

UK statement to the WTO's Dispute Settlement Body on Appellate Body Appointments

World news story

The UK delivered the following statement to the WTO's Dispute Settlement Body on Appellate Body Appointments on 28 August



The WTO is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

Thank you, Chair.

The United Kingdom continues its support for this proposal for the launch of the selection process and we refer to our previous statements on this agenda item. We also support the statement made by Mexico on behalf of all co-sponsors.

We continue to be concerned that the WTO Membership has not been able to launch the selection processes for new Appellate Body members and we are now seeing the concrete impairment of rights arising from this situation.

While we do not underestimate the challenge of reaching agreement on the necessary reforms, we continue to view a two-stage dispute settlement system with the support of all Members as a central pillar of the broader multilateral trading system. We have listened carefully to the concerns raised, and proposals advanced, and we continue to call on all Members to engage in a solutions-based discussion on reform.

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Government has changed the law so most renters have a 6 month notice period

The government is continuing to help renters with an unprecedented package of support measures.

Legislation has now been introduced, so landlords must now give tenants 6 months' notice before they can evict until March 2021, except in the most serious of cases, such as incidents of anti-social behaviour and domestic abuse perpetrators.

The stay on possession proceedings has been extended until 20 September, meaning that in total no tenant can have been legally evicted for 6 months at the height of the pandemic.

The package of support for renters includes the extension of notice periods and the extension to the stay on possession proceedings. For the most egregious cases, notice periods have returned to their pre-coronavirus levels, and landlords will be able to progress serious rent arrears cases more quickly.

These changes mean that from 29 August, landlords must provide at least 6 months' notice period prior to seeking possession through the courts in most cases, including section 21 evictions and rent arrears under 6 months.

Notices served on and before 28 August are not affected by these changes, and must be at least 3 months.

The government is also helping landlords affected by the worst cases to seek possession; these are:

- anti-social behaviour (now 4 weeks' notice)
- domestic abuse (now 2 to 4 weeks' notice)
- false statement (now 2 to 4 weeks' notice)
- over 6 months' accumulated rent arrears (now 4 weeks' notice)
- breach of immigration rules 'Right to Rent' (now 3 months' notice)

In addition, new court rules have been agreed, which will come into force on 20 September meaning landlords will need to set out in their claim any relevant information about a tenant's circumstances, including information on the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. Where this information is not provided, judges will have the ability to adjourn proceedings.

Secretary of State for Housing, Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

We have developed a package of support for renters to ensure they continue to be protected over winter. I have changed the law so that renters are protected by a 6 month notice period until March 2021.

No tenant will have been legally evicted for 6 months at the height of the pandemic as the stay on possession proceedings has been extended until 20 September. For the most egregious cases, for example those involving anti-social behaviour or domestic abuse perpetrators, notice periods have returned to their normal level, and landlords will be able to progress serious rent arrears cases more quickly.

These changes will support landlords to progress the priority cases while keeping the public safe over winter. We will keep these measures under review and decisions will continue to be guided by the latest public health advice.

The new legislation applies to both the private and social rented sectors in England, and to all new notices in relation to assured, assured shorthold, secure, flexible, introductory and demoted tenancies and those under the Rent Act 1977, but not to any notices issued before the legislation comes into force.

Courts will carefully prioritise the most egregious cases, including anti-social behaviour, fraud, and domestic abuse, ensuring landlords are able to progress the most serious cases, such as those involving anti-social behaviour and other crimes.

If a landlord made a claim to the court before 3 August, they must notify the Court and their tenant that they still intend to seek repossession before the case will proceed, including in section 21 cases.

More detailed guidance on using the courts and the new arrangements will be made available in advance of possession proceedings starting again.

We are conscious of the pressure on landlords during this difficult time and do not want to exacerbate this. Of course, it is important that tenants who are able to do so must continue to pay their rent.

The government has put in place an unprecedented support package to support tenants to pay their living costs, such as the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, £9.3 billion of additional support through the welfare system, and increasing the Local Housing Allowance rate to the 30th percentile.

We are committed to bringing forward the Renters Reform Bill to abolish section 21 and deliver a fairer and more effective rented sector in due course. However, such legislation must balance greater security of tenure with an assurance that landlords are able to recover their properties where they have valid reasons to do so.

