

Call for evidence launched for Post Office Horizon IT Inquiry

- Inquiry Chair Sir Wyn Williams has today launched [a call for evidence](#) to invite views about and gather evidence relating to the Post Office Limited's IT system (Horizon) and events associated with its use
- while Sir Wyn will welcome evidence about all aspects of the use of Horizon which is relevant to the terms of reference of the Inquiry he would like to make clear his wish to receive a body of evidence relating to the human impact of the Horizon dispute
- to ensure the transparency of the Inquiry, information that it receives will be published on an additional website for public viewing whenever that is legally permissible and publication not inconsistent with other competing factors such data protection, confidentiality, and privacy

Evidence received will support the Inquiry's understanding of institutional settings and the experience of postmasters, employees and contractors at the Post Office Limited both historically, and as the company seeks to respond to the findings in the Horizon judgments and implement the measures set out in the settlement agreement.

The [call for evidence](#) will invite evidence and information from the public on the [Inquiry's terms of reference](#), call for written statements on the human impact of the Horizon dispute and seek questions from the public to be posed to the participants in the stage 2 open evidence session, which will focus upon hearing from the Post Office Limited, Fujitsu and the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy.

Today, he has published a [Statement of Approach 002](#), setting out the type of information that will be made public, and when it will be available to view.

Records that meet the criteria set out in Statement of Approach 002 will be shared on a [new webpage](#) that can be accessed by anyone.

Sir Wyn Williams, Chair of the Horizon Post Office IT Inquiry, said:

I am very pleased that we have reached the point of a Call for Evidence in accordance with the timetable we set ourselves and I look forward to receiving a substantial volume of evidence both written and oral which will ensure that the Inquiry is very well equipped to ensure that it fulfils its terms of reference.

Today's developments follow the publication of a previous Statement of Approach (001) last month, in which Sir Wyn set out that senior members of the Post Office Limited, Fujitsu and the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) will be invited to give evidence in formal open sessions as part of the Inquiry. Post Office Ltd, Fujitsu (which supplied the

Horizon system) and BEIS have committed to fully cooperating with the Inquiry.

Individuals can view or participate in the Inquiry's public hearings and [a registration form](#) is available.

The non-statutory Inquiry is committed to understanding and acknowledging what went wrong in relation to Horizon and to ensuring that there is a public summary of the failings that occurred at Post Office Ltd so that they should never be repeated.

British Embassy Chisinau call for proposals: State Forestry Agency Reform

The British Embassy Chisinau seeks applications from organisations with experience of working on climate change, environmental issues, and governance reform in Moldova.

This call for proposals specifically seeks applications for projects related to the reform of the State Forestry Agency, "Moldsilva".

Please refer to the [Terms of Reference](#) for further details.

Budget

We welcome project proposals in the value range up to £10,000.

Selection criteria

- project alignment with the above mentioned specific priority
- projects should include clear gender and social inclusion activities or outcomes within the above mentioned thematic priorities wherever possible
- projects should have clearly defined, SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-limited) outputs and deliverables and demonstrate value for money
- project partners may be local, or national across Moldova, or international organisations
- funding may be awarded to consortia of local and/or international organisations; but there will need to be a clear lead organisation that will be accountable for financial and results management and delivery
- the agreed budget must be spent in full and all activities completed by 31 March 2021

- successful applicants will be required to submit final financial and narrative reporting
- as a general rule, grants should not be used to procure goods and equipment but this will be considered on a case-by-case basis; no more than 10% of project funds may be used for equipment. The budget may not be used for gifting
- payments will be made in MDL at an FCDO (Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office) rate.

Reporting and measure and evaluation

- the supplier will meet at least monthly with the British Embassy team to discuss ongoing progress against their project plan (including communications plan), risks and impact
- the supplier will be asked to formally submit financial and narrative reporting on the project as well as a completion report at the end of the project
- FCDO reserves the right to carry out evaluation visits at a time agreed with the supplier and after giving reasonable notice

Dependencies

The supplier is asked to assume that they will deliver an entirely independent intervention should they win the competition. Items such as office space, translation costs, security, legal fees, and insurance, transport and accommodation costs should be priced into the contract.

