

Changes to Discretionary Grant and Restoration Repayment Guidance

News story

Changes to Bona Vacantia Division (BVD) Discretionary Grant (company can be restored) and Restoration Repayment Guidance



On 30 November 2020 the Bona Vacantia Division will be publishing new Discretionary Grant (where a company can be restored) and Restoration Repayment guidelines.

There are significant changes to the guidance and forms which will make the application process easier including the introduction of QR Codes and the requirement for statutory declarations in discretionary grant applications (company can be restored) being removed and replaced by a form of undertaking.

Any application forwarded using the current published guidance and forms will be accepted up until 31 December 2020. As from 1 January 2021 any application must be made using the new forms and guidance.

Any submissions received after 1 January 2021 using the old forms and guidance will not be accepted and will be returned for re-submission.

It is very important to note that due to the current Government guidance concerning coronavirus (COVID-19) we are accepting scanned identification documents and declarations which do not have to be verified by the Post Office, practising Solicitor or a Notary Public as stated in our guidelines and forms.

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Wigan man jailed for longer after killing 13-year-old

News story

Liam Wilson has had his sentence increased following intervention from the Solicitor General, Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP.



A man whose dangerous driving caused the death of a 13-year-old boy has had his sentence increased following intervention by the Solicitor General, Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP.

Liam Wilson, 21, had not passed his driving test when he bought a car for £250 in July 2020. Despite being told he would need to insure and MOT the vehicle immediately if he wanted to drive it, he chose not to do so.

On Tuesday 7 July 2020, Wilson drove the car through Ashton-in-Makerfield. He drove the car around a bend at 58mph in a 20mph zone. Wilson lost control of the car and collided with Jack Worwood, 13, who died in hospital the following day.

After colliding with the victim and crashing the car, Wilson fled the scene and hid from police. He was arrested the following day.

Wilson was sentenced to 4 years' imprisonment and disqualified from driving for 5 years and 10 months on 4 September 2020 at Bolton Crown Court.

Following a referral to the Court of Appeal by the Solicitor General, on 27 November the sentence was found to be unduly lenient and has been increased to 5 years' imprisonment. The Court also increased Wilson's driving disqualification to 6 years and 6 months.

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General said:

Wilson's dangerous driving killed an innocent young boy who was on his way to play football. He fled the scene after the crash and showed little remorse. No sentence can repair the damage Wilson

caused, but I hope the Court of Appeal's decision today gives some closure to the victim's family.

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[Quagga mussels found in the River Trent and Rutland Water](#)

Press release

Members of the public are being asked to help out to limit the spread of quagga mussels in the East Midlands.



A quagga mussel

- Invasive non-native species found in East Midlands
- River and reservoir users urged to follow 'check, clean, dry' procedures
- Environment Agency and Anglian Water working together to identify spread

The invasive non-native species has recently been found in the River Trent near Newton-on-Trent, Lincolnshire, as well as in Rutland Water. People using the river or reservoir are now being urged to follow 'check, clean, dry' procedures to try to prevent the spread.

The Environment Agency has increased its monitoring across the region's rivers to establish the extent of the problem and is working with Anglian Water and the GB Non-Native Species Secretariat to agree an appropriate bio-security response. While quagga mussels do not pose any immediate direct threat to water quality, animals or people, they do spread rapidly and can block pipes and water based assets resulting in significant future maintenance costs.

Quagga mussels were first recorded in the UK in 2014 and have previously been found in the Thames catchment. It is not known how they arrived in the Trent or Rutland Water.

Geoff Craig, area environment manager for the Environment Agency, said:

Unfortunately, further spread of the quagga mussels is highly likely, but we can slow down the spread. We urge all water users in the affected areas to follow the required biosecurity procedures of 'check, clean, dry' whenever working or engaging in leisure activities in or near the water.

Find out more about [Check, Clean, Dry](#).

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[CDEI proposes a roadmap to tackle algorithmic bias](#)

A major review from the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation (CDEI), which draws on a detailed analysis of the use of algorithms in four sectors (financial services, local government, policing and recruitment), proposes significant measures for government, regulators and industry to act on to tackle the risks of algorithmic bias.

Key recommendations include:

- Government should place a mandatory transparency obligation on all public sector organisations using algorithms that have an impact on significant decisions affecting individuals.

