

[Companies House Direct \(CHD\) and WebCheck to close by February 2021](#)

We are closing Companies House Direct (CHD) and WebCheck by February 2021.

We encourage users to use our [Companies House Service \(CHS\)](#) instead. We are continuously expanding the functionality on CHS, and it now includes:

- company snapshot reports
- alphabetical search
- ordering facility for certificates, certified documents and missing images

CHS is a fully accessible service and has already replaced the majority of the functionality provided by CHD and WebCheck.

Following the government response to the [Corporate Transparency and Register Reform consultation](#), we've published [guidance on dissolved records to outline our approach](#).

[Almost 6,000 officers join police as coronavirus enforcement steps up](#)

The government's campaign to recruit 20,000 additional officers over the next three years is ahead of schedule, with almost 6,000 new officers joining up to the end of September, statistics published today (Thursday 29 October) show.

One year on from the launch of the campaign, 5,824 extra officers have joined forces across England and Wales to the end of September 2020.

This means recruitment is well ahead of schedule, as the government had pledged to bring in an additional 6,000 police officers by March 2021.

New officers are working to help drive down crime and to make our streets safer, with statistics showing crime was already beginning to fall before the pandemic period began.

Over recent weeks the police have also been keeping the public safe by stepping up enforcement against those flouting rules in place to help stop the spread of coronavirus.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

Getting more police officers on our streets is a priority for the British people – therefore a priority for me.

Just one year since we began recruiting, I am delighted that there are nearly 6,000 of the 20,000 additional officers on our streets cutting crime and making your communities safer.

As we've seen from the frontline response to coronavirus, the work of each and every police officer helps to save lives and I would like to extend my gratitude to them, and to the new recruits, for joining the police and being a part of this heroic national effort.

The figures also show 12,675 new officers joined the 43 forces across England and Wales between November 2019 and September 2020. 5,824 of these were specifically recruited as part of the uplift programme. Others were recruited to backfill leavers or through locally funded recruitment.

There is now a total headcount of 134,885 officers across forces in England and Wales.

Martin Hewitt, Chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council:

These additional officers are most welcome as demand for policing services continues to increase.

The figures released today show a step forward but there is much more to be done, whether it is how we continue to attract and recruit our new officers or how we retain those already in service.

We are relentlessly working to achieve our ambition of being a diverse and inclusive service that is truly representative of our communities.

Chief Constable Mike Cunningham, CEO of the College of Policing, said:

The figures released today demonstrate policing's ability to adapt to challenges and continue to recruit new officers in difficult circumstances. I am pleased to see forces hitting recruitment numbers on this scale.

Bringing 20,000 new officers into the service presents an important opportunity for police forces to become more representative of the communities they serve.

It is encouraging to see more officers joining from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic backgrounds, however, our work to support representation in policing doesn't stop here.

The service will continue to build on this progress, so that policing is able to best protect the public now and into the future.

The recruitment drive is at the centre of the government's promise to back the police with more resources and support to tackle crime and keep communities safe.

For the first time, this publication includes data on the ethnicity and gender of officers who have joined forces since April 2020. Of the new recruits, 629 identified as Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic, representing 10.7% of recruits who stated their ethnicity.

The police workforce now includes 9,842 officers from these groups, making it more diverse than ever before.

The Home Secretary will visit Essex Police today to meet new recruits and hear about the force's efforts in tackling key crimes as well as their tactics for attracting applicants from a range of backgrounds.

Since April, 9.9% of joiners to Essex Police identified as Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic, compared to 6.8% of the region's total population (ONS 2011 Census).

The recruitment drive is at the centre of the government's promise to back the police with more resources and support to tackle crime and keep communities safe.

Anyone interested in applying to their local force can search 'Join the Police' to find out more.

[Nightingale Courts in Liverpool and Winchester open as temporary jury rooms rolled out](#)

- 4 extra court rooms will be provided in Winchester and Liverpool
- 16 Nightingale Courts now operating across England and Wales – providing 29 courtrooms
- Part of plans to ensure the courts system recovers from the pandemic as quickly as possible

Located temporarily at the Winchester Guildhall and St George's Hall in Liverpool, they will free up jury rooms in nearby crown courts – allowing more cases to be heard and delivering quicker justice for victims.

It brings the total number of Nightingale Courts, set up nationwide to alleviate pressure on courts and tribunals resulting from the pandemic, to 16.

Justice Minister Chris Philp said:

These additional facilities will help to boost the capacity of these courts – reducing delays and ensuring speedier justice for all.

This is the latest step in our plan to work with the judiciary and legal sector in pursuing every available option to ensure our courts recover as quickly as possible.

Alan Smith, General Manager at St George's Hall Liverpool said:

We are delighted to be able to accommodate, support, and host HMCTS in the Crown Court of St George's Hall.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, it is amazing how organisations have been able to adapt and cooperate to ensure that key services are supported.

It is also fantastic to see the magnificent Crown Court of the Hall come to life again and perform its original function as a court.

