

# RWM launches new venture to lead groundbreaking research into geological disposal

News story

Research Support Office established in partnership with University of Manchester and University of Sheffield



Radioactive Waste Management has launched the Research Support Office (RWM RSO) to harness the UK's vast array of research capabilities in geo-disposal science and technology. The RSO will provide RWM with world-class, independent, and robust evidence to guide its work around safety and design in support of the delivery of a UK Geological Disposal Facility (GDF). A GDF is a highly engineered network of vaults and tunnels built into the rock many hundreds of metres underground designed to safely and permanently dispose of higher activity radioactive waste.

Lucy Bailey, RWM's Head of Research Support Office said:

I am thrilled to be leading this exciting new initiative for RWM. Through the RSO we will harness the best research expertise across the UK to build the knowledge and understanding required to underpin the safety case to deliver a GDF that deals permanently with the UK's higher-activity waste.

Geological disposal is internationally recognised as the best long-term solution for dealing with higher activity radioactive waste. It is the chosen approach in countries including Sweden, Finland, Canada, and France, with some of these countries well on the way to constructing their own GDFs. To help meet this challenge in the UK, the RSO will focus its research on nine themes covering: advanced manufacturing; applied mathematics; applied social science; environmental science; geoscience; materials science; public communication of science; radiochemistry; and training. Teams within partner

universities will be supported by around £20m funding over a period of up to 10 years, to undertake needs driven research in these areas.

This partnership will also support the development of the next generation of researchers and build an enduring community of subject matter experts for geological disposal. Having this knowledge and expertise coordinated across the UK's academic institutions will allow RWM and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority group, regulators, and supply chain to tap into the latest academic expertise, research, and thinking.

To keep updated on the work of the RSO, follow them on [Twitter](#) or visit their [website](#)

For more information about geological disposal, visit us on our [website](#):

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## [Quality assurance at heart of new £2 billion green homes grants](#)

- Government urges tradespeople to sign up for TrustMark accreditation in drive to support over 100,000 jobs through a new energy efficiency scheme
- new Green Homes Grant will give over 600,000 homeowners in England up to £10,000 to install insulation, heat pumps, draft proofing and more to help households cut energy bills
- strict accreditation rules for tradespeople involved in the scheme, giving households confidence that improvements to their homes will be of the highest quality

Builders, plumbers, and other tradespeople across England will need a government-backed seal of approval to provide their services as part of the new £2 billion Green Homes Grant going live at the end of September.

The new scheme will see the government fund up to two-thirds of the cost of home improvements of over 600,000 homes, supporting over 100,000 jobs in green construction.

Tradespeople must register for [TrustMark](#) or [Microgeneration Certification Scheme \(MCS\)](#) accreditation to take part in the scheme, which will cover green home improvements ranging from insulation of walls, floors and roofs, to the installation of low-carbon heating, like heat pumps or solar thermal – measures that could help families save up to £600 a year on their energy bills.

The government is today setting out further details of the range of measures included and how consumers in England will be able to claim the new vouchers, which are worth up to £5,000 for homeowners. Households on low income can receive vouchers covering 100% of the cost of the improvements, up to a maximum of £10,000.

Business and Energy Secretary Alok Sharma said:

Green home improvements will save people money on their energy bills, help to cut carbon emissions, and create new work for many thousands of builders, plumbers and other tradespeople.

Our TrustMark scheme will guarantee that building work is completed to a high standard by accredited tradespeople, ensuring consumers are fully protected.

TrustMark is the government-endorsed quality scheme covering work a consumer chooses to have carried out on their home. Households will be able to choose from approved tradespeople in their areas to carry out the work, but only approved and accredited installers will be able to be commissioned, ensuring high standards and consumer protection.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak said:

The Green Homes Grant is a vital part of our plan for jobs as we secure the UK's economic recovery from coronavirus. This is going to be a green recovery with concern for our environment at its heart.

It will help to protect and create jobs, while also saving people money and cutting carbon.

The Green Homes Grants will give homeowners, including owner occupiers and social/private landlords, vouchers to install one or more of the following:

- solid wall, under-floor, cavity wall or roof insulation
- air source or ground source heat pump
- solar thermal

In addition, households can use their voucher for further energy saving measures. These include one or more of the following:

- double or triple glazing/secondary glazing, when replacing single glazing
- upgrading to energy efficient doors
- hot water tank/appliance tank thermostats/heating controls

Later this month, homeowners across England will be able to access advice and support on improving the energy efficiency of their homes from the [Simple](#)

[Energy Advice \(SEA\) service](#). SEA will suggest appropriate home improvements that homeowners may be able to apply for support in funding.

Households will be offered a list of approved TrustMark and MCS registered tradespeople in their local area to carry out the work. Once the works are agreed, vouchers will start to be issued from the end of September so work can commence.