*Organisations should be actively using data to identify and mitigate bias. They should make sure that they understand the capabilities and limitations of algorithmic tools, and carefully consider how they will ensure fair treatment of individuals.

- Government should issue guidance that clarifies the application of the Equality Act to algorithmic decision-making. This should include guidance on the collection of data to measure bias, as well as the lawfulness of bias mitigation techniques (some of which risk introducing positive discrimination, which is illegal under the Equality Act).

The CDEI, the UK government's advisory body on the responsible use of AI and data-driven technology, has proposed a roadmap that government, regulators and industry can take to increase fairness and reduce bias, while also ensuring that the UK regulatory ecosystem is set up to support responsible innovation.

The measures are designed to produce a step change in the behaviour of all organisations making life-changing decisions on the basis of data, with a focus on improving accountability and transparency. The report emphasises that organisations are responsible for their decisions – whether they have been made by an algorithm or a team of humans – and offers guidance for organisational leaders and boards to enhance accountability.

The CDEI recommends that the government should place a transparency obligation on all public sector organisations using algorithms which support significant decisions. This would include information about how algorithms are used in the overall decision-making process, and steps taken to ensure fair treatment of individuals.

The CDEI argues that there is an opportunity here: effective use of data can enable organisations to shine a light on practices that may otherwise go unseen, and identify the drivers of bias. The report recommends that government and regulators provide clear guidance about how organisations can actively use data to tackle current and historic bias. This guidance should address the misconception that data protection law prevents the collection or usage of data for monitoring or addressing discrimination.

The review was informed by public engagement to gain a deeper understanding of attitudes towards algorithmic decision-making, drawing on methodologies including survey and behavioural science research. A large scale survey, conducted with Deltapoll, found that the majority of respondents were aware of the use of algorithms to support decision-making (around 6 out of 10). Of those respondents who were aware of the use of algorithms, respondents were most aware of their use in financial services (more than 5 in 10), in contrast to local government (around 3 in 10). The results suggest that the public are more concerned that the outcome of decision-making is fair, rather than whether algorithms are used to inform these judgements. There is public support for data – including age (net agreement of +59%), ethnicity (+59%) and sex (+39%) – to be used for tackling algorithmic bias in recruitment.

The review points to the need for an ecosystem of industry standards and professional services to help organisations address algorithmic bias in the UK and beyond. This presents an opportunity for the UK: leadership in this area can not only ensure fairness for British citizens, but can also unlock growth by incubating new industries in responsible technology.

To catalyse this, the CDEI has initiated a programme of work on AI assurance, in which it will identify what is needed to develop a strong AI accountability ecosystem in the UK. Other related CDEI work includes: working with the Government Digital Service (GDS) to pilot an approach to algorithmic transparency; supporting a police force and a local authority to apply lessons learnt and develop practical governance structures; and active public

engagement to build understanding of the values that citizens want reflected in new models of data governance.

In its report, the CDEI calls for national leadership and coordination to drive the pace of change, and urges the government to be clear on where responsibilities sit for tracking progress.

Adrian Weller, Board Member for the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation, said:

“It is vital that we work hard now to get this right as adoption of algorithmic decision-making increases. Government, regulators and industry need to work together with interdisciplinary experts, stakeholders and the public to ensure that algorithms are used to promote fairness, not undermine it. The Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation has today set out a range of measures to help the UK to achieve this, with a focus on enhancing transparency and accountability in decision-making processes that have a significant impact on individuals. Not only does the report propose a roadmap to tackle the risks, but it highlights the opportunity that good use of data presents to address historical unfairness and avoid new biases in key areas of life.”

Simon McDougall, Deputy Commissioner – Regulatory Innovation and Technology for the Information Commissioner’s Office, said:

“We welcome and support the findings of the report and want to echo the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation’s concerns around algorithmic bias. When developed and used responsibly, algorithms can transform society for the better. But there is also significant risk that algorithms can exacerbate issues of fairness and inequality. This often impacts the most vulnerable or marginalised people. Data protection law requires fair and transparent uses of data in algorithms, gives people rights in relation to automated decision-making, and demands that the outcome from the use of algorithms does not result in unfair or discriminatory impacts. The ICO has prioritised the data protection implications of AI for a long time and has produced guidance for organisations on the use of AI.”

