

## Homes England revamps land disposal process to support SMEs and new entrants

From July 2021 a new Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) will replace the current Delivery Partner Panel (DPP3). The DPS will change how Homes England procures housebuilders, increasing flexibility and introducing a new more proportionate approach to ensuring partners' ability to deliver homes on sites.

The DPS is planned to open for the first round of applications from April 2021. Housebuilders will have the option to apply to join the DPS at any time as our pipeline of sites coming to market are publicised on the Homes England Land Hub or are brought forward by public sector landowners. We are moving away from the DPP approach where housebuilders had one opportunity to join when the panel was renewed. This new dynamic and land led approach will open Homes England sites up more widely to the whole market and be more flexible to accommodate market changes.

The DPS will also be available to help other public sector bodies, including local authorities and Registered Providers, procure a housebuilder or contractor to build homes on their land.

The DPS will introduce different categories of membership. SMEs bidding to deliver smaller sites will benefit from simpler entry criteria whereas the entry criteria for developers bidding to deliver larger strategic sites will be proportionately more testing. Larger developers will be expected to demonstrate leadership around issues such as design quality, building safety and improving equality and diversity in the industry.

Housebuilders will be able to tailor their membership to express interest in specific locations or types of development to give the agency the ability to more effectively market sites to interested parties.

Throughout the lifetime of the DPS, housebuilders will be able to apply to enter new categories and amend their membership, giving SMEs the ability to take on more ambitious schemes as they grow.

Minister of State for Housing Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP said:

"We are helping more SME and new developers to get into the house building market, and the measures announced today will make it easier for them to work in partnership with Homes England – unlocking home ownership for more families across the country.

"This compliments our recent work to simplify the outdated planning system through our planning reform proposals, making it easier and cheaper for small developers to build the homes we need."

Nick Walkley, Chief Executive of Homes England, said:

“Whilst a government procurement framework may not sound like exciting news, our new Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) and land led approach really does modernise how we invite bids for public land. I hope our partners can see that we’ve actively listened to their feedback and acted on it.

“Our new DPS, with its new flexibilities, new membership criteria and more effective approach to marketing sites, will benefit our partners in the public sector and the housebuilding sector, particularly new entrants and SMEs.”

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## [Newham rapist has his sentence increased](#)

News story

Ian Vacciana has had his sentence increased following an intervention by the Solicitor General, Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP.



A man who repeatedly raped and assaulted a woman has had his sentence increased following intervention by the Solicitor General, Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP.

Ian Vacciana, 58, raped and assaulted a woman on a number of occasions between 2018 and 2019. The first incident occurred in 2018 when Vacciana attempted to rape her. In the following months Vacciana violently assaulted her several times, with the victim requiring hospital treatment as a result of his attacks.

After a series of violent assaults, Vacciana raped the woman on multiple occasions. She managed to call the police after a particularly violent attack and Vacciana was arrested.

Vacciana was sentenced to 13 years and 6 months' imprisonment with an extended licence period of 4 years on 16 March 2020 at Snaresbrook Crown Court.

Following a referral to the Court of Appeal by the Solicitor General, on 10 December the sentence was found to be unduly lenient and has been increased to 18 years' imprisonment with an extended licence period of 4 years.

After the hearing at the Court of Appeal the Solicitor General, Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP, said:

Vacciana is a dangerous individual who has shown no remorse for his sickening behaviour. I hope the Court of Appeal's decision today brings some closure to the brave victim.

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## [Nationwide call for views on tackling violence against women and girls](#)

A nationwide [Call for Evidence](#) to inform a new strategy to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls has been launched by the government today (10 December).

The launch of this Call for Evidence will mean that the experiences of victims and survivors will be at the heart of the government's strategy. As well as urging organisations who directly support victims and survivors – such as frontline professionals and academics – to respond, for the first time the government is also asking victims, survivors, and their families and friends for their views and experiences.

Over the last 10 years, the government has responded to newer forms of crimes against women, such as cyber flashing and revenge porn. Action includes making 'upskirting' a specific criminal offence and commissioning a review of the laws around non-consensual sharing of intimate images, however, the pace of societal and technological change means it is even more critical that we adapt the response to these crimes.

This strategy will be an important step in making sure the government's efforts continue to keep up with societal and technological change.

Given sensitivities, this survey will be carried out in partnership with third sector organisations so that victims and survivors are fully supported when speaking about their experiences. This will be anonymous, enabling

respondents to provide as much information as they are comfortable with.