For example, if a homeowner of a semi-detached or end-terrace installed cavity wall and floor insulation, costing around £4,000, the homeowner would pay just £1,320 – with the government paying £2,680. Doing so could save the owner over £200 annually on their bills and reduce their carbon footprint by cutting 700 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> a year from their home alone.

Chief Executive of the Energy Saving Trust, Mike Thornton, said:

The Green Homes Grant is a significant investment by the government in energy efficiency which will provide long term benefits to householders and the environment by cutting fuel bills and reducing carbon emissions. It will particularly help low-income households access much-needed funds to make their homes warmer. I would really encourage homeowners to apply for the scheme.

The funding will mean warmer homes for 600,000 households, with those on low income who are owner occupiers and in receipt of income-based or disability benefits, getting 100% subsidy up to a maximum government contribution of £10,000. As part of this package, £500 million will be earmarked specifically to support low-income, fuel poor households, including those living in rented accommodation.

Chief Executive of the Federation of Master Builders, Brian Berry, said:

The Green Homes Grant is a really welcome boost for the building industry as it recovers from the impact of COVID-19. The vouchers will be a significant benefit to households wanting to make their homes more energy efficient and reduce their energy bills, whilst providing much needed work for accredited installers at this difficult time.

Chief Executive of TrustMark, Simon Ayers, said:

Consumer confidence is not only essential to the recovery of the UK's economy, but also to the protection and creation of key jobs that will support the long-term delivery of quality green home improvements.

That's why having TrustMark accredited tradespeople will provide households with the confidence they need that those working on

their homes have been thoroughly vetted for technical competence, customer service and trading practices.

Heating buildings accounts for almost a fifth of UK greenhouse gas emissions and reducing carbon dioxide from homes will be essential to reaching net zero by 2050.

The government's wider green package, announced earlier this month by the Chancellor, also includes an additional £1 billion programme to make public buildings, including schools and hospitals across the UK more energy efficient. An additional £50 million will pilot innovative approaches to retrofitting social housing at scale.

Since being established in 2005 TrustMark has been instrumental in enhancing levels of consumer protection in a range of industry sectors. TrustMark serves to enhance consumer protection and choice, providing peace of mind and confidence. TrustMark registered businesses have been thoroughly vetted to meet required standards. TrustMark offers a range of remedies to give further protection to consumers.

All heat pump installers must be registered with MCS in order to carry out work under the Green Homes Grant. They can [get certified on the MCS website](#).

£500 million of the £2 billion will be administered by local authorities across England through the [Green Home Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme](#). Local authorities will be able to bid for funding to support low-income households in their area.

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## **£1.3 billion investment to deliver homes, infrastructure and jobs**

- Over 300 shovel-ready projects in England to share £900 million investment to build homes and infrastructure, and create jobs
- £360 million investment confirmed to deliver 26,000 new homes on brownfield land
- Strict accreditation rules for tradespeople involved in the £2 billion Green Homes Grant scheme to ensure homes are of the highest quality

Tens of thousands of new homes and other vital infrastructure projects were given the green light with nearly £1.3 billion of investment confirmed today (4 August 2020) by Housing Secretary Robert Jenrick.

The move is part of the government's comprehensive plan to deliver upgrades to local infrastructure and boost skills to help fuel a green economic recovery.

Over 300 successful projects in England are being told they will receive a share of the £900 million Getting Building Fund, which was announced by the Prime Minister in June, to invest in shovel-ready housing and infrastructure projects, creating jobs and supporting economic recovery across the country.

The investment is expected to deliver up to 45,000 homes, create up to 85,000 jobs and reduce around 65 million kgs of CO2 emissions across England.

Housing Secretary Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

As we get Britain building we are also laying the foundations for a green economic recovery by investing in vital infrastructure for local communities, creating jobs and building environmentally-friendly homes with a huge £1.3 billion investment announced today.

This government is determined to level up all parts of the country and this funding will not only give a much needed boost to our economic recovery, it will help build the good quality, affordable homes the country needs.

Successful projects being funded include:

- £23 million for phase 1 of the development of commercial space at Mayfield Park in Greater Manchester, expected to deliver 3,200 jobs and attract over 1 million visitors a year
- £14.88 million to accelerate the National Brownfield Land Institute, a project aiming to create a leader in sustainable construction which will support the housing deal and drive levelling up across the region
- £12 million to support a new high-speed railway station in Thanet, Kent, improving transport in the area and creating 800 new jobs

To deliver a further 26,000 new homes while protecting greenfield sites, the government has also confirmed a £360 million investment in Mayoral Combined Authority areas through its £400 million Brownfield Fund.

A further £8 million of funding has also been announced to help speed up the delivery of these new homes on brownfield sites and the government is inviting ambitious bids from the Mayoral Combined Authorities for the remaining £40 million of the fund.