The supplier is responsible for due diligence of potential partners and for assessing, reporting on and mitigating all risks at a project level.

How to apply

Applicants must complete the Project Proposal and Project Budget forms (in English).

[Project Proposal Form Moldsilva](#) (ODT, 11.9KB)

[Activity Based Budget Template](#) (ODS, 10.3KB)

[Moldsilva Reform Project Terms of Reference](#) (ODT, 21.5KB)

Applicants must be aware that the British Embassy Chisinau will accept applications until close of business on 11 December 2020. Projects proposals submitted after the deadline will not be taken into consideration. Please note that the size of one message should not exceed 3 MB.

Applicants must send the completed Project Proposal and Project Budget forms to email: projects.chisinau@fcdo.gov.uk

'Build the Future' announced as theme for National Apprenticeship Week 2021

- Theme of 'Build the Future' announced for NAW2021
- Focus on how employers train, retain and achieve with apprenticeships
- Toolkit available online to assist the apprenticeship community in getting involved

"Build the Future" is the theme for NAW2021, taking place between 8 and 14 February 2021, aiming to encourage everyone to consider how apprenticeships help individuals to build the skills and knowledge required for a rewarding career.

The 14th annual week-long celebration of apprenticeships, taking place across England, will showcase the impact apprenticeships can have on communities, local businesses and regional economies and how they all benefit from the impact of apprenticeships.

As a result of the pandemic and many individuals relying on technology and virtual meetings more than ever, National Apprenticeship Week 2021 will be different, but just as exciting. NAW2021 will celebrate the motivating stories of how apprentices have helped business adapt and build during a difficult year.

Minister for Apprenticeships and Skills, Gillian Keegan said:

Apprenticeships are a fantastic way to learn while you earn, opening up new and exciting career paths that can transform lives. It's been a tough year for everyone, but we want the theme for National Apprenticeship Week 2021 to be a springboard to look ahead to how apprenticeships can futureproof workforces and boost careers.

The week is a great opportunity to highlight the huge range of apprenticeships on offer – from Space Engineer to Registered Nurse. There are currently around 7,000 apprenticeship opportunities available on the Find An Apprenticeship website which will benefit individuals, businesses and local communities. I encourage everyone to get involved and help make it a success.

To support National Apprenticeship Week 2021, individuals, employers, training providers and communities are being encouraged to get involved, to celebrate apprenticeships and how they:

TRAIN apprentices, and future proof their workforce and careers through apprenticeships;

RETAIN apprentices, gaining the skills and knowledge needed by the business, and seeing apprentices thrive, whilst having impact;

ACHIEVE a real return on investment from apprentices; realising the business benefits of apprenticeships, with apprentices progressing in their chosen careers.

Peter Mucklow, Director, Apprenticeships, Education and Skills Funding Agency said:

There is no doubt that National Apprenticeship Week 2021 will be different this year in how we celebrate apprenticeship success.

We are however continuing to ask employers to encourage everyone to consider how apprenticeships can help build organisations for years to come; whilst showing the clear return on investment realised when apprentices are brought into the business. Employers are helping the nation to #BuildTheFuture through apprenticeships.

The diversity of career options and industries available now, through apprenticeships, is outstanding. We want all current apprentices from all sectors to get behind the Week and to showcase the positive impact of apprenticeships, on careers, families and communities.

A toolkit is available now to support the apprenticeship community with planning their activity for National Apprenticeship Week 2021. [Download the toolkit from GOV.UK.](#)

Keep up to date with National Apprenticeship Week 2021 updates by following @Apprenticeships on Twitter, and National Apprenticeship Service on LinkedIn.

Use the hashtags #NAW2021 #BuildTheFuture in social media activity.

