

Message from Simon French, Chief Inspector of Rail Accidents

These are difficult times for everyone, including those in the railway industry. Although RAIB offices have effectively closed, our teams continue to work from home and, when essential, on railway premises. All our usual investigative functions are continuing; deployments to site when necessary, evidence gathering, analysis and testing, report production, consultation and publication. The railway industry should continue to notify RAIB of accidents and incidents in accordance with the Railways (Accident Investigation and Reporting) Regulations 2005, by the normal means, and we will respond to this information as usual. However, in accordance with Government guidance, we will seek to minimise contact between our staff and others. As such, site activity will be limited to that which is absolutely necessary for investigations to continue and we will conduct more interviews and consultation meetings by phone or other remote means. If you have any questions please contact us via enquiries@raib.gov.uk.

I wish you well in these extraordinary circumstances.

Simon French

Survey and Inspection information update

Published 26 March 2020

Last updated 20 April 2020 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 20 April 2020

MIN 612 has been updated to MIN 612 Amendment 2. Link changed and date issued amended.

2. 27 March 2020

Added contact information for closed Marine offices during COVID-19 pandemic.

3. 26 March 2020

First published.

Fifth anniversary of the conflict in Yemen: joint statement

Dominic Raab and Anne-Marie Trevelyan urge all parties to engage with the UN-led peace process on the fifth anniversary of the Saudi-led Coalition's military intervention in the conflict in Yemen.

The intervention came at the request of the internationally recognised Government of Yemen.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab and International Development Secretary Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

Yemen is now at a crossroads between a path to peace or yet more violence. The risk of further conflict as well as the threat of an outbreak of coronavirus could deepen what is already the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Now, more than ever, all parties must engage with the peace process led by the UN Special Envoy, Martin Griffiths. The UK stands by the people of Yemen and is saving lives every day with vital UK aid support but a political solution is the only lasting way to alleviate suffering. We urge the parties to respond to the call by the UN Secretary General, António Guterres, yesterday to work towards a political solution to end this appalling conflict.

Background:

- The UN Secretary General, António Guterres, issued a [statement](#) on 25 March, which urged the parties in Yemen to immediately cease hostilities, focus on reaching a negotiated settlement and do everything possible to counter a potential outbreak of COVID-19. This followed Guterres' call on 24 March for an end to conflicts around the world amid the global COVID-19 pandemic.
- The year began with some political progress, including agreement on prisoner exchanges and the first of a series of mercy flights of Yemenis to receive medical treatment abroad. However, recent clashes in Marib Governorate and the prospect of a Houthi offensive in that governorate threaten to undermine progress. The Foreign Secretary visited the region in March and met Yemeni President Hadi to reiterate the UK's support for the UN-led process. The UK continues to lead on Yemen in the UN Security Council and funds efforts by the UN Special Envoy to ensure the peace process involves marginalised groups, including women and young people.
- Restrictions on humanitarian access, particularly in Houthi-controlled areas, as well as the beginning of the cholera season and the risk of a

COVID-19 outbreak would further worsen the humanitarian situation. The UK is clear that humanitarian aid must not be used as a political tool and calls on all parties to comply with UN Security Council Resolution 2451 by facilitating safe, rapid, and unhindered access for the humanitarian response. The UK has committed £770 million to support Yemen since the conflict began in 2015 and provided over £200 million in funding this financial year (2019/20).

- The SAFER oil tanker anchored off the coast of Yemen poses a major environmental threat. In accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2511, the Houthis must immediately facilitate access for the UN to conduct an assessment and essential maintenance.

Further information

[COVID-19 IMPACT: UK Visa Application Centre in Accra Closure](#)

IMPORTANT: COVID-19 IMPACT Due to the international effort to reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), the UK Visa Application Centre (VAC) in Accra will be closed to the public effective immediately. Any new applications will not be accepted until further notice. We are currently contacting any affected customers to cancel scheduled appointments and arrange the return or collection of passports. We continue to monitor the situation and updates on when the service will re-open will be available on this page. We apologise for the inconvenience and thank you for your cooperation. For further updates to our visas service, please use the following link: ACCRA https://pos.tlscontact.com/acc_en/ Visit the Coronavirus (COVID-19): advice for UK visa applicants and temporary UK residents GOV.UK page for more information

[Regulator responds to Coronavirus impacts with changes to regulatory approach](#)

The Regulator of Social Housing has written to all registered providers of social housing setting out the changes it is making to its regulatory approach in response to Coronavirus. It also sets out expectations about providers contacting the regulator about significant compliance challenges.

This is intended both to support providers in focussing on front-line operations and to identify where there may be challenges that the sector or individual providers need regulatory support to meet.

Across the sector, the shared priority is to maintain tenant safety, including addressing emergency [and urgent] repairs and statutory compliance with health and safety requirements. The impact of the outbreak, and the measures to contain it, will mean that there will be some incidence of statutory non-compliance and repairs backlogs. RSH assures providers that it will apply a proportionate regulatory approach and take full account of the current circumstances but that it expects providers to inform it in a timely manner about material non-compliance with regulatory standards, focