

Joint approach to training gets international recognition

News story

A training session for our regulators delivered by experts from Sellafield Ltd is up for an international award.



IChemE Global Awards

The awareness induction for new Office for Nuclear Regulation (ONR) and Environment Agency inspectors covers the whole of the nuclear industry.

The majority of the week-long syllabus is delivered by Sellafield Ltd personnel, alongside input from across the NDA estate.

ONR have submitted the course to the [IChemE Global Awards](#) and it has been shortlisted in the teams and training categories.

The entry was focused on the team element and the final will be a virtual event in November.

Elisabeth Cooke, Chief Process Engineer, Sellafield Ltd said:

The work we did on the course has already been acknowledged by the ONR and won a Sellafield Ltd employee team award.

I'm delighted that the entry has been shortlisted in both categories as it provides recognition to the whole team (from across the UK Nuclear sector) of their efforts.

The contributors to this course have demonstrated all of our expected behaviours whilst doing their bit to create a safe environment for future generations. I'm very proud to have been associated with such a dedicated group of nuclear professionals.

John O'Brien, Head of Engineering Design, Sellafield Ltd added:

This team provided significant input and help with the ONR's training programme for their inspectors to raise their knowledge of the Sellafield site, the hazards it presents, and the engineering/technology deployed to keep us all safe.

I'm delighted to hear the entry has been shortlisted.

Published 22 September 2020

[Divorce online: guided by service users](#)

The decision to end a marriage or civil partnership is, of course, a very personal and often painful one. But when a couple embarks on this course of action, our online application can make the process smoother and less traumatic for all involved.

Background

The first stage of the online divorce service for personal applications was available in April 2018. This allowed people to apply for an uncontested divorce, upload evidence and pay online.

In January 2019, we added acknowledgement of service and decree nisi applications online. Later the same year, decree nisi outcomes were added to the digital process too, with the decree absolute application following shortly afterwards.

New scanning technology means that any paperwork sent related to online applications is placed on the digital court file automatically. Alongside this, we developed an online system for legal representatives to apply for divorce on behalf of a client.

User feedback has been vital to the successful development of the project and has taken many forms, including inviting users to complete a short online survey after making their divorce application, which lead to important changes.

Clear feedback

Through survey responses many users expressed their need to take a break and compose themselves during the application. They highlighted that the process required the disclosure of many sensitive issues, ranging from instances of domestic abuse or infidelity, to an account of how the divorcing couple drifted away from one another.

Recounting such issues is a great emotional strain for many and often cannot be completed in a single sitting.

Acknowledging the importance of incorporating a 'Save and Return' function into the service, the project team worked with technical colleagues to implement a solution where divorce applicants can save their application at any point in the user journey and return later, rather than having to start again from scratch.

Another example of a change being initiated by feedback from users of the service was when legal professionals recommended the introduction of a standardised platform for the processing of entitlement orders, standardising the categories for refusal across all regions.

In both cases, once the changes had been made the project team continued to engage with service users through user experience (UX) research sessions held at HMCTS' UX laboratory.

Impact

The changes made as a result of feedback were integral to building a quality online service, which will continue to develop and evolve.

Currently, 70% of all new divorce applications in England & Wales are being submitted online. It takes half the time to fill in as the old paper forms. As a result, we return less than 1% of online applications because of user error, compared to 40% in the old system.

Since 2018, more than 80,000 applications have been received with more than 8 out of 10 users saying they were satisfied or very satisfied with the service (an 87% satisfaction rate).

Strong reciprocal engagement with service users and other stakeholders has been integral to the success of this project.

The online divorce [test] has been a triumphant success and shows, to my mind conclusively, that this is – must be – the way of the future.

– Sir James Munby, President of the Family Division until July 2018

Below are some examples of user feedback on the revised service:

Perfect and stress-free.

Everything was straight forward and easy to follow.

It was so straightforward and easy to understand, it was very easy to complete.

This service is excellent. Very user friendly.

To be honest I think it was a brilliant service, so easy and simple to use with no stress. So, I wouldn't change anything.

What is next?

We will start the design and development required for changing the digital service to accommodate the new divorce legislation that will come in from October 2021.

Further information

[Apply for a divorce online](#)

[New legislation to overhaul divorce law](#)

[HMCTS Reform projects explained](#)

[HMCTS engagement groups](#)

[Engaging with our external stakeholders – our approach and plans](#)

[Commemorating the 75th anniversary of the United Nations at UNGA 2020: UK statement](#)

Today, as we renew our commitment to tackle our common challenges, I recall the UN's beginnings.

Seventy-five years ago, representatives from 51 nations met in London. They showed ambitions to build a global community out of the searing experience of two World Wars.

But it was also an inception rooted in optimism and a determination that 'we, the peoples' would create a better future for ourselves and our children.

