

[Christina Blacklaws appointed as Chair of the Judicial Pension Board](#)

News story

The Lord Chancellor has approved the appointment of Christina Blacklaws as Chair of the Judicial Pension Board.



The Lord Chancellor has approved the appointment of Christina Blacklaws as Chair of the Judicial Pension Board for 3 years from 1 September 2022.

Christina is an entrepreneurial solicitor who established a virtual law firm and the first UK ABS with the Cooperative Group. Christina acts as a non-executive director for law firms and tech companies, provides strategic advice on transformational change, innovation and diversity and inclusion, sits on the QC Selection Panel and chairs the MoJ's Lawtech UK Panel.

The Judicial Pension Board (JPB) is responsible for helping the Lord Chancellor to manage and govern the Judicial Pension Schemes.

The Commissioner for Public Appointments regulates the appointment of the JPB Chair and the recruitment process must comply with the Governance Code on Public Appointments.

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[New houseblock to boost prisoner employment prospects](#)

- construction begins on new 200-place houseblock and workshop at HMP Stocken

- innovative partnership with DHL to boost inmates' skills and employment prospects
- more than 100 jobs for local people and ex-offenders during construction

Work has begun on a new 214-place houseblock at HMP Stocken (category C, Rutland) creating more than 100 new local jobs – with at least 10 roles earmarked for ex-offenders with constructors Wates.

As part of a drive to skill-up offenders to equip them for a life free from crime, the block includes an innovative partnership with shipping and logistics company DHL which will run courses at a purpose-built workshop. Prisoners will earn qualifications in the logistics industry, helping them find work upon release – boosting efforts to reduce reoffending and keep the public safe.

The new houseblock will also include new prisoner classrooms and fitness facilities for offenders to aid rehabilitation.

Prisons Minister, Stuart Andrew, said:

This government is delivering on its promise to create 20,000 new prison places, complete with the workshops and facilities that will help to steer offenders towards the straight and narrow.

This not only transforms the lives of the prisoners who will be set on a better path, it will protect us all by driving down reoffending and cutting crime.

HMP Stocken Prison Governor Russ Truman said:

This development will boost the prospects of prisoners by giving them even more opportunities to earn the skills and qualifications they need to find work on release.

The Prison Service's longstanding partnership with DHL sees them employ around 500 prisoners to pack more than 66,000 orders a week of food and toiletries purchased by offenders in jail.

Construction of the houseblock is expected to be completed at the end of 2023, with the first prisoners arriving in early 2024.

Andrew Riggs, Head of Government Sector, Wates, said:

I'm delighted construction can begin on this positive project at HMP Stocken.

We have been working closely with the MOJ for almost two decades to support the expansion of its estate and look forward to drawing on

our in-house expertise to deliver these new prison places and create first-class facilities to help rehabilitate offenders.

The development is part of a programme to create more than 4,000 new places across England and Wales by expanding existing jails, with construction already underway at HMP High Down and two houseblocks earmarked for HMP Guys Marsh.

This is a key element of the government's overall £4 billion investment to build 20,000 modern and innovative prison places, ensuring the right conditions are in place to truly rehabilitate prisoners. This will give prisoners the education, skills and addiction support they need to live crime-free lives on release, helping to cut crime and protect the public.

Notes to editors

- The new houseblock will increase HMP Stocken's capacity by 214 places with 188 single cells, 12 double cells and two accessible cells.
- In its recent [Prisons White Paper](#), the Ministry of Justice pledged to commence a large-scale recruitment campaign for up to 5,000 additional prison officers in public and private prisons by the mid-2020s. The full list of sites due to receive additional houseblocks are HMPs Bullingdon, Channings Wood, Elmley, Highpoint, Hindley, Wayland, Guys Marsh, High Down (in the form of a workshop) and Stocken.

[£3.3 million boost for next generation nuclear technology](#)

- Government's nuclear ambitions backed with £3.3 million funding to support advanced nuclear technology
- projects across the UK will benefit, helping support research to develop a UK Advanced Modular Reactor (AMR)
- funding is a further boost for new homegrown nuclear to protect the UK's energy independence

Cutting-edge nuclear technology projects across the UK have today (Friday 2 September) received government backing to help develop the next generation of nuclear reactors. The funding will support the early-stage innovation for 6 winning projects, helping attract private investment and supporting the creation of new, highly-skilled green jobs.

This £3.3 million funding through the [Advanced Modular Reactor Research, Development and Demonstration \(AMR RD&D\) programme](#), will support the development of cutting-edge nuclear technology in the UK such as high temperature gas reactors (HTGRs), helping revolutionise the way the UK gets

its energy.

