

# Companies House resumes voluntary strike off process

News story

Temporary measures to suspend voluntary strike off action will be lifted from today (10 September 2020).



The process for companies that have applied to be struck off the register will resume today following changes to temporary measures announced in April 2020.

Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, Companies House paused all strike off activity to relieve the burden on businesses and to protect creditors and other interested parties who may have had difficulties in registering an objection.

The measures have been reviewed monthly and the latest change has been implemented after careful consideration and feedback from customers and stakeholders.

This means all companies that applied to be struck off before July 2020 will be struck off the register in a phased approach over the next 4 weeks, starting on 10 September 2020.

For companies that applied to be struck off from July 2020 onwards, the voluntary strike off process will continue as normal after this initial 4 week period.

Stuart Morgan, Intelligence and Enforcement Service Owner at Companies House, said:

Our priority has always been to relieve the burden on businesses which have been struggling during these unprecedented times.

In reaching this decision, we have aimed to strike the right balance between supporting both companies and creditors. We have

listened to our customers and stakeholders and we believe now is the right time to resume voluntary strike off action.

By striking off companies no longer in business, we will improve the integrity of the register and continue to drive confidence in the UK economy.

This may result in a large number of companies being struck off the register over a short period. However, these figures should not be misinterpreted as they are a direct result of the easements we put in place and will include companies that applied before the coronavirus outbreak.

The [compulsory strike off](#) process, where Companies House takes steps to remove companies if there's reasonable cause to believe they're no longer carrying on business or in operation, will resume on 10 October 2020.

Published 10 September 2020

---

## [British Embassy supports United Nations Population Fund project in Ashgabat](#)

World news story

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) project, 'reviving a community – based hotline as a lifeline for women and girls' was launched in Ashgabat.



British Embassy supports UNFPA project in Ashgabat

The British Embassy in Ashgabat is glad to support UNFPA project on “reviving

a community – based hotline as a lifeline for women and girls”. The signing ceremony took place on 7 September at the UN building.

The project aims to revitalize and expand its counselling anonymous services to include issues related to domestic violence, reproductive health, as well as to establish linkages with services to refer women and girls who may need them.

Published 10 September 2020

---

## [Chevening community in Turkmenistan to reach over 80](#)

World news story

We are pleased to be able to continue offering Chevening Awards to the most talented emerging leaders.



Although, we are all faced with a global pandemic this year which has a far-reaching impact on each of us for the foreseeable future, thanks to the timely reaction and quick adjustment of the programme in order to meet the significant challenges of today, we are pleased to be able to continue offering Chevening Awards to the most talented emerging leaders who have been selected to study for their master’s degree on this prestigious programme.

Welcoming the new awardees to tea and coffee at the British Ambassador’s recently renovated residence garden, the British Chargé d’Affaires Mr David Pert congratulated Guljahan Tursunova, Bahram Atayev and Merdan Altyyev on their awards and highlighted the importance of Chevening in shaping the future of young leaders from around the world. He then presented each scholar with a certificate confirming their award and wished them every success in their academic adventures.

In normal times, all candidates would have commenced their studies in the UK in September and October 2020 but because of the COVID-19 challenges, they will have the opportunity to start their courses online and later join the in-class teaching at their respective University as soon as international flights are reinstated and Turkmen citizens can freely leave the country. They will become the latest scholars from Turkmenistan to benefit from the scholarship programme, which is sponsored by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. Guljahan will undergo a one-year postgraduate course at Bristol University, while Merdan will be pursuing postgraduate studies at the Queen Mary University of London. Bahram's degree course will commence at the Leicester University.

Applications for the [Chevening scholarship programmes](#) are now open for the 2021/22 academic year! We welcome applications from interested candidates across Turkmenistan and in case you missed the big news last week, we're seeking passionate people able to demonstrate their commitment to creating positive change. Applications should be submitted by 3 November 2020.

Published 10 September 2020

---

## [Action taken to improve resilience of railway following Stonehaven tragedy](#)

- government publishes [Network Rail's interim report](#) into the impact of extreme weather on the resilience and safe performance of the railway
- Transport Secretary commits to ensuring industry learns and acts on "every possible lesson" from tragedy
- Transport Secretary writing to Chief Constable of Police Scotland to recommend that PC Liam Mercer – who was among the first emergency service personnel on the scene – is commended for his bravery

[Network Rail's interim report on the Stonehaven tragedy](#), commissioned by the Transport Secretary Grant Shapps immediately after the event, has been published today (10 September 2020), setting out immediate and long-term action to improve the railway's resilience to extreme weather events, following the derailment of a passenger train in Aberdeenshire.