We have been working closely with the judiciary through a Master of the Rolls led Working Group to finalise the arrangements on the prioritisation of cases, for when the stay on possession proceedings lifts from 20 September.

29 August, landlords must provide at least 6 months' notice period prior to

seeking possession through the courts in most cases, including section 21 evictions and rent arrears under 6 months. We have also extended the validity of a section 21 notice from 6 to 10 months to accommodate this change.

[Consultation launched to support marine renewables](#)

Press release

The consultation will examine how the UK can build back greener through marine renewable projects across the country.



- New consultation launched on how government can support marine energy projects, such as floating offshore wind farms, tidal stream and wave energy
- views invited on how project costs could be reduced, environmental impacts minimised, and how supply chains are able to benefit in all parts of the UK

The government is launching a new [call for evidence](#) to examine how the UK can build back greener through marine renewable projects across the country.

Marine renewables include emerging technologies such as floating offshore wind farms, tidal stream and wave energy. The consultation will invite views from developers and other interested parties on areas including:

- how projects could be funded
- how costs could be reduced
- how the environmental impacts can best be handled
- how supply chains could benefit in the nations and regions of the UK

The new consultation builds on the UK's success in renewable energy so far, with more offshore wind capacity than any other country in the world and well over a third of its energy now coming from renewables.

Secretary of State for Business and Energy Alok Sharma said:

As an island nation we are perfectly placed to capitalise on clean marine energy, building on our world-leading position in offshore wind.

Examining how to make the most of our natural resources and support marine technologies that are cost-effective for the consumer will be crucial as we build back better, creating green jobs and reaching net zero emissions by 2050.

Marine technologies could benefit every part of the UK. For example, tidal stream projects that harness the energy of tides could be suitable for the Highlands and Islands and North Wales, while floating offshore wind turbines could be suitable for deeper waters off the coast of Scotland, Wales and South West England.

The call for evidence comes after the recent consultation on the fourth round of the successful Contracts for Difference auction. This new consultation builds on that work to provide the government with evidence to base its decisions on future support for marine renewables.

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[Homeowners to see savings available under new Green Homes Grant scheme](#)

- Homeowners and landlords given head start in making the most of the new Green Homes Grant scheme
- website offers personalised energy plan, and access to trusted local tradespeople to carry out the work
- scheme is part of the government's plans to build back greener, with more than 600,000 new homes set to become more energy efficient and more than 100,000 skilled jobs supported

Homeowners and landlords can from today (Friday 28 August) see for themselves how the government's new Green Homes Grant scheme can help make their homes warmer and more energy efficient.

Business and Energy Secretary Alok Sharma today unveiled a new opportunity for consumers to get tips for making their homes more energy efficient, and details of how the Green Homes Grant scheme can make installations cheaper. These will be available on a revamped [Simple Energy Advice website](#).

The site offers a quick energy survey for consumers to see how energy efficient their homes already are, and where improvements can be made. Taking as little as 5 minutes, once completed homeowners and landlords can receive a personalised energy plan.

The Green Home Grants scheme, due to open by the end of September, will allow consumers to obtain funding for up to two-thirds of the cost of the energy saving measures identified – up to £5000 – in the form of new vouchers. Lower income households could be entitled to have as much as £10,000 of the costs covered.

The scheme will cover green home improvements including insulation of walls, floors and roofs, the installation of double or triple glazing when replacing single glazing, and low-carbon heating. These measures could help families save up to £600 a year on their energy bills.

The [Simple Energy Advice website](#) then offers people access to fully accredited tradespeople in their area able to carry out the work needed, so they can get quotes ready for when the vouchers become available.

Business and Energy Secretary, Alok Sharma, said:

Green Homes Grants are a key part of our plans to build back greener, helping make 600,000 homes more energy efficient with government vouchers, while supporting 100,000 skilled jobs and supporting our transition to net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

From today people will have the chance to see how this scheme could help save money on their energy bills and connect to trusted local tradespeople across the country, so they are ready for the scheme's launch in September.

Announced in August, the Green Homes Grant scheme will see the government fund up to two-thirds of the cost of home improvements up to £10,000 to make over 600,000 homes across the country more energy efficient and support over 100,000 jobs in green construction.