[Jobcentre guidance on COVID-19 Local Restriction Tiers](#)



The department will follow the latest government and Public Health England (PHE) guidance to ensure colleagues and customers remain safe throughout.

On 23 November 2020, the Prime Minister announced that the government will be returning to a strengthened Local Restriction Tiers system of COVID-19 measures in England from Thursday 3 December 2020 to protect the NHS and save lives.

This means from 3 December 2020 in England, the following updated jobcentre guidance will apply to customers, and will ensure essential support is provided whilst keeping colleagues and customers safe.

Local Restriction Tier 1 (Medium) and Tier 2 (High):

- Work Coaches will be empowered to support customers by the best and most appropriate channels – whether online, by phone, or in person – with jobcentres remaining open to help those who need extra support and are unable to interact with us on the phone or digitally.
- All jobcentres to remain open – maintaining social distancing and regular desk and communal space cleaning in line with current COVID-19 guidance.
- Face-to-face assessments for disability benefits remain suspended.
- If you think you might be entitled to a health and disability benefit you should contact us as soon as possible to make a claim in the normal way.
- For existing customers, payments will continue as normal. Anyone who has a change in their needs should contact us immediately so we can ensure they are receiving the correct level of support.

Local Restriction Tier 3 (Very High) and Tier 4 (Stay at Home):

- All face-to-face assessments will be suspended, except for vulnerable customers who will still be able to attend jobcentres for urgent support.
- Work Coaches will be empowered to support customers by the best and most appropriate channels – whether online, by phone, or in person – with jobcentres remaining open to help those who need extra support and are unable to interact with us on the phone or digitally.
- All jobcentres to remain open – maintaining social distancing and regular desk and communal space cleaning in line with current COVID-19 guidance.

- Face-to-face assessments for disability benefits remain suspended.
- If you think you might be entitled to a health and disability benefit, you should contact us as soon as possible to make a claim in the normal way.
- For existing customers, payments will continue as normal. Anyone who has a change in their needs should contact us immediately so we can ensure they are receiving the correct level of support.

On 3 November 2020, we also confirmed that the suspension of the Minimum Income Floor – for self-employed customers claiming Universal Credit in England, Scotland, and Wales – has been extended to the end of April 2021. This means that self-employed customers on Universal Credit will receive a payment that reflects their earnings at this difficult time.

For Scotland:

On 2 November 2020, the Scottish Government introduced a five level tiered system. The following will therefore apply to jobcentres and customers in Scotland:

Levels 0 and 1:

- For these levels, the jobcentre guidance in place for Tier 1 (medium) of the updated Local Restriction Tiers system (above) will apply.

Level 2:

- For this level, the jobcentre guidance in place for Tier 2 (high) of the updated Local Restriction Tiers system (above) will apply.

Levels 3 and 4:

- For these levels, the jobcentre guidance in place for Tier 3 (very high) of the updated Local Restriction Tiers system (above) will apply.

For Wales:

The Welsh Government has introduced a system of four COVID alert levels for Wales. The following will therefore apply to jobcentres and customers in Wales:

- Alert level 1 – For this level, the jobcentre guidance in place for Tier 1 (medium) of the Local Restriction Tiers system (above) will apply.
- Alert level 2 – For this level, the jobcentre guidance in place for Tier 2 (high) of the Local Restriction Tiers system (above) will apply.
- Alert level 3 and 4 – For these levels, the jobcentre guidance in place for Tier 3 (very high) of the Local Restriction Tiers system (above) will apply.

From 28 December 2020, Wales will move into Alert level 4.

For Northern Ireland:

Please contact the Department for Communities for more information on measures introduced in Northern Ireland – 028 9082 9000.

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 3267 5144

Follow DWP on:

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Last updated 21 December 2020 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 21 December 2020

Added jobcentre guidance for Tier 4 (Stay at Home) in England.

2. 18 December 2020

The Welsh Government has introduced a system of four COVID alert levels for Wales. This page has been updated to reflect this.

3. 2 December 2020

From 9 November, the Welsh Government announced an easing of restrictions. From then, the jobcentre guidance in place for Tier 2 (high) of the updated Local Restriction Tiers system (above) will apply to jobcentres and customers in Wales.

4. 27 November 2020

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