Details of the new £2 billion Green Homes Grant scheme, which will see the government fund up to two-thirds of the cost of home improvements of over 600,000 homes, have also been announced.

Tradespeople must register for TrustMark accreditation to take part in the scheme, which will cover green home improvements ranging from insulation of walls, floors and roofs, to the installation of low-carbon heating, like heat pumps or solar thermal – measures that could help homeowners including landlords save up to £600 a year on their energy bills.

Households on low income can receive vouchers covering 100% of the cost of

the improvements, up to a maximum of £10,000.

Business and Energy Secretary Rt Hon Alok Sharma said:

Green home improvements will save people money on their energy bills, help to cut carbon emissions, and create new work for many thousands of builders, plumbers and other tradespeople.

Our TrustMark scheme will guarantee that building work is completed to a high standard by accredited tradespeople, ensuring consumers are fully protected.

Chair of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Network, Mark Bretton said:

As business led partnerships with a ready-made pipeline of projects, LEPs responded swiftly to the Prime Minister's call for infrastructure projects with more available when government is ready.

LEPs 'can do' business attitude has created a proven track record of complex delivery, landing projects at scale, on time and to budget. The foundations they are building for local recovery in their Five Point Plan will underpin our national recovery.

The funding commitments come ahead of a radical overhaul of the planning system due to be announced shortly. The reforms will bring about a simpler, faster, people-focused system to deliver the high-quality, energy efficient homes we need.

As part of the changes, developers will have to contribute fairly to the infrastructure needed to sustain communities, ensure designs keep in with local character and work as part of a new interactive online planning system.

The [full list of projects](#) is available on GOV.UK.

The government has today confirmed the list of over 300 successful projects which will receive a share of £900 million from the Getting Building Fund.

The Getting Building Fund is investing in shovel-ready infrastructure projects to create jobs and support economic recovery across the country.

Projects funded include:

- regeneration of town and city centres
- green infrastructure and clean energy
- transport and digital connectivity improvements
- unlocking of housing and business sites
- support for SMEs and learners

The successful projects (over 300) are expected to deliver up to 85,000 jobs, over 1,500,000 sqm of commercial floor space, unlocking 45,000 homes, almost

1,000,000 sqm of public realm or green space improved or created, over 50,000 new learners assisted, and 65 million kgs of CO2 emissions saved.

All projects have been selected by Local Enterprise Partnerships and Mayoral Combined Authorities in each area and endorsed by the Housing Secretary.

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## Wrexham magistrates' court to undergo £5.4m transformation

Press release

Wrexham Magistrates' Court will undergo £5.4m worth of renovations to boost capacity, improve accessibility, and deliver more trials.



- New investment to enhance facilities at Wrexham Magistrates' Court
- The building will be made more secure and accessible for disabled users
- Part of the Government's £142m funding to improve courts across England and Wales

The project will see a new, state-of-the-art two-storey 'custody suite' built, which will securely detain more defendants and keep the public safe.

Further modifications are proposed to improve accessibility for disabled users, including the installation of a new lift so people can get to the court easier.

The upgrade will be delivered by Spring 2021 and is the first milestone in the £142 million investment by government to improve and modernise courtrooms across England and Wales.

Courts Minister, Chris Philp, said:

This investment will allow Wrexham Magistrates' Courts to better



serve its community, delivering jobs locally and dramatically enhancing its ability to hear more cases.

It is the just the latest example of our commitment to give courts the resources needed to uphold the rule of law and deliver swifter justice for victims.

The plans seek to help modernise the court and will consider sustainability initiatives to improve the energy performance of the building and reduce its impact on the environment. The work will be completed by local contractors where possible, delivering jobs and investment to the area.

Today's announcement is part of an extra £285 million earmarked to improve courts and prisons this year which will see hundreds of businesses supported and thousands of jobs created.

## Notes to editors

Published 3 August 2020

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## [VMD temporary enforcement policy under specific COVID-19 circumstances](#)



The statements setting out temporary VMD enforcement policies in relation to specific obligations under the VMR in response to COVID-19 are no longer required.

These policies allowed, in exceptional circumstances, for relaxations concerning the temporary change of veterinary practice and SQP retailer premises, the supply to these temporary premises from veterinary wholesalers and the arrangements for SQP remote prescribing and authorisation of supply.

We will continue to monitor the situation with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Published 3 August 2020

Last updated 7 March 2022 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 7 March 2022

All statements relating to the temporary VMD enforcement policy have been withdrawn and are no longer in force.

2. 23 December 2021

Updated to reinstate the temporary enforcement policies in relation to specific obligations under the VMR in response to Covid-19.

3. 19 November 2021

All statements relating to the temporary VMD enforcement policy have been withdrawn and are no longer in force

4. 3 August 2020

First published.