

UK Export Finance publishes its 2019-20 results and new Business Plan.

- Results show UKEF provided £4.4 billion in support for UK exports to 69 countries
- 77% of the companies UKEF directly supported were SMEs, 88% of which were based outside of London
- UKEF's new Business Plan sets out how it will increase its support to UK exporters and suppliers

UK Export Finance (UKEF) has today [published its results for 2019 to 2020](#), revealing it provided £4.4 billion in support for UK exports, helping UK companies trade with 69 countries.

UKEF supported 339 companies in 2019-20, up 29% on the previous year, with a sharp increase in companies in supply chains indirectly benefiting from UKEF support. 77% of the companies UKEF supported were SMEs, and 88% of these were based outside London as the department works with companies across the UK.

Businesses that benefited from UKEF support include Environmental Street furniture, a Belfast firm selling street furniture to the Dubai Arena, Tall Group, a printing company in Runcorn selling secure high school certificates to the Kenyan National Examination Council and IQA group, a Glasgow-based utilities contractor helping Angola improve its national power supply.

In the year the UK hosted the UK-Africa Investment Summit to strengthen trade ties with the continent, UKEF has seen significant growth in its support for UK exports to Africa. UKEF provided £780 million of support to facilitate UK exports to the continent, up from £625 million last year and rising from just £85 million five years ago. This included £110 million in financing for a new maternity hospital in Ghana that will help reduce infant mortality rates in the south of the country.

Secretary of State for International Trade, Liz Truss, said:

This has been another outstanding year for UK Export Finance, helping businesses in every part of the UK win export contracts.

Supporting international trade will be crucial as the UK looks to recover from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. UK Export Finance is already playing a critical role at the centre of the government's plan to power an export-led recovery and its offer is more important than ever for UK exporters.

UKEF has today also launched its [2020 to 2024 Business Plan](#) which sets out how the department will meet the challenges in providing export credit and trade finance support over the next four years, particularly as the UK recovers from the impact of COVID-19.

The Business Plan outlined new objectives that will allow UKEF to adapt its support for SMEs, help businesses across all the regions of the UK access UKEF products, and focus its activity on sectors and countries where UKEF support will have the greatest economic benefit. This includes plans to further develop its support for clean growth and renewable energy business by building on the £2 billion recently allocated to UKEF's direct lending facility for clean growth projects.

Marcus Dolman, Co-Chairman of the British Exporters' Association (BExA) welcomed the results and said:

BExA welcomes the positive figures announced by UKEF today, which show a marked increase in business volumes compared with previous years and we commend UKEF for their continued support of UK exporters.

UKEF is a critical resource for UK exporters and their importance will be amplified this year in supporting businesses through the current crisis. We praise their enthusiasm and ingenuity in developing new products and services. We particularly look forward to the new schemes that are under development being made available to all exporters imminently and see this as a real game changer in the support of UK exports.

Notes to editors: UKEF 2019 to 2020 highlights

- UKEF's support is provided on a commercial basis in partnership with over 100 private sector providers and the department charges a premium to cover its costs and the risk it takes on. In 2019-20, UKEF generated more than £177 million in premium income for the Exchequer.
- This year UKEF supported its first ever offshore-wind projects in 2019-2020, enabling British companies to win contracts on the Formosa 2, Changfang and Xidao wind farms in the Taiwan Strait with more than £300 million of support.
- UKEF support in 2019-2020 extended to Jaguar Land Rover, one of the country's major exporters. UKEF guaranteed a £500 million loan to support the company's continued investment into research and development of its electric vehicles – the first deal for UKEF of this kind, with UKEF's support tied to Jaguar Land Rover's overall working capital needs instead of a specific export contract.

Read our [2019 to 2020 Performance Highlights](#) and the [Annual Report and Accounts](#).

Find out more about our [2020 to 2024 Business Plan](#).

Achieving the goals of the peace agreement in Afghanistan

Thank you very much, Madam President. Let me also welcome today our briefers, SRS Lyons and Executive Director Waly, who I think are making their first appearances in their new roles.

Madam President, there are two preeminent priorities facing Afghanistan today: pursuing peace and tackling the COVID-19 pandemic.

On peace, let me say how much the United Kingdom welcomes the progress made towards intra-Afghan negotiations since our last meeting. These will be Afghan-owned and Afghan-led negotiations. And for the United Kingdom's part, we stand ready support in any way we can. And we note with appreciation the United Nations' readiness to do likewise.

