

# First space census launches today

- UK space sector aims to create 30,000 new jobs in next decade and is reliant on a diverse workforce
- The census launch comes during UN-backed World Space Week (WSW) 2020, which celebrates the contribution made by satellites to everyday lives

The first ever UK Space Census launches today (7 October 2020) to survey the diversity of the UK space sector and help inform future space policy.

Coming during World Space Week, the 2020 Space Census will collect for the first time anonymous information from space sector professionals to build a comprehensive picture of the UK space job market; covering demographic characteristics from age and gender to race and sexuality.

Once complete, the Space Growth Partnership – a network of government, industry and academia that informs national space policy and sector strategy – will use this intelligence to develop actions to improve equality, diversity and inclusion in the UK space sector.

The UK space sector is aiming to create 30,000 new jobs in the coming decade and this ambition relies on it having a highly-skilled and diverse workforce, with jobs from satellite builders and rocket scientists to accountants and business development managers.

## **Science Minister Amanda Solloway said:**

I am delighted to mark the launch of the UK Space Census, the first detailed study into the make-up of our brilliant space industry.

This new census will be critical in driving forward diversity right across the sector, bringing new ideas to help tackle some of our greatest challenges that will cement the UK as a space superpower for decades to come.

Diversity in businesses is a proven driver of economic growth, and research shows that more diverse and inclusive workplaces are more productive and more likely to achieve longer-term growth.

## **Graham Turnock, Chief Executive of the UK Space Agency, added:**

The UK has bold ambitions in space, but in order to grow our sector further we need to properly champion diversity, equality of opportunity and make sure our space businesses truly reflect our society as a whole.

We need to drive change for the future of our sector in a way that is not just us ticking a box and this census will play a vital role

in helping us understand the demographics of space in the UK and, most importantly, what the challenges are.

Earlier this year, the Government committed almost £3 million and a package of business support to help turn inspiring ideas into thriving businesses, backing new inventions by women and young people like clean energy solutions and healthcare services.

Of the Government's funding commitment, £2.2 million will go to the Young Innovators' Awards. In partnership with The Prince's Trust, the Government-backed award will support young people with creative and ground-breaking business ideas to turn these into reality.

**Nick Shave, Chair of UKspace, said:**

Understanding the make-up of our space sector is critical to us collectively developing a clear and transparent approach about how best to support those individuals and groups throughout their careers. We already recognise that the BAME community is underrepresented in the sector, but we are determined to address this, working in partnership with other key industry stakeholders.

This census will provide us with a vital benchmark of our sector, giving us the impetus to ensure there are equal opportunities for everyone and measure the success of our efforts to improve diversity over the next few years.

The 2020 Space Census is carried out by the Space Skills Alliance and sponsored by the University of Leicester, and will run until the end of the year.

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## **[New debt letters rules will support people in problem debt](#)**

The letters borrowers receive from their lenders when they are seriously behind on repayments will be easier to understand and less intimidating as a result of new rules proposed by the Treasury today (7 October 2020).

Default Notices are designed to give people who are falling behind on their debts fair warning before lenders take further action, but much of the formatting and content has not been updated in nearly 40 years.

Research from the Money and Mental Health Policy Institute and debt charities has shown that large amounts of capitalised text and legal terms can make the

information contained in the letter hard to understand, which has the unintended consequence of confusing and distressing people. This has a negative impact on people's mental health as well as their ability to effectively manage their debt.

As part of the government's effort to support people in problem debt, it will legislate to change the language and presentation of information in debt letters. The new rules will make debt letters less threatening by restricting the amount of information that must be made prominent and requiring lenders to use bold or underlined text rather than capital letters. Lenders will also now be able to replace legal terms with more widely understood words and letters will clearly signpost people to the best sources of free debt advice.

John Glen, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, said:

Being behind on your credit repayments can be a really distressing experience which is made worse by a confusing and intimidating letter from your lender.

As part of our effort to help to people struggling with their finances, it's right that we look again at the legislation around these letters. These new rules will help to take the fear out of finance by ensuring that letters are easier to understand, less threatening, and empower people to take control of their finances.

Some vital work has been done by charities, the industry and the Money and Mental Health Policy Institute and I am grateful for their support in tackling this important issue.