While the report in no way pre-empts the outcome of formal independent investigations being carried out by the Rail Accident Investigation Branch, or those by the Office of Rail and Road, British Transport Police and Police Scotland into the tragedy on Wednesday 12 August, the initial findings suggest that, after a period of heavy rainfall, the train struck a pile of washed-out rock and gravel before derailing.

The interim report assesses the current controls and management of thousands of miles of earthworks – the sloped ground beside railway tracks – and sets out how the industry plans to reduce the risk of landslips on the network in the future.

The report highlights the need for an increased focus on deploying technology across the network to predict failures and investment in better forecasting to enable local decisions for imminent weather events. Network Rail's extensive research and development portfolio is helping to accelerate the development and deployment of this technology.

Key findings also suggest that industry rules for reporting and responding to adverse rainfall will be improved and strengthened, helping signallers better manage services during bad weather. Other plans include discussions with meteorologists to understand how real-time information can be better used to inform train operations about unpredictable extreme weather.

Hundreds of sites across the country have been inspected over the last three weeks by engineers and specialist contractors, and supplemented by helicopter surveys to identify any significant issues requiring emergency intervention.

It follows the launch of 2 independent task forces, which will be led by distinguished experts in their field – Lord Mair and Dame Julia Slingo – to help Network Rail better manage its vast number of cuttings and embankments, and its response to severe weather events.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

The incident at Stonehaven was a tragedy, and my heart goes out to the friends and family of driver Brett McCullough, conductor Donald Dinnie, and Christopher Stuchbury.

We owe it to those who lost their lives, were injured, and were affected by this incident to learn and act on every possible lesson to ensure this is never repeated. The independent investigation will enable us to understand exactly what went wrong and make sure it does not happen again.

We cannot delay learning the lessons. That is why I immediately commissioned this report and am making the interim findings available. I welcome the work setting out the challenges in adapting our rail infrastructure to cope with increasing extreme weather events caused by climate change. The task is now to overcome those challenges.

We will use the findings of this interim report to improve, shape and accelerate our work to build a more robust and resilient rail network so that our railway continues to be one of the safest in the world.

The Secretary of State is also writing to the Chief Constable of Police

Scotland, Iain Thomas Livingstone, recommending that PC Liam Mercer, one of the first people on scene following the derailment, is commended for his bravery.

Network Rail Chief Executive Andrew Haines said:

My thoughts remain with the families and friends of the three people who lost their lives, those who were injured and everybody affected by the tragedy at Stonehaven last month. We owe it to them, and all our passengers, to make sure we understand what happened and what more we should be doing to reduce the risk of it ever happening again.

We are all aware that we are increasingly seeing more incidents of severe weather and, as the report published today shows, earthworks and drainage infrastructure – some of which are more than 150 years old – prove to be a real challenge as the country experiences more heavy rainfall and flooding.

Our railway is one of the safest in Europe and tragic accidents are incredibly rare, but something went wrong on 12 August near Stonehaven and it is a stark reminder that we must never take safety for granted. We are improving and accelerating our resilience work, and will do everything we can to minimise the impact of weather on the safety and reliability of the railway as our climate continues to change.

Between 2019 and 2024, Network Rail has made a record investment of £1.3 billion in strengthening the railway's resilience to extreme weather, compared with £550 million from 2009 to 2014 and £952 million from 2014 to 2019.

Network Rail has developed industry-leading techniques to monitor and manage ageing cuttings and embankments deemed high risk, while the government's Committee on Climate Change recognises its resilience planning for climate change adaptation as well advanced. However, with the impact of severe weather events experienced in recent years, it has become even more important to swiftly implement these plans.

Today's interim report will be followed by a final report, which will be published in due course. This will provide greater detail on work that can be accelerated to improve the railway's management of extreme weather and earthworks.

---

# Assessing the global ceasefire to help fight COVID-19

Thank you, Mr President. I thought it was a particularly thoughtful and thought-provoking set of briefings, which perhaps reflects the subject matter that we're discussing today. I think there's a lot for us to take away from that. Because this is our first Council meeting in follow up to the original resolution, I just want to again pay tribute to the painstaking French diplomacy that got us here, particularly to Nicholas de Rivière. And I want to pay personal tribute to the Tunisian Permanent Representative Kabtani. The UK strongly supports implementation of resolution 2532, and calls on all Member States to uphold their international commitments. Breaches of arms embargoes agreed by this Council are worsening in conflicts throughout the world. Let me talk about the situation in three areas out of many which we could discuss today, Yemen, South Sudan and Sudan, and see if we can draw any conclusions.