Over the past 75 years, the UN has achieved many things:

- it has promoted development and democracy
- it has strengthened universal values and human rights, particularly of women and girls
- it has immunised the vulnerable
- it has fed the hungry
- it has negotiated peace settlements and supported stability, reconciliation and reconstruction in places that need it most

The United Kingdom was there at the beginning and we've been a major contributor to UN ever since, upholding its principles, providing political and financial support, expertise, and peacekeeping troops as well.

Our commitment to spend 0.7% of Gross National Income on Official Development Assistance is enshrined in law and allows us to [support the Sustainable Development Goals](#).

As a member of the United Nations Security Council, we are resolute in our commitment to international peace and security.

Each generation brings new challenges. So, there is much more to do. But we can rise to these challenges, and I pay tribute to the UN's tireless efforts to tackle the unprecedented disruption and human impact of COVID-19. The pandemic has highlighted just how interwoven our fates are, and I believe our moral duty to support those hit hardest by the pandemic, alongside the opportunity to collaborate in building a greener, more sustainable future.

We know that when we pull together, we can overcome the toughest challenges and achieve the most amazing things.

Nowhere is that need for cooperation greater than in tackling climate change, for which the UK is proud to be hosting COP26 in Glasgow next year.

With those challenges ahead of us, I am delighted that the United Kingdom will host the Secretary-General in January.

We will commemorate the first anniversaries of the first UN General Assembly and Security Council meetings, both of which took place in London. We will make sure it is a fitting tribute to all that we have achieved together and we will redouble our commitment to rise to the challenges that lie ahead.

UN Human Rights Council 45: Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on Myanmar

Thank you Madam President,

Thank you Special Rapporteur. We encourage Myanmar to work with you as you fulfil your mandate.

We are deeply concerned by the ongoing human rights violations taking place across Myanmar and the Tatmadaw's culture of impunity, including for sexual violence.

We welcome Myanmar signing a joint communique with the UN to prevent and respond to conflict-related sexual violence. We urge the Government to start working more closely with the UN to develop and publish a joint action plan. Steps must be taken to prohibit sexual violence, ensure timely investigations of alleged abuse and ensure perpetrators are held to account.

More broadly, gender-based violence remains endemic in Myanmar and is likely to increase with Covid-19. We encourage Myanmar to facilitate essential support to victims of GBV, including in Rakhine, which is currently prevented by 'stay at home' orders. Halting these services could exacerbate vulnerabilities and put additional lives at risk.

We also encourage the next Government to finalise the Prevention of Violence Against Women Bill as a priority, working closely with civil society to ensure it protects all those that are vulnerable, including those in conflict affected areas.

Special Rapporteur, How can Myanmar build prevention of GBV into its response to Covid-19?

Joint statement from AoC, AELP, HOLEX, FAB, JCQ and Ofqual on VTQs

This summer has been extraordinary for everyone involved in awarding vocational and technical qualifications. It has been an anxious time for learners and has involved a huge amount of hard work for centres and awarding organisations (AOs).

Everyone in the sector has worked collaboratively to issue valid and reliable

VTQ results to learners in order for them to progress onto the next stage of their education or into work. It is a significant achievement that millions of certificates were issued, for thousands of different qualifications.

We recognise and acknowledge, however, that this achievement has been a great challenge for all concerned, and will continue to be so. Colleagues right across the sector, both in centres and awarding organisations, had to make enormous efforts to secure results for learners, rapidly developing and implementing new systems and processes. Particular credit is due to our colleagues working in centres for their hard work and professionalism.

It is important to learn the lessons from the summer, in particular how the sector can work together even more effectively to improve communications and the exchange of information between centres and AOs so that things run more smoothly in 2020/21.

You may have seen that Ofqual has been consulting on the regulatory framework for 2020/21, which is, like this summer's framework, flexible to ensure that AOs can put in place arrangements and adaptations that best suit their qualifications. But we are conscious of the need to ensure as much consistency as possible, and we recognise that collaboration will be key.

AoC, AELP, HOLEX, FAB, JCQ, Ofqual, have therefore committed to work together, convening a working group to agree how centre-facing communications can be streamlined over the current academic year.

As a first step, we have jointly agreed that, by 23 October, awarding organisations will have started to communicate to centres their planned approach to any adaptations to their qualifications for 2020/21, to assist in mitigating disruption to teaching, learning and assessments so that, as far as possible, learners have the opportunity to receive fair results in 2020 to 2021 and are not disadvantaged by the longer-term impacts of the pandemic. We will be strongly encouraging awarding organisations to keep their centres fully informed as plans develop, and we will use this group to co-ordinate milestones and communications, and to address issues arising through the year.

A number of subject and sector groups (for example, covering Functional Skills Qualifications, and Hair and Beauty Qualifications) have work well underway to support consistent approaches to adaptations of qualifications in 2020/21.

We are pleased to confirm that CCEA Regulation and Qualifications Wales will also be part of the working group going forward, and we commit to updating you on a regular basis as decisions are made and clarity achieved.