Martin Lewis, Founder and Chair of the Money and Mental Health Policy Institute charity, said:

It's no exaggeration to say that this change could save lives. Over 100,000 in England attempt to take their lives each year due to debts, and four times that consider it. So we're delighted the government has agreed to back this element of our campaign and change the default demand rules. The last thing people struggling with debt need is a bunch of thuggish letters dropping through the letterbox, in language they can't understand, written in shouty capitals alongside threats of court action.

And the timing is crucial, with millions of people facing debt and distress due to the pandemic, the sooner we end these out-of-date laws which force lenders to send intimidating letters the better. Today's changes will make the most distressing debt letters much less intimidating, and crucially will also easily and calmly point people in serious debt to get the free, non-profit, debt advice they need.

Eric Leenders, Managing Director, Personal Finance at UK Finance said:

The banking and finance industry understands the impact that debt can have on a customer's wellbeing and has been working closely with government to help support customers, especially those in vulnerable circumstances. Lenders have to send Default Notices and these important changes announced today will ensure that customers receive more appropriate and supportive communications.

These new rules are the latest in a wide package of support put in place to help people struggling with their finances, especially through coronavirus. This includes £38 million of extra funding to debt advice providers this year and working with lenders and financial regulators to give people access to payment holidays on their mortgages and a range of consumer credit including credit cards, personal loans, motor finance and payday loans.

The government has also given the Financial Conduct Authority strong powers to protect consumers who borrow money, including cracking down on payday lenders, capping the cost of rent-to-own, and taking action on overdraft fees.

The new rules will be delivered through secondary legislation and are expected to come into force in December 2020. All lenders will then be required to make the changes within six months.

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## **UK to announce £5m support package for Ukraine during Presidential visit**

As part of the visit, Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab will meet Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba to reaffirm the UK's support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity in the face of malign behaviour from Russia. Dominic Raab will also announce £5m of humanitarian aid to support communities in eastern Ukraine who have been affected by the conflict and the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. UK aid will enable the provision of food, water, medical supplies and psychosocial support for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence.

President Zelenskyy and the First Lady of Ukraine will have an audience with Their Royal Highnesses the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge at Buckingham Palace, further strengthening the historic ties between the UK and Ukraine.

Also during the visit, UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson and President Zelenskyy will sign the Political, Free Trade and Strategic Partnership Agreement to strengthen UK cooperation in political, security and foreign

matters with Ukraine, while also securing continued preferential trade for businesses and consumers.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said:

Ukraine's stability is vital for Europe's security. Providing £5m in humanitarian aid and signing the Political, Free Trade and Strategic Partnership Agreement is a clear demonstration of the UK's commitment to Ukraine's prosperity and security.

The UK supports President Zelenskyy's efforts to end the conflict in eastern Ukraine and is focussing diplomatic efforts on assisting the Ukrainian government with peace-building and recovery, alongside our longstanding support for economic and governance reform and anti-corruption initiatives.

The Foreign Secretary will highlight the importance of stability in Ukraine to security in Europe. Responding to the priorities of the Ukrainian government, the UK has this year increased investments into stabilisation, making it a priority alongside our security support.

This year, the UK has allocated over £40m in funding – including £5m of humanitarian aid – for projects to support practical steps towards peace, counter gender-based violence, and promote economic and governance reform. This includes empowering women to take part in shaping their society.

The additional humanitarian funding for communities in eastern Ukraine will also help provide repair of water infrastructure, health facilities and housing, alongside support to micro-businesses and entrepreneurship to enable these communities to become self-reliant and aid the longer-term economic recovery of eastern Ukraine.

The UK is also stepping up its support by £600,000 for the vital work of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe's Special Monitoring Mission, who report on the conflict in eastern Ukraine, including ceasefire violations and the impact on civilians.

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## [Protecting civilians in DRC and ensuring an effective exit strategy for MONUSCO](#)

Madam President, let me begin by thanking SRSG Zerrougui for her briefing and commend the continuation of MONUSCO's vital operations throughout the unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic. We are also grateful to Ambassador Abarry

for briefing on the 1533 Committee.

President Tshisekedi's call for electoral reforms based on consensus is welcome. We call on all parties to reduce tensions, which risk jeopardising progress, and to work together to seek reforms, which will deliver timely and credible elections.