Mr President, in Yemen, following the Secretary-General's call, we did see unilateral ceasefires by the Saudi-led coalition. These were sadly not reciprocated. But that is why the Council must continue to strongly support the UN Special Envoy's efforts to secure a lasting political solution to the conflict in Yemen and why it is vital that all Member States comply with the arms embargo. It's also vital, as this Council has called for regularly, that all parties engage constructively with the process. And we urge all to cease provocative military offenses, in particular the Houthis in Marib, as well as their cross-border attacks into Saudi Arabia. The humanitarian crisis, already the world's worst, is significantly worsening, with the effects of Covid-19 restrictions on access and shortages of United Nations funding, as described regularly by Mark Lowcock in our debates on Yemen, which make the peace process even more necessary and even more urgent. And we must also not lose focus, Mr President, on South Sudan. Recent increases in violence, combined with food insecurity and flooding, put South Sudan again at risk of catastrophe. The peace deal of 2018 remains the best chance for long-term stability. But pressure is needed from all parties in order to deliver further progress if we're going to maintain that ceasefire, protect humanitarian workers, and ensure that we can help South Sudan respond. More encouragingly, we welcome recent progress towards a comprehensive peace agreement with Sudan, including the important steps taken in Juba on the 31st of August with the Sudan Revolutionary Front. And again, we urge all parties involved to work together with the international community to ensure the swift and effective implementation of this agreement and for all other groups to engage without preconditions to achieve a comprehensive peace that the Sudanese people have called for. My colleague, the distinguished representative of China, mentioned sanctions. I do think it's a shame that there has been some intentional blurring of issues on sanctions and attempts to take advantage of a potential Covid-19-related tragedy. Sanctions are a vital tool in our armoury. Let's take the example of Syria and work that through. There are UK and EU sanctions on Syria. They specifically target

those responsible for human rights abuses against ordinary Syrians and those who support or benefit from the Assad regime's corruption and murderous activity. Sanctions don't apply to food, medicine, medical equipment or medical assistance. Put simply, the problem facing Syria's health sector is not sanctions, but rather that the regime is more intent on bombing hospitals than building them and the restrictions imposed on cross-border aid. Humanitarian exemptions apply to sanctions regimes mitigating the impact of sanctions on humanitarian programmes. We have always worked, and we continue to work, with organisations and individuals to ensure that sanctions do not affect humanitarian operations and that organisations and individuals are able to import non-conflict-related goods. The issue in Syria, of course, is a chronic mismanagement of Syria's economy by a corrupt regime and its friends. Turning, if I might, to the question of famine. Resolution 2532 underpins some vital humanitarian principles and interests. Conflict and Covid-19 has seen the outlook for food security in 2020 become increasingly bleak. And Mark Lowcock not only warned about that today, but also in his white note. So an end to conflict, and the realisation of resolution 2532's ceasefire call, is essential. Millions of people are in crisis or emergency stages of food insecurity. And the risk of famine looms in several countries. The United Kingdom continues to support the UN and other international organisations, which we believe may provide an effective and efficient support in places that need it most. The United Kingdom's current contribution is approaching a billion pounds additional to existing funding already announced. More also needs to be done though on the ground by governments and non-state armed groups, to improve humanitarian access in areas where it is hard to reach the most vulnerable populations. Access has been further challenged by Covid-19 lockdown measures and international travel restrictions. And as Mark Lowcock pointed out, I would urge all governments to ease visa restrictions on key humanitarian workers. But the Council needs a better understanding overall of who is blocking access, what its impact is on the humanitarian situation, and how to address it. Let me just quickly say I'm grateful to Undersecretary-General Lacroix for his comprehensive briefing on the peacekeeping side, and I wish to express thanks and appreciation for peacekeepers and their actions to support their host countries and of course, to avoid inadvertently spreading the virus themselves. Ultimately, Mr President, conflict prevention and resolution is our only lasting solution. Women have a crucial role to play here, and the gendered impact of Covid-19 risks undermining peace and worsening conflict. However, this remains largely unacknowledged and undervalued by governments and international organisations. The United Kingdom strongly urges parties to armed conflict to invest in peace processes which include meaningful participation of women, youth, religious groups and civil society. Let me conclude, Mr President, by saying that I think we need more regular horizon scanning of situations which may threaten international peace and security, using effective early warning mechanisms and United Nations analysis coming from those in the field and relevant UN agencies and departments. It is vital that we take a unified and combined approach. And that's not just a message to the United Nations, but also to us, its Member States. We need to be ready to be agile to support the UN as they collectively shine a light and tell us where more activity is needed, whether that is in our humanitarian funding, or whether it is in our political messaging. As the impact of Covid-19



affects vulnerable countries in different ways, so we need to look further ahead at evolving risks to instability and take action to prevent conflict. Problems with access to humanitarian aid and health care should be highlighted in particular, and that could lead us to take more timely interventions, which must be the goal of all us. Thank you, Mr President.