What is most crucial, Madam President, is that they start and they start without delay.

Now, the political agreement between President Ghani and Chairman Abdullah in May was an important and welcome step in this direction. The government has shown strong, unified leadership in its commitment to the release of Taliban prisoners. More of this strong, unified leadership will be essential for the next stage of the peace process and also to address the COVID-19 pandemic, to which I will return. I would like to urge President Ghani and Chairman Abdullah to finalise the formation and appointments of the new government quickly.

Madam President, the Taliban too, must show that they are a credible partner for peace. We welcome that they have released prisoners as well and remain committed to negotiations. However, the United Kingdom condemns in the strongest terms the recent upswing in violence, for which the Taliban is primarily responsible and which undermines trust in the Taliban's sincerity about peace.

The United Kingdom's message to the Taliban is threefold:

First, reduce violence now. Previous occasions – most recently, the Eid ceasefire – shows that you, the Taliban, are capable of doing so. The question is one of willingness.

Second, fulfil the commitment to counter-terrorism, break completely with all terrorist groups, including al-Qaeda, and condemn all acts of terrorism in Afghanistan.

And third, engage in good faith in the upcoming intra-Afghan negotiations. This includes accepting the inclusive negotiating team of the Afghan

Government.

My final remark on peace is to restate the centrality of inclusion and human rights to peace. I know that Ms Akbar said that this is not an optional 'nice to have'. This is at the core of Afghans' aspirations for a lasting peace in their country. That means that any peace settlement must protect and build on the progress made in recent years, including on freedom of religion and belief, freedom of expression and the rights of women, minorities and children. And let me record the United Kingdom's strong support for the conclusions on children in armed conflict in Afghanistan this Council adopted last week.

Women's effective and meaningful participation in the peace process and in governance is particularly important. And as Co-Chair of the Group of Friends of Women in Afghanistan, the United Kingdom remains and will remain a strong advocate for women at and in all levels of decision-making.

Madam President, all of this is happening against the backdrop of the Global COVID-19 pandemic. We share the deep concern about the pandemic's impact in Afghanistan – both the immediate health impacts and the secondary socio-economic effects. The United Kingdom is already providing assistance to implement the most urgent parts of the United Nations' humanitarian response plan and to provide water, food and sanitation.

As one of the largest international donors in Afghanistan, we're also working closely with Finland and UNAMA, co-organisers of the Ministerial Pledging Conference due to take place in November this year. The international donor community must redouble its efforts to ensure that support is available and channelled effectively to help Afghanistan weather the pandemic and build back better on a long-term, sustainable footing.

Madam President, there is no doubt that these challenges are daunting. But at a time when the world is united in common cause to fight COVID-19, Afghans have an unparalleled opportunity to unite in securing lasting peace and security in Afghanistan. It is, of course, for Afghans to seize that opportunity and for this Council, the United Nations and Afghanistan's friends to provide all the support that we can. And the United Kingdom is committed to doing our part.

Thank you very much, Madam President.

Statement on media freedom in Yemen

Press release

Media Freedom Coalition's Executive Group statement concerning media freedom

in Yemen



The undersigned members of the Media Freedom Coalition's Executive Group express their growing concern about the Houthis' attacks on media freedom in Yemen, where their continued detention of Yemeni journalists is troubling evidence of serious abuses of the right to freedom of expression.

In particular, we condemn the Houthis' decision to put four Yemeni journalists to death for their reporting, an alarming situation that constitutes a blatant disregard for human rights. Attacks on media freedom are attacks on human rights, and the protection of journalists and other media workers is critical to the success of any peacebuilding efforts undertaken in Yemen.

We call on all parties to guarantee the safety of journalists and to respect human rights and international humanitarian law, so that they can carry out their work without fear of detention, reprisals or restrictions inconsistent with the right to freedom of expression.

We also call on the Houthis to:

- immediately disavow their decision to put to death the journalists Abdulkhaleq Ahmed Amran, Akram Saleh Al-Walidi, Al-Hareth Saleh Hamid and Tawfiq Mohammed Al-Mansouri and release them
- Immediately release journalists Hisham Ahmed Tarmoom, Hisham Abdulmalik Al-Yousefi, Haitham Abdulrahman Al-Shihab, Essam Amin Balgheeth, and Hassan Abdullah Annab
- immediately free all other detained Yemeni journalists and disavow any intention to punish or harm them, and account for those journalists who are missing
- Refrain from undermining the exercise of the right to freedom of expression by all Yemeni journalists and media workers in the pursuit of their essential work—without being subjected to further punishment

Canada, Germany, Latvia, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States of America

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Driving lessons, theory tests and driving tests to restart in England



The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) has announced that learners can resume driving lessons and motorcycle training in England from Saturday 4 July 2020.