We remain committed to ensuring long-term stability and security in eastern DRC. The deterioration in North and South Kivu, resurgence of conflict in Ituri, and increased ADF activity in areas previously controlled by DRC's armed forces are concerning. There is a critical need for security sector reform in DRC, grounded in a comprehensive national strategy to be developed by the Government of DRC.

We are encouraged by MONUSCO's work with Governors in eastern DRC on the development of Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) roadmaps – and welcome reports that a number of armed-groups and militia combatants' are ready to surrender. We call on the Government of the DRC to support this momentum by nominating a national focal point and developing a comprehensive national framework on DDR.

The human rights situation remains deeply troubling, in particular the increased abuses by armed groups, widespread conflict related sexual violence and continued violations by state agents, including in the context of measures implemented to tackle Covid-19. We condemn the involvement of DRC's armed forces and police in conflict related sexual violence.

We echo the Secretary-General's call for the adoption of a national transitional justice strategy capable of addressing the culture of impunity and providing justice. We urge all state agents to demonstrate full respect for human rights and call for continued efforts by the Government of the DRC on improving the human rights environment.

Mr President, as DRC's second largest bilateral donor, the United Kingdom remains a committed humanitarian and development partner. We recognise the broader socio-economic impact of Covid-19 on DRC's health crisis and humanitarian situation. We are concerned by the risk of a further deterioration in both, and reduced capacity to respond to crises, including the 11th Ebola outbreak in Equateur province and growing concerns of food insecurity.

We echo the Secretary-General's call to investigate fully the allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in 2018-2020 against those working on the Ebola response in the eastern DRC. Sexual exploitation and abuse are completely abhorrent and the United Kingdom expects thorough investigations whenever allegations are made.

Protection of civilians is of the utmost importance to peace and stability. We welcome MONUSCO's development of targeted provincial Protection of Civilian strategies. Local and national ownership will be essential to their successful implementation.

We call for the prompt implementation of mandated reforms to MONUSCO and its Force Intervention Brigade. While noting the delays due to Covid-19, it is crucial that all relevant stakeholders, particularly the relevant Troop Contributing Countries, cooperate constructively to ensure the full implementation of the reforms mandated by this Council.

Finally, Madam President, we look forward to receiving the MONUSCO's exit strategy, developed jointly with the Government of the DRC, later this month. We expect the transition to be conditions based, with clear and measurable benchmarks. We call on the Government of the DRC to participate actively in planning MONUSCO's exit: national ownership will be critical in ensuring the exit is sustainable.

Thank you.

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## **UN Human Rights Council 45: statement for resolution L.52, Assistance to Somalia in the field of human rights**

The UK is proud to present this resolution, L.52, with the Permanent Mission of Somalia to renew the mandate of the Independent Expert on Somalia.

We commend Somalia for the recent progress it has made in the field of human rights and recognise that Somalia's recovery from over 25 years of conflict is ongoing. We also recognise the additional 'triple threat' challenge facing Somalia for the past year: flooding, locusts and COVID-19.

Despite these challenges, we welcome the ways in which human rights have been upheld, and political processes strengthened. We particularly commend the work by the Ministry for Women and Human Rights Development in championing human rights, including those of women and girls who have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

This resolution does not shy away from the many challenges that remain, and we commend Somalia for its continued engagement with this Council in facing up to them. The resolution calls for support to Somalia's institutions to build a stable, peaceful and prosperous state.

The resolution expresses serious concern at the recently tabled 'Sexual Intercourse Bill' and calls for Somali lawmakers to instead consider a bill that is compliant with Somalia's international obligations and commitments on the protection of children, women and girls. The resolution also raises concerns about continuing attacks against the media in Somalia, including journalists, especially in the form of harassment, arbitrary arrest and prolonged detention. It calls on Somalia to promote freedom of expression and

end a prevailing culture of impunity.

We recognise Somalia's sincere desire to transition towards deeper engagement with OHCHR and other thematic experts, including Special Procedures. We look forward to engaging further with the Independent Expert and we stand ready to work with Somalia to identify specific areas that require attention.

The cooperation shown by Somalia with a range of international mechanisms, and this Council, demonstrates a willingness to move forward and improve the human rights situation. We are struck by the level of positive engagement Somalia has shown on this resolution and we hope that this can translate to improvements on the ground.

We will continue to support Somalia, and call upon the international community to do the same. We hope this resolution can be adopted by consensus by this Council.