During the 10 week consultation, the government will also seek the views of organisations who directly support victims and survivors, such as frontline professionals and academics.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

Crimes which disproportionately affect women and girls, such as sexual violence, have a devastating impact on those directly affected, as well as on society as a whole.

Sadly, the methods used by perpetrators of these horrible crimes are constantly evolving and adapting, so our response must too.

I am steadfast in my determination to see more perpetrators brought to justice and all victims and survivors receiving the support they deserve.

Safeguarding Minister Victoria Atkins said:

Crimes that disproportionately affect women and girls range from rape and FGM to upskirting and online offences; they can have terrible effects on victims. We want to do all we can to tackle these appalling crimes, through a new strategy to tackle Violence Against Women and Girls.

I know it requires great bravery for victims to come forward, but we want to hear from them and from the public, so that the strategy reflects their views and experiences.

Help us to create a strategy to tackle crimes against women and girls in the 21st century.

Nimco Ali OBE, who was recently appointed as an Independent Government Adviser on Tackling VAWG, will be supporting this Call for Evidence and making sure voices from all parts of society are heard.

Independent Government Adviser on Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Nimco Ali said:

As a survivor of FGM, I know the impact gender based violence can have on your life. How it can eat away at your peace of mind and the ability to feel safe in your body, your home and at times in the world. But I also know that we can prevent Violence Against Women and Girls and we can erase the fear that consumes so many of us.

Today as we launch the consultation on Violence Against Women and

Girls, I want you to know this government cares about everyone woman and girl in this country and we want to hear from you.

We want to hear your lived experience and how we can help make you feel safer. Progress is possible and with your help we can create a world free of VAWG and the fear of it.

The 10-week consultation begins today (10 December) and closes on 19 February 2021.

As well as the public survey, the Home Office will set up focused discussions with a range of representatives from charities directly engaging with victims to gather their views. The survey will provide the fine detail of the lived experiences, while the focus groups will inform with more strategic or structural issues.

Statistics show that there were estimated 2.3 million victims of domestic abuse in the last year and it costs society an estimated £71 billion. Domestic homicides count for around 1 in 5 of all homicides and the government is aiming to reduce homicide overall.

This is why the government will next year bring forward a new dedicated standalone Domestic Abuse strategy which will complement the new VAWG strategy so it will be given the national prominence it deserves with a comprehensive strategy to tackle it.

The Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy will be published early next year, with the Domestic Abuse Strategy due to follow once the Domestic Abuse Bill receives Royal Assent.

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## **[New UK Government Covid testing site opens in East Kilbride](#)**

The UK Government has today, Thursday 10 December, opened a new walk-through coronavirus testing centre at the Red Deer Centre in East Kilbride (G75 8AE). The centre is easily accessible for people without a car.

The test centre is part of the largest network of diagnostic testing facilities created in British history. In Scotland, this comprises of six drive through sites, 19 walk-through sites, 21 mobile units, plus the Glasgow Lighthouse Lab which is working round the clock to process samples.

In Scotland, the UK Government is providing all Covid testing and test processing outside of the NHS. Around two thirds of all daily tests are provided by the UK Government, in support of Scotland's health services.

Tests must be booked in advance at [NHS Inform](#) or by calling 0800 028 2816. People should only book at test if they have coronavirus symptoms (a high temperature, a new and continuous cough, or a loss or change to their sense of smell or taste).

Health Minister Lord Bethell said:

To respond to the coronavirus, we have built a major testing and tracing system from scratch. We are constantly working to expand and improve it with new technologies and innovations so everyone with symptoms can get a test.

New walk-in sites like this one makes it even easier to get a test no matter where you live. If you have symptoms of coronavirus, I urge you to book a test today and follow the advice of NHS Test and Protect if you are contacted to protect others and stop the spread of the virus.

Baroness Dido Harding, Interim Executive Chair of the National Institute for Health Protection, said:

Walk through sites offer communities better access to coronavirus testing, so everyone with symptoms can get a test. This new site is part of our ongoing work to expand our testing network across the UK which now has the capacity to process more than 500,000 tests a day. We will continue to expand capacity to improve test turnaround times and push forward testing innovations to make sure anyone who needs a test can get one.