The rule applies to all types of driver and motorcycle training in England, including private practice with someone you live with or in your [support bubble](#).

Theory tests will restart in England on Saturday 4 July. The tests will take place with social distancing measures in place to help stop the spread of coronavirus.

Car driving tests will restart in England on Wednesday 22 July, which will give learner drivers time to have refresher lessons and practice before taking their test.

DVSA will make further announcements about the resumption of testing, training and lessons, including publishing information on how services will be restarted safely, shortly.

When lessons and tests will restart

When services restart depends on what vehicle you're learning to drive or ride.

Car

Service	Date
Driving lessons	Saturday 4 July 2020
Theory tests	Saturday 4 July 2020
Driving tests	Wednesday 22 July 2020

Motorcycle and moped

Service	Date
Motorcycle and moped compulsory basic training (CBT)	Saturday 4 July 2020
Motorcycle direct access scheme (DAS) training	Saturday 4 July 2020
Theory tests	Saturday 4 July 2020
Motorcycle and moped module 1 and module 2 tests	Monday 13 July 2020

Lorry, bus and coach

Service	Date
Driver training	Saturday 4 July 2020
Theory tests	Saturday 4 July 2020
Driving tests	Monday 13 July 2020

Car and trailer

Service	Date
Driver training	Saturday 4 July 2020
Driving tests	Monday 13 July 2020

Tractor and specialist vehicle

Service	Date
Driver training	Saturday 4 July 2020
Driving tests	Monday 6 July 2020

Approved driving instructor (ADI)

Service	Date
Driving instructor training	Saturday 4 July 2020
ADI part 1 test (theory)	Saturday 4 July 2020
ADI part 2 test (driving ability)	Wednesday 22 July 2020
ADI part 3 test (instructional ability)	Wednesday 22 July 2020
ADI standards check	Wednesday 22 July 2020

Motorcycle trainer

Service	Date
DVSA enhanced rider scheme trainer theory test	Saturday 4 July 2020

Helping the country to get moving again

Grant Shapps, Transport Secretary, said:

Driving lessons and tests are vital in helping people get to work and visit loved ones, and provide the skills for a lifetime of safe driving.

As the country recovers from COVID-19 we can now open-up our services to help get the country moving again and I am very pleased to announce the restart of driving tests and lessons in a COVID-secure way.

Gareth Llewellyn, DVSA Chief Executive, said:

It has been vital that lessons and tests only resume when safe to do so and in line with the government's advice.

We know this has been a tough time for the whole country including learners and driving instructors but I am pleased to announce the restart of lessons and tests in England.

Tests for critical workers have continued during the lockdown and I would like to thank all those instructors and examiners who have continued to work to help deliver tests for those who have done so much to help us during this terrible pandemic.

More information

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Last updated 15 July 2020 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 15 July 2020

Added the date that approved driving instructor (ADI) part 3 (instructional ability) tests and ADI standards checks restart in England.

2. 1 July 2020

Added links to information about theory tests and driving tests in England, and in Scotland and Wales.

3. 25 June 2020

First published.

[Major milestone hit as 2 billion items of PPE delivered](#)

- Almost 28 billion items have been ordered by the government to provide a continuous supply to health and care workers tackling coronavirus

- Part of herculean cross-government effort to future-proof supply chains

Two billion items of PPE have been delivered to NHS and social care staff across the UK since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, the government has announced today.

Amid unprecedented global pressures on supply chains, 341 million masks, 313 million aprons, 4 million gowns and 1.1 billion gloves have been delivered to frontline workers thanks to the efforts of government, NHS, industry and the armed forces to massively scale-up distribution networks.

Almost 28 billion items of PPE have been ordered overall from UK-based manufacturers and international partners to provide a continuous supply in the coming months.

This will help protect our hardworking NHS and care staff, allowing them to continue to save lives and provide high-quality care to those who need it.

This was a vital condition in order to safely ease the lockdown and start to bring some normality back to people's lives.

