

[A message of condolence from Her Majesty The Queen to the President of the Republic of Honduras](#)

World news story

The Queen's message to the people of Honduras.



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[Government closes antique firearms loopholes to protect public](#)

Loopholes exploited by criminals to use antique firearms in violent crime will be closed by new laws introduced today (Monday 9 November).

The antique firearms exemption allows collectors and dealers to possess and trade in old firearms which no longer present a danger to the public, but evidence shows this is being exploited for criminal use.

Seven ammunition types will be removed from the definition of 'antique firearm', making up to 26,000 guns that use them illegal to own without a firearms licence.

Policing Minister Kit Malthouse said:

Public safety is our top priority and we cannot allow these dangerous firearms to fall into the wrong hands.

The UK has some of the toughest gun laws in the world – we will do everything in our power to make sure it stays that way.

According to the National Ballistics Intelligence Service, there has been a sharp rise in the number of antique guns being seized from crime scenes in

recent years.

In 2007 there were four recoveries, which grew to 97 in 2016 and remain at high levels with 69 recovered in 2019.

Since 2007, six fatalities have been linked to antique firearms.

Existing owners of the firearms that will be affected by these regulations can apply for a firearm certificate.

They can also sell, deactivate or surrender these firearms ahead of the law changing, which will take place shortly after Parliament approves the legislation.

The maximum sentence for the unlawful possession of a firearm is five years' imprisonment.

The regulations will be reviewed every three years so that they reflect any future trends in criminal use and do their job of keeping the public safe.

The regulations apply across England and Wales. The regulations apply to Scotland except in respect of air weapons, which is a devolved matter. The regulations do not apply in Northern Ireland as firearms policy is devolved.

The government continues to do everything in its power to protect the public, including recruiting 20,000 additional police officers over the next three years, expanding stop and search powers to take knives off our streets and investing in early intervention initiatives to support those at risk of exploitation and involvement in serious violence.

[COVID-19: HMCTS publishes Civil, Family & Tribunals Recovery Plan](#)



HMCTS has today [published an overview](#) of how operations have been maintained across the civil, family and tribunals courts during the COVID-19 pandemic. The publication also details the progress that has been made to safely

increase capacity to deal with outstanding cases and sets out plans of how HMCTS will continue to deliver justice services for all users in these areas.

Over the past six months, HMCTS has put in place measures to help the civil and family courts and tribunals recover as quickly as possible. There are five key pillars of recovery on which our approach in these areas is based, and we are integrating our planning across all of them. These pillars include:

- maximising the capacity of the judiciary to sit as many sitting days as possible
- re-opening our courtrooms where it is safe to do so as quickly as possible and reinforce this capacity with COVID Operating Hours and [Nightingale courts](#) where required
- ensuring remote hearings continue to be effectively supported with increased staff support and guidance for users
- increasing our staff numbers to support delivery as we adapt to new ways of working
- continuing to build online services in areas such as probate and divorce and working with the judiciary to pilot new approaches, which saves administrative time and frees up judges to hear more cases.

The measures we have taken over the last six months will enable us to respond quickly to any further changes in restrictions, should they be required as part of the government's ongoing response to the pandemic.

Today's publication follows a recent [£80m investment in the courts system](#) to meet the unprecedented challenge presented by the pandemic.

This will fund the [employment of 1,600 new staff to support the recovery](#), with more temporary Nightingale Courts and technology to boost capacity.

Meanwhile, a [major £153 million investment across the courts system](#) announced in July 2020 will speed up technological improvements and modernise courtrooms.

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Last updated 12 November 2020 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 12 November 2020

Added translation

2. 9 November 2020

First published.

Communities at risk of flooding urged to apply for a share of £200m resilience programme

A transformative £200m programme to improve the resilience of communities at risk of flooding and coastal change across England has been opened today (Monday 9 November)

Through the government's new [Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme](#), managed by the Environment Agency, 25 areas will be selected to pilot new and creative approaches to improve resilience to flooding and coastal change.

This could include planting trees and restoring peatland to reduce run-off into rivers or making changes in people's homes so they can recover more quickly after flooding.

Lead Local Flood Authorities (LLFAs) and Coast Protection Authorities (CPAs) are being invited to express an interest in becoming one of these areas, with a deadline of 15 January 2021.

Each area will receive approximately £6m between 2021 and 2027. The funding is separate and in addition to the £5.2bn programme of investment in flood and sea defences announced by the government in the March budget. Areas will be selected based on a range of criteria, including repeated significant flooding in the past.

The rest of the money will support other flooding and coastal resilience activities including the development of long-term investment pathways in the Thames and Humber Estuaries, Yorkshire and the Severn Valley.

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow said:

The impact of flooding can be devastating, and even more so for those who have suffered repeatedly. Our ambitious new Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme will help communities test different approaches to become more resilient to flooding and coastal change alongside our record investment to build and maintain our flood defences.

This funding will not only help to build long-term resilience in those 25 areas, but the evidence and learning from those projects will be used to inform future approaches to, and investments in, flood and coastal erosion risk management across the country.

The funding can be used for projects to improve resilience to flooding and coastal erosion, such as:

- sustainable drainage systems and dual use water storage for flood attenuation and water resources, or rainwater harvesting
- building community and voluntary sector capacity to respond and recover
- proactive approaches for making existing homes and businesses community infrastructure more flood resilient, such as installing flood doors, raising electrics off ground level, and using materials such as tiles that increase resistance to damage from water

Environment Agency Chair, Emma Howard Boyd, said:

Most flood protection is created when it's not raining. The homes and infrastructure built today should last 50 to 100 years, so while we prepare for flooding this winter, and create defences for the decades ahead, we also need to test resilience measures for a whole century of accelerating climate change.

In delivering this programme the Environment Agency plans to provide excellent examples of domestic leadership on adaptation and resilience ahead of COP26.

LLFAs and CPAs will work together with partners to develop their expressions of interest by 15 January. The 25 selected areas will receive some initial funding to develop their project proposals into more detailed plans during spring 2021, before the projects formally begin from summer 2021.

The opening of the Flood and Coastal Resilience Innovation Programme coincides with the launch of the Environment Agency's Flood Action Week (9 – 15 November), a public awareness campaign aimed at informing people in at-risk areas of what to do in the event of a flood.