The innovative projects being backed by the government include National Nuclear Laboratory Ltd in Cheshire, who are coordinating a UK-Japan team to design an innovative HTGR, and U-Battery Developments Ltd in Slough, for a study to determine the optimum size, type, cost, and delivery method for a U-Battery AMR suitable for demonstration in the UK.

The AMR funding represents another key step in the government's plans to accelerate homegrown nuclear power to strengthen the [UK's energy security](#).

Energy Minister Greg Hands said:

This investment will help unlock the potential for new nuclear reactors in the UK, as we drive forward plans to boost clean, cutting-edge, homegrown technologies for our energy security, while driving down bills in the long term.

[£2.5 million in funding is going to 6 projects](#) seeking to develop Advanced Modular Reactors (AMRs) in the UK. These reactors use novel and innovative fuels, coolants, and technologies to generate high-temperature heat for industrial use, as well as electricity.

The AMR RD&D programme, part of the £385 million Advanced Nuclear Fund, focuses on developing high temperature gas reactors (HTGRs), with an ambition for a demonstrator by the early 2030s, as they optimise opportunities for decarbonising industrial heat to support the UK's target of reaching net zero by 2050.

AMR technology could be a cost-effective solution for decarbonising industry, typically having higher temperature outputs than conventional reactors. The low carbon, high temperature heat from AMRs could be used for hydrogen production, process heat for industrial and domestic use, as well as electricity generation.

In addition, the government is providing up to £830,000 to the Office for Nuclear Regulation and the Environment Agency to develop their capability and consider innovative regulatory approaches to high temperature gas reactors (HTGRs). This will help support the government's plans to have a UK-based HTGR demonstration by the early 2030s. BEIS will work with the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and their wider estate to explore how to leverage their knowledge, sites and operational experience to inform the development, deployment and operation of the demonstration and to support BEIS policy objectives in this area.

The winners announced today

- U-Battery Developments Ltd in Slough is receiving £499,845 for a study to determine the optimum size, type, cost, and delivery method for an U-Battery AMR suitable for demonstration in the UK

- EDF Energy Nuclear Generation Ltd in Gloucester and Hartlepool is receiving £499,737 focusing on end-user requirements to determine the reactor design characteristics most suitable for a HTGR demonstration in the 2030s. EDF proposes the Hartlepool Heat Hub as a host site for the UK's first HTGR demonstration
- Ultra Safe Nuclear Corporation UK Ltd in St Helens, Merseyside is receiving £498,312 for a project that will build on USNC's existing micro modular reactor (MMR) design as a foundation to develop and demonstrate a modified MMR+ design best suited to UK industry's current and projected future process heat demands. This includes a demonstration of hydrogen and sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) production
- National Nuclear Laboratory Ltd in Cheshire is receiving £497,495 for a project that coordinates a UK-Japan team (NNL, Japan Atomic Energy Agency (JAEA) and Jacobs) to leverage a proven HTGR baseline from Japan and adopt an innovative approach in its design, build, construction and operation
- Springfields Fuels Ltd in Salwick, Lancashire is receiving £243,311 for a project, in collaboration with Urenco Limited, to support the range of potential HTGR technologies which may come forward in the UK
- National Nuclear Laboratory Ltd in Cheshire is receiving £250,000 under the Lot 2 Phase A funding, for a project that aims to deliver a domestic commercial fuel supply starting with the first fuel load for the HTGR demonstration

Notes to editors

Funding for this programme was split into 2 Lots:

- Lot 1 for projects developing advanced modular HTGR technologies, with up to £500,000 available for each project
- Lot 2 for projects developing coated particle fuel (CPF) for HTGR technologies, with up to £250,000 available for each project

[Permanent Secretary Matthew Rycroft visits Fiji](#)

World news story

The UK's Home Office Permanent Secretary, Matthew Rycroft, was in Fiji on a two-day visit to affirm UK's long-term commitment to Fiji and the wider Pacific.



Attorney General Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum (left), United Kingdom Home Office Permanent Secretary, Matthew Rycroft

During the two-day visit, the Permanent Secretary met government officials and partners including the Hon. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, Attorney General and Minister for Economy, Justice, Civil Service, Communications, Housing and Community Development; The Hon. Inia Seruiratu, Minister for Defence, National Security, Policing, Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management and The Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum, Henry Puna.