Energy Savings Trust Chief Executive, Mike Thornton, said:

The Green Homes Grant scheme is a great opportunity to get a grant to cut energy bills. Now the website is live, we urge people to go online to create a personalised plan for energy efficiency in their home as a first step to getting their grant.

View the [Simple Energy Advice website](#).

Anyone wishing to be accredited to complete work under the Green Homes Grant scheme can simply register with [TrustMark](#) via their website, with registration taking as few as 5 working days for those who already have

membership of a recognised trade body such as the Federation of Master Builders, the Cavity Insulation Guarantee Agency and Building Engineering Services Association, or who are already certified under the [Microgeneration Certification Scheme](#).

Installers must meet Publicly Available Specification Standards to install energy efficiency measures. All work under the Green Homes Grant scheme must be completed to PAS 2030:2017, however if an installer has already transitioned to PAS 2030:2019 they can work to this standard instead.

Installers must meet the relevant Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) to install low carbon heat measures.

[UK Government to fund COVID-19 research in Scotland](#)

The UK Government is investing £8.4 million in COVID-19 immunology research projects across the UK, including the Universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee.

It is the biggest ever contribution to COVID-19 immunology research in the UK.

Three new UK-wide studies will receive funding from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) and the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) to understand immune responses to COVID-19.

Together, it is hoped these studies will improve the treatment of patients and inform the development of vaccines and therapies.

The Scottish universities are taking part in the largest study, the UK Coronavirus Immunology Consortium, which will receive £6.5 million and bring together leading immunologists from 17 UK universities. The University of Edinburgh is also involved in another study.

Dr Christopher Lucas, University of Edinburgh, will lead a study titled 'Inflammation in COVID-19: Exploration of Critical Aspects of Pathogenesis', which will receive £394,000.

It will focus on the key features of fatal COVID-19 and the impact the virus has upon the lungs and other vital organs.

Using authorised hospital post-mortem examinations of patients who have died from COVID-19, this study will provide a unique opportunity for expert clinicians and scientists to study the whole body in a level of detail that is not possible during life.

Dr Christopher Lucas said:

We have learned so much from COVID-19 patients during the past six months. However, there is only so much that we can learn from clinical examinations and blood tests.

By having a deeper look at those who have died from COVID-19 through post-mortem examination, we will increase our understanding of what is happening to the body in the most severe cases of this disease.

Critically, this will allow us to rapidly answer key clinical questions and help inform the care of patients and the development of new treatments.

The UK Coronavirus Immunology Consortium will investigate key questions including:

- how long does immunity from COVID-19 last?
- why are some people's immune systems better able to fight off the virus?
- why do some people's immune responses cause damage, especially to the lungs?
- how does the virus 'hide from' the immune system and how can this be tackled?
- does immunity to previous infection with seasonal coronaviruses (which cause the common cold) alter a person's outcome with SARS-CoV-2?

Better understanding of these immune responses, particularly the T cell response, could provide targets for new therapies to treat COVID-19 and inform the efforts to develop a vaccine.

The project will use samples and data from major UK COVID-19 projects already underway, funded by UKRI and NIHR, including ISARIC-4C (characterizing and following more than 75,000 hospitalized patients with COVID-19) and the genomic studies COG-UK (sequencing the SARS-CoV-2 virus genomes) and GenOMICC (sequencing the genomes of people with COVID-19).

UK Government Minister for Scotland, Iain Stewart said:

Scotland has a world-leading life science and research sector. This UK Government investment underpins the significance of our

universities and academics nationally and internationally.

We have much to learn about understanding immune responses to COVID-19.

These studies, we hope, will improve the treatment of patients and inform scientists as they develop future treatment. It is a commendable contribution in the fight against the coronavirus pandemic.

Professor Massimo Palmarini, Director of the MRC-University of Glasgow Centre for Virus Research (CVR) said:

My colleagues and I at the CVR are extremely proud to be involved in the UK-CIC consortium, and are grateful to UKRI and NIHR for the generous funding support.

It's now more important than ever that the immunology community work together, as we aim to address important, unanswered questions about SARS-COV-2 as we move through this pandemic.