Matt Hancock, Health and Social Care Secretary, said:

Coronavirus has placed unprecedented global demands on PPE supply chains. To tackle this we set a national challenge calling on companies to channel their manufacturing power into manufacturing much-needed PPE, and brought in Lord Deighton who has truly delivered once more for his country.

Two billion items of PPE have now been delivered to the frontline, and a further 28 billion items sourced, that will protect frontline workers well into the future.

It is thanks to the herculean effort from UK industry, the NHS and departmental teams, our diplomatic teams abroad, and the armed forces that we have now hit this impressive milestone.

The normal supply chain for PPE was designed to accommodate delivery to 226 NHS trusts, but essential PPE supplies are now being supplied to 58,000 different settings, including care homes, hospices and community care organisations.

This has been achieved through a cross-government effort to harness the manufacturing power of UK suppliers, forging new relationships with overseas companies and setting up new supply chains from scratch in a matter of weeks.

Lord Deighton, the government's adviser on PPE who previously led the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics, was also appointed to oversee supply and ramp up manufacturing of PPE from UK-based companies.

More than 30 deals have been struck with companies, including the Royal Mint,

Jaguar Land Rover and Honeywell, through the Make initiative to manufacture and deliver PPE in the UK. We are also working with over 175 new suppliers to deliver at the scale and pace the UK requires. Around 20% of all PPE will be manufactured in the UK by the end of the year.

The latest companies to join the national drive and sign new contracts are:

- Medicom, a company based in Montreal, will be providing hundreds of millions of respiratory and medical masks to the UK every year, once the UK facility is opened later this summer. This new UK-based factory will create at least 75 new full-time, skilled jobs
- Redwood, based in Wigan, will be providing 379,000 gowns until November this year – around 75,800 a month – with the first delivery due this week

Lord Paul Deighton, adviser to the Health and Social Care Secretary on PPE, said:

The driving motivation of our team has been to supply our frontline workers with the PPE they need so they can focus on saving lives. This is why hitting this milestone matters and why I am so grateful to all the individuals and companies, both in the UK and overseas, who have contributed to this effort.

Responding to a massive spike in our requirements and a significant global supply shortage, we have in a matter of weeks scaled up our international procurement, our domestic manufacturing and our logistics and distribution capabilities so that we can deliver PPE to where it's needed.

We are now working to build the stock levels which will help to future-proof our health and care sectors for years to come.

Contracts for billions of items of PPE were negotiated by a team led by Defence Equipment and Support, the procurement arm of the Ministry of Defence.

Sir Simon Bollom, Defence Equipment and Support CEO, said:

The New Buy PPE team has worked tirelessly and collaboratively with colleagues from the NHS and across government from the outset and this remarkable milestone indicates how focused they are on getting vital PPE to the NHS frontline.

Ranil Jayawardena, International Trade Minister, said:

The announcement today is testament to the hard work of British teams around the globe, sourcing critical medical equipment in the

fight against coronavirus.

We've got to keep going and do even more. I welcome Lord Deighton's important work on PPE here at home and abroad – and the Department for International Trade will continue our work to make our supply chains more robust, seize new overseas opportunities, and push on with trade deals amongst friends and allies to boost the British economy.

The government will always be ready to fire up our overseas networks, secure medical and other critical supplies, and help make Britain more resilient in the future, as we strive to beat this virus.

From the beginning of the outbreak, the government has worked tirelessly to find new ways of getting more PPE to staff across the health and care system as quickly as possible.

We have rapidly processed over 23,000 cases from over 15,000 suppliers to ensure they meet the safety and quality standards that our NHS staff need, as well as prioritising offers of larger volumes. We have so far actively engaged with over 99% of the companies that have offered PPE.

We now have sufficient contracted supplies for our foreseeable demand in most product areas.

We've contracted with over 175 new suppliers able to deliver at the scale and pace the UK requires.

In March, the National Supply Distribution Response 24/7 helpline was launched to allow health and care providers to arrange urgent deliveries of PPE. This was followed by £1.6 billion of funding for local authorities to deal with the immediate impacts of coronavirus, which they could use to help ensure social care staff could get the protection they needed. Social care providers later received an emergency drop of over 7 million items of PPE from the government.

In April, the government launched [the PPE action plan](#), setting out clear, decisive actions on securing enough PPE to last through the crisis and ensuring those who need PPE can get the right type at the right time.

The temporary team rapidly mobilised by Lord Deighton to source UK manufactured PPE included many senior executives from the private sector, many of whom were involved in the delivery of London 2012.