PS Rycroft reiterated the UK's long-term commitment to Fiji and the wider Pacific and set out his desire to work closely with the Government on shared challenges including climate security and transnational crime. He:

- highlighted the UK's commitment at COP26 to provide a new £274million Climate Action for a Resilience Asia (CARA) programme to support the Pacific
- announced that the UK is providing £15 million for the Pacific region through its Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) programme, which works in partnership with Pacific Island Countries to strengthen law and justice, maritime security, reduce conflict and corruption and promote open and inclusive societies
- highlighted the Royal Navy Offshore Patrol Vessels forward-deployed in the region, HMS Spey and Tamar, supporting Fiji to tackle Illegal Fishing and other maritime threats, alongside diverse engagement including sport, conservation and women's empowerment

Mr Matthew Rycroft said:

I am pleased to be visiting Fiji and working to champion the issues which matter most to Pacific partners. We share history, values, and a determination to tackle global challenges. We have thousands of Fijian diaspora living in the UK, which is at the heart of the relationship between the two countries. It is these people-to-people ties that makes Fiji a particularly important partner for the UK.

British High Commissioner to Fiji, Dr Brian Jones, said:

On top of his National Security focus, PS Rycroft met USP students to discuss the growing Pacific impact of Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine. He also met senior Fiji police officers about to head to the UK to study and train with Greater Manchester Constabulary. This further strengthens our cooperation preserving and protecting international peace and the rule of law.

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[CMA clears NortonLifeLock / Avast merger](#)

NortonLifeLock and Avast both offer cyber safety software to consumers under a variety of different brands. Products include antivirus software (also known as endpoint security software), privacy software (such as VPNs) and identity protection software. The companies announced plans to merge in a £6 billion deal in August 2021.

In its initial Phase 1 investigation, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) concluded that the deal raised a realistic prospect of a substantial lessening of competition, and referred the merger for an in-depth Phase 2 investigation to consider those concerns in more detail in March 2022.

In a Phase 2 investigation, the legal standard to assess whether a deal raises competition concerns is higher, to reflect the more extensive investigation that takes place in a Phase 2 inquiry. When applying that more stringent test, the CMA provisionally concluded, in August 2022, that the deal does not substantially reduce competition in the UK and may not be expected to do so in the future. Following a consultation that ended on 24 August 2022, the CMA has upheld its provisional findings and cleared the deal.

The CMA's Phase 2 investigation has found that the supply of cyber safety software to consumers is rapidly evolving. Providers of paid-for and free services are continually developing and improving their products to meet different and changing customer needs.

While the CMA's Phase 1 decision raised concerns about the extent of competition that the merged business would face, a more detailed analysis of the deal has found that the merging businesses face significant competition. This comes from McAfee – their main rival – plus a range of other suppliers that currently have a smaller market position in the UK.

The CMA also found that security applications provided by Microsoft, which

holds a unique position in the market as the owner of the Windows operating system, offer increasingly important alternatives for consumers.

In recent years, Microsoft has improved its built-in, bundled security application so that it now offers protection which is as good as many of the products offered by specialist suppliers. In addition, applications recently launched by Microsoft for its customers bring its cyber safety offering closer to those of the merging businesses and are likely to further strengthen Microsoft as a competitor going forward.

On this basis, the CMA considers that the merging businesses will continue to face sufficient competition after the deal completes and has concluded that the merger does not raise competition concerns.

Kirstin Baker, chair of the CMA inquiry group, said:

Millions of people across the UK rely on cyber safety services to keep them safe online.

Phase 2 investigations allow us to explore concerns identified in our initial review in more detail, as we gather further information from the companies involved and other industry players. After reviewing the evidence in an in-depth review, we are now satisfied that this deal won't worsen the options available to consumers. As such, we have concluded that the deal can go ahead.

For more information, visit the [NortonLifeLock / Avast merger inquiry page](#).

Notes to editor:

1. For media enquiries, contact the CMA press office on 020 3738 6460 or press@cma.gov.uk.
2. A Phase 2 inquiry has a different statutory test to Phase 1. In its assessment of mergers at Phase 1, the CMA is required to assess whether the merger creates a 'realistic prospect' of a substantial lessening of competition (SLC). At Phase 2, the CMA applies a 'balance of probabilities' threshold. The realistic prospect threshold at Phase 1 is intentionally a lower and more cautious threshold for an SLC finding than that applied by the CMA after more extensive investigation at Phase 2.
3. The CMA ran a 3-week consultation on the provisional findings up to 24 August 2022, during which time anyone could make submissions to the CMA. The responses are published on the merger inquiry page.