Please book a test if you have coronavirus symptoms: a new continuous cough, a high temperature and a loss or change in sense of smell or taste, and follow the advice of NHS Test and Protect if you are contacted.

UK Government Minister for Scotland, Iain Stewart, said:

The UK Government is helping all parts of the UK fight the coronavirus pandemic.

Testing is vital, helping to manage local outbreaks and protecting people's livelihoods. The UK Government is providing the bulk of Covid testing in Scotland, and this new walk-through centre is just the latest in our extensive testing network.

We are pleased to be working with local and commercial partners. These sites are not possible without the hard work of many people. I would like to thank everyone involved for their incredible efforts for the good of the country at this difficult time.

Gabe Docherty, Director of Public Health, NHS Lanarkshire said:

The public health department continues to contact-trace positive cases and clusters in our community and this addition to the UK testing provision is welcome.

I want to thank the public for their co-operation in reducing spread of the virus and ask that they please remain vigilant. The general measures to minimise the risk of Covid-19 remain the same – face coverings, avoid crowded places, clean your hands, two metre distance, self-isolate and go for a test if you have symptoms.

Please do not hesitate if you have symptoms. It's critical that you go for a test and this walk-in centre is a very welcome addition to our testing capacity.

Simon Venn, Mitie Chief Government & Strategy Officer, said:

Our priority during the pandemic is to support the nation's efforts to fight COVID-19 and help keep the country running. Testing is a critical part of the UK's strategy to combat coronavirus and we're proud to support the UK Government with this vital task. A big thank you to all the NHS staff, Mitie employees and other frontline heroes in East Kilbride, who are working tirelessly to keep us all safe.

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## **New surrender scheme starts to keep dangerous weapons off the streets**

The surrender scheme marks an important development in the government's commitment to tackling serious violence and strengthening police powers to take action against it.

Under the scheme, offensive weapons that will soon be prohibited as well as rapid firing rifles, which fire at a rate closer to semi-automatic rifles, can be surrendered to the police. Lawful owners will be able to claim compensation for the items in most cases.

This follows the Offensive Weapons Act which bans possession of dangerous and offensive weapons in private. The list of weapons includes zombie knives, cyclone knives, knuckledusters, death star knives, flick knives, gravity knives, batons, disguised knives, push daggers and other offensive weapons. It was already illegal to possess a knife or offensive weapon in public.

Crime and Policing Minister, Kit Malthouse, said:

I am committed to ensuring our streets are safe from the scourge of violent crime.

We are prohibiting ownership of dangerous weapons which have a high potential for causing harm – every item surrendered is one which can no longer fall into the hands of criminals.

The government's top priority will always be keeping the public safe and we are ensuring that our laws and police powers deliver on these commitments.

The scheme will run for 3 months from 10 December 2020 to 9 March 2021. Lawful owners will be able to claim compensation if the total value of the claim is more than £30. Claims can be submitted to the police using a [form](#).

This scheme is in addition to knife amnesties that are routinely conducted by police forces.

National Police Chiefs' Council lead on knife crime, Deputy Assistant Commissioner Graham McNulty, said:

Tackling knife crime and reducing violence is a top priority for policing. The surrender scheme will enable us to remove dangerous weapons off the streets and assist in keeping our communities safe.

Every weapon removed is possibly a life saved and I urge people to please help us make our streets safer.

The Offensive Weapons Act is part of wider a government commitment to reducing serious violent crime, providing safer streets and neighbourhoods for everyone. This includes:

- introducing Knife Crime Prevention Orders which are intended to be preventative, helping young people at risk of being drawn into knife crime to change their behaviour
- making it unlawful to dispatch bladed products sold online without measures in place to ensure they are not delivered into the hands of a person under 18
- changing the legal definition for threatening someone with an offensive weapon to make prosecutions easier
- banning the sale and delivery of corrosive products to under 18s and making it an offence to possess a corrosive substance in a public place

The government is also boosting police numbers with 20,000 additional officers, almost 6,000 of which have already been recruited. New laws will also make it easier for police to use stop and search powers for those previously convicted of knife crime.



The full surrender scheme applies in England and Wales which relates to certain knives and other offensive weapons, as well as rapid firing rifles, their ancillary equipment and bump stocks. The scheme extends to Scotland and Northern Ireland only with respect to firearms, their ancillary equipment and bump stocks.

[Guidance](#) is available providing a list of items covered, guidance on how to travel with and surrender weapons safely, and compensation levels.