Photograph of St George's Hall in Liverpool

Winchester City Council leader, Cllr Lucille Thompson said:

One of our highest priorities at the moment is to help our high streets recover, and so I am delighted that HM Courts and Tribunals have signed an agreement with the City Council to use the Guildhall as a Nightingale Court for the next nine months.

Not only will this help our local economy and businesses by driving up footfall and bringing people back to the centre, but it also ensures that one of our very special buildings is being made use of during these challenging times.

In total, 16 Nightingale Courts are now open nationwide.

Today's announcement 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. These measures are beginning to show positive results:

- Since August 2020, Magistrates' courts have been sitting on Saturdays, amounting to around 100 extra court sessions a month, dealing with thousands of cases
- Magistrate' courts are also now consistently completing more cases than they are receiving, reducing their outstanding caseload as a result
- 250 Crown Court rooms will be available for jury trials in the coming weeks following the roll out of Plexiglass screens to more than 200 court rooms and 100 jury deliberation rooms

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

[VOA launches its 2021 graduate scheme](#)

Acting Chief Executive, Jonathan Russell, and Chief Valuer, Alan Colston, introduce the graduate scheme. They also discuss how the VOA continues to successfully develop the next generation of Chartered Surveyors.

Statement from Jonathan Russell, acting Chief Executive of the VOA

"Here at the VOA we are always looking at how we can build a brighter future; we value the skills and fresh outlooks brought in by graduates. You are vital to helping us continue to adapt and thrive as a diverse team representing our communities.

Our graduate training programme aims to maintain our exceptional pass rate in the RICS Assessment of Professional Competence (APC). Our graduates receive support from experienced surveyors, counsellors and RICS assessors, and have access to the huge range of skills, knowledge and resource across the Agency.

By joining us after graduating you'll be helping to shape the work we do and making a significant difference. In return, we provide you with access to a wealth of opportunities to learn, progress and continue to develop in your career."

Statement from Alan Colston, Chief Valuer of the VOA

"At the VOA, surveying is at the heart of what we do. As Chief Valuer and

Head of the Surveying Profession in the VOA, I am responsible for ensuring we adhere to the highest professional and valuation standards.

Our valuation expertise is vitally important to our customers, our people and our delivery partners, including those in central and local government. Developing our surveying profession with talented people is fundamental to our business.

With us, you'll have the opportunity to work with some of the best surveyors in the country who will support you and advise you as you work your way through the graduate programme. The breadth and range of surveying work we do is unsurpassed and will allow you to get an excellent understanding of all aspects of the profession.

If you choose to join us, you will have access to:

- our wide professional network
- a dedicated supervisor and counsellor for the full duration of your training
- a structured training programme from Day 1 that will enable you to develop all the professional skills you need to meet the demands of the APC

I look forward to welcoming you to the VOA.”

Find out more

If you're interested in finding out more and applying, there is information available on [Valuation Office Agency: Graduate scheme](#).

[UK signs fisheries agreement with the Faroe Islands](#)

The UK has today signed a fisheries framework agreement with the Faroe Islands. This is the second coastal state agreement negotiated since the UK left the EU and follows the [UK-Norway fisheries treaty](#) signed by Environment Secretary George Eustice on 30 September 2020.

The agreement was signed by the UK Ambassador to Denmark, Emma Hopkins, and the Faroese Fisheries Minister, Jacob Vestergaard. UK Fisheries Minister Victoria Prentis joined the ceremony via video conference. It sets out that the UK and Faroes will hold annual negotiations on the issues of access to waters and quotas.

This treaty is a further step forward as the UK prepares to leave the EU's Common Fisheries Policy at the end of December and become an independent

coastal state. From 1 January, the UK will be able to decide who can access its waters and on what terms, in the best interest of its marine environment and its seafood and fishing sectors.

Fishing communities across the whole of the UK will benefit from fisheries agreements such as this one signed with the Faroes, which ensures that the needs of our fishermen and our fish stocks are put first. The UK is taking back control of its natural resources while seeking to restore more of our fish stocks to healthy levels.

The agreement includes principles that demonstrate the shared will of the UK and the Faroe Islands to cooperate as independent coastal states and seek effective and sustainable management of their fisheries.

Fisheries Minister Victoria Prentis said:

This agreement will ensure that annual fisheries negotiations can take place this year to the benefit of our fishing industry.

I would like to thank our Faroese counterparts for their constructive approach, and I look forward to building on the strong and historic links between our nations while taking further steps to responsibly manage our seas.

Faroes Fisheries Minister Jacob Vestergaard said:

This is a historic day for the relations between the Faroes and the United Kingdom. The signing of the Fisheries Agreement is a landmark in our history and a stepping stone in our joint ambition to develop further the cooperation between our two nations.

I am especially pleased with the sincere and constructive working relationship between Faroe and UK Ministers and officials in recent years.

Each year, the UK fishing fleet catches around £2.34m worth of fish from Faroese waters. Iconic species including cod, haddock, and pollock are landed in ports such as Lerwick, Peterhead and Ullapool.

In previous years, bilateral negotiations with the Faroe Islands were led by the European Commission on behalf of the UK and other member states. This autumn, for the first time in over 40 years, the UK will be negotiating fishing opportunities for 2021 as an independent coastal state.