Mr President, while recognising Iran has not conducted any test launches in the reporting period, we remain concerned by Iran's development of advanced ballistic missile technologies. We note Iran's announcements in August of two new ballistic missile systems, and in November of a missile system capable of multiple launches located in an underground facility.

The 2231 Secretariat has an important and ongoing role monitoring and reporting on the restrictions on Iran's ballistic missile programme that

remain in place under Annex B of resolution 2231. The UK therefore opposes any proposal in the 5th Committee that aims to reduce the 2231 budget beyond that recommended by the Secretary-General.

This year has seen a continuation of Iran's destabilising activity around the Middle East. We are concerned by the Secretariat's findings on imagery of four anti-tank guided missiles in Libya, one of which has been found to be consistent with weaponry manufactured in Iran.

There is also broader evidence of continued Iranian transfer of missiles to armed groups, including the Houthis in Yemen, in violation of several UNSC resolutions, including UNSC resolutions 2216 and 1540. Such proliferation is destabilising for the region and escalates already high tensions; it should stop.

The circumstances of Iranian nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh's death remain unclear. To date no State or non-State actors have claimed responsibility, but the UK has repeatedly and consistently condemned extrajudicial killings whenever and wherever they take place. Iran is no exception to this.

I would like to conclude by reiterating our concern at current tensions across the region. Escalation would be in no one's interest. We once again welcome agreement of a Joint Statement by the JCPOA's remaining participants at yesterday's Ministerial Joint Commission meeting.

We hope next year will see the US re-join the JCPOA and Iran return to compliance with the agreement. A return to diplomacy represents the best means of bringing greater security to the region, upholding the nuclear non-proliferation regime and preventing Iran from developing a nuclear weapon.

Finally, Mr President, although I am recently arrived and the newest member of the Security Council, may I take the opportunity to thank all colleagues for their warm welcome and join those paying tribute to our departing colleagues from Belgium, South Africa, the Dominican Republic, Germany and Indonesia. As Shakespeare says, "Parting is such sweet sorrow." I look forward to continuing to work with all of you.

Thank you.

New interim Chief Regulator of Ofqual

Press release

Simon Lebus appointed interim Chief Regulator of Ofqual, replacing Dame Glenys Stacey



Simon Lebus has been appointed as interim Chief Regulator of Ofqual, replacing Dame Glenys Stacey from 1 January 2021.

Mr Lebus will be in post up to 17 September 2021.

Dame Glenys will continue to provide support to Ofqual as Chair of a committee of the board focusing on exams and assessments in 2021.

Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Simon's knowledge and experience will be vital as we work to make sure young people taking exams and qualifications in 2021 have the best possible chance to succeed.

I'd like to thank Dame Glenys for her commitment and support over the last four months as acting Chief Regulator, in particular regarding the exceptional measures that have been put in place for exams next year. I am grateful to her for agreeing to continue to support work on exams from January, as Chair of the 2021 committee of Ofqual's board.

Mr Lebus has worked in the education sector since 2002, most notably as Chief Executive of Cambridge Assessment between 2002 and 2018. He now has a non-executive portfolio.

Ian Bauckham CBE, interim Chair of Ofqual from January 2021, said:

We are delighted to have secured Simon Lebus as interim Chief Regulator. Taken together these arrangements will ensure that Ofqual has the extra capacity, support and oversight it needs to make sure that next year's arrangements command public confidence, and to deliver its part in key qualification reform programmes.

Simon Lebus, interim Chief Regulator at Ofqual from January 2021, said:

I am pleased to have the opportunity to serve as Chief Regulator. I look forward to working with colleagues at Ofqual, its board, the

DfE, awarding organisations and across the education and training sector to ensure a smooth-running exam series in 2021 and to tackle important longer-term issues such as technical and vocational qualification reform and supporting innovation in assessment.

Having spent 15 years of my career involved with public exams and qualifications, I have no doubt that Ofqual has an absolutely central role in ensuring the integrity, independence, fairness and quality of our assessment system and it will be a privilege to lead it in doing that.

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[Independent batch release testing of COVID-19 \(coronavirus\) vaccines by the NIBSC](#)



As is the case for current, licensed vaccines, the quality of each batch of any potential COVID-19 vaccine will be evaluated by an independent laboratory. The independent laboratory will also carry out a thorough review of the manufacturer batch documentation that describes the production process and quality control testing performed by the company.

In the UK, this independent testing is performed by the National Institute for Biological Standards and Control (NIBSC), an expert centre of the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

Before any batch can be released for deployment, the NIBSC will issue a certificate confirming that the independent testing has been performed and that the batch is compliant with the relevant specifications for the product.

See [the NIBSC's statement on independent batch testing of COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca](#).

[Further information on independent batch release testing](#).

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Last updated 8 January 2021 [+ show all updates](#)

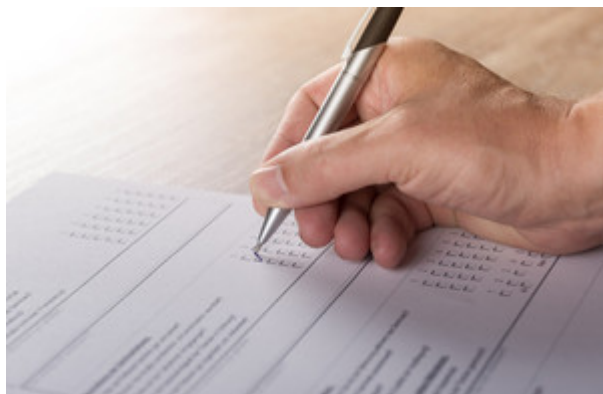
1. 8 January 2021

Added a link to the NIBSC's statement on independent batch testing of COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca

2. 22 December 2020

First published.

[Survey seeks views on contingency arrangements](#)



The Legal Aid Agency (LAA) is seeking views from all law firms and providers of legal aid services as part of a survey on contingency measures.

Providers of legal aid services will be able to tell the LAA about how the supervision and office requirements contingency arrangements have been used and leave feedback on these arrangements.

This follows the LAA's decision that virtually all COVID-19 contingency measures would be extended to 31 March 2021.

In relation to supervision and office requirements, however, we have decided to extend contingencies until the 31 January and review what shape these measures should take from February onwards.

Providers of legal aid services will have until Monday 11 January to complete the survey.

The LAA is asking all providers with a legal aid contract to complete the survey, whether they have made use of the contingency arrangements or not, so that a complete picture can be built up.

The survey can be [completed online](#).

More details on the extension of contingency arrangements can be found on our [COVID-19 contingency page](#).

Further details about supervision and office requirements can be found on our [contract management and assurance page](#).

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Last updated 22 December 2020 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 22 December 2020

Edited text to include 'supervision and office requirements'.

2. 22 December 2020

First published.

[British Army family gets new home for Christmas as they move into the first refurbished houses](#)

Corporal Stewart Angus of 1st Battalion the Mercian Regiment moved into the upgraded property at Larkhill along with his wife Sarah and children Paige, aged 11 Bradley, aged 4, and 3 year-old Oscar.

Their new home has been completely upgraded by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) and contractors Amey, thanks to £200-million of funding for military accommodation which was announced by the Chancellor and Secretary of State for Defence in July.

The Angus family are the first of around 3,500 military families who will be able to live in newly upgraded homes because of the funding.

Cpl Angus, Sarah and their children will benefit from a house which has been refitted, with a new kitchen, bathroom, downstairs toilet, heating pipework and radiators, boiler, electrical wiring and fittings and flooring.

Corporal Angus with his wife Sarah and children Paige, Bradley and Oscar at their new home. DIO Crown Copyright, 2020.

Artex ceilings were removed, walls were completely re-plastered and new carpets and curtains were added. In addition, the house got a new roof, windows and doors, external lights and some new fencing. New loft insulation and external wall insulation were also added, greatly increasing thermal efficiency to save energy, reduce the family's heating bills and make sure it's a warm family home through the winter.

The Government's funding totals £200-million for accommodation improvements for armed forces personnel. Of this, £122-million is being spent on upgrading 3,500 service homes throughout the UK. Some properties are receiving a full refurbishment, like Cpl Angus' family home, while others will see smaller but still significant improvements with a minimum investment of £25,000 per property.

Around 800 homes which have been empty for a long time are being targeted first to reduce disruption to families. A number of play parks in military housing areas will also see significant investment, giving many children improved places to play.

Air Commodore James Savage, DIO's Head of Accommodation, has welcomed the family to their new home.

He said:

It's great to see Corporal Angus and his wife and children become the first of many military families across the country to benefit from improvements to Service Family Accommodation. This funding allows us to target some of the homes most in need of improvement and really make a difference to the home lives of thousands of servicemen and women and their families.

It's a condition of the funding that it must be spent within 18 months, so my team and our industry partners, Amey, have had to work very quickly to identify where the money can be best spent and then to put our plans into action.

Corporal Angus' new home is the first of many and I hope he and his family are very happy there.

Corporal Angus said:

Moving house is always stressful, especially with three children, but it certainly helps to be moving to somewhere that I know is practically a new house in many ways. We're really pleased to be moving to a property with all of these new and upgraded features, particularly just in time for Christmas!

Tim Redfern, Amey's Managing Director Defence said:

Amey and DIO have a shared vision of providing the military community with secure, warm and energy-efficient homes, and this huge boost in government funding will enable us to further support the MOD in their commitment to improve the quality of armed forces living accommodation, and enhance the economic, sustainable and social performance of the Defence estate.

Additionally, it allows our supply chain partners to preserve the resilience of their own business during the pandemic and provide a much-needed boost to their local community.

We're absolutely delighted that Corporal Angus and his family are pleased with the upgrades to his property and we look forward to welcoming many more families into their newly-refurbished homes.

Alongside the spending on family homes, DIO is investing £38-million of the £200-million funding on a nationwide Net Carbon Accommodation Programme and £6-million on refurbishing accommodation at Longmoor Training Camp. This will improve facilities for troops when they are training away from their permanent base. The remaining £34-million will be used for improvements to some Single Living Accommodation facilities in Army barracks, RAF stations and naval establishment.

This investment programme will provide work to dozens of companies, many of which will be small and medium enterprises local to the area. It is expected to sustain around 2,000 jobs in the construction sector.

Watch the Youtube video to hear directly from the Air Commodore James Savage and Corporal Angus: <https://youtu.be/lZPoJyMNvW8>.

Read the full transcript: [Army family get Christmas wish granted with fully upgraded Service Family Accommodation](#) (ODT, 5.75KB)