To find out more about apprenticeships, visit: www.apprenticeships.gov.uk

[Is getting useful references a challenge?](#)

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is collaborating with a number of safeguarding partners to hold a consultation about safer recruitment practices, references and conduct information within the social care and health sector.

Working alongside Skills for Care, Reed Screening, Dominic Headley & Associates, and VBA Consulting, our aim is to develop resources which will provide social care employers with the guidance, knowledge and tools to allow them to share accurate and relevant information about individuals with prospective employers – and with DBS, when appropriate.

Background

Gathering effective references for staff working in social care and health settings has always been an essential part of safe and fair recruitment, but many employers experience challenges in obtaining and providing them. Some employers refuse to complete references, others provide insufficient information and sometimes, appropriate 'evidence of conduct' is not provided, which is legally required by the Care Quality Commission.

Temporary arrangements put in place due to COVID-19, including the introduction of our 24-hour emergency Barred Lists checks, have resulted in an increased need for satisfactory social care references, and evidence of conduct. Our COVID-19 Barred Lists checks allow individuals working in eligible roles to commence employment prior to receipt of the full DBS certificate, so references and other elements of safe recruitment are essential.

Consultation and workshops

In light of the above, DBS is working with the above-mentioned partners to hold an online consultation and several workshops which will then inform the development of a number of resources – all of which aim to assist social care and health employers where references and evidence of conduct are involved.

The workshops will:

- provide further information about the project
- examine the barriers and challenges that employers face in gathering and providing references and evidence of conduct
- look at any ideas that participants have for improving referencing within the social care and health sector, or any practices that currently work well within their organisation

Each session will include case study scenarios for participants to explore that will highlight some of the key issues we are trying to address.

Executive Director of Barring and Safeguarding, Dr Sue Smith, says:

Effective evidence of conduct and references are part of a basket of measures that are key for safer recruitment within the social care and health sector, and we understand the difficulties that employers sometimes face in providing and obtaining this essential information. We are working together with Skills for Care, Reed Screening, Dominic Headley & Associates, and VBA Consulting, to develop these resources and workshops so we can provide employers

with the tools they need to support them during recruitment and ongoing employment, and in doing so, continue our work within the safeguarding community to make recruitment safer.

Dates and times of the workshops are as follows:

Date	Time
Wednesday 13 January	12:30 to 15:00
Thursday 21 January	12:30 to 15:00
Wednesday 3 February	12:30 to 15:00

Register your interest in a workshop

To find out more about this consultation, or register your interest in a workshop, please email dominic@dominicheadleyassociates.co.uk.

Survey

As part of this consultation, we are asking organisations within the social care and health sector to take part in a short survey, which focuses on how they currently obtain and provide references, their understanding of references and the part they play within recruitment, and what they would like to gain from this consultation. This survey can be found [here](#).

[GC Christmas webinar: Sustainable Chemistry](#)



Professor Tom Welton speaking at the Green & Sustainable Chemistry conference (2019)

During our Christmas webinar, Professor Tom Welton presented how sustainable chemistry is the natural corollary of the concept of sustainable development as described in the UN Sustainable Development Goal 12.4 (SDG 12.4), and

described the challenges that it presents.

Background

[SDG 12.4](#) describes the target to achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle by 2020, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment.

During his talk, Professor Welton focussed particularly on plastics and showed that both consumers and producers need to act to achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and waste.

About the speaker

[Professor Tom Welton](#) OBE CChem FRSC, is the current President of the Royal Society of Chemistry (2020-2022), Former Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Professor of Sustainable Chemistry at Imperial College London. He works with ionic liquids in order to develop sustainable solvent technologies and has published over 100 papers, primarily on the structures and chemistry of ionic liquids and their solutes.

Professor Welton was introduced by [Julian Braybrook, Government Chemist](#).

Listen to this webinar

The webinar took place on 17 December, 14:00 GMT. [You can now listen to the recording.](#)

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1. 21 December 2020

Webinar recording is now available.

2. 14 December 2020

There is still time to register for this webinar.

3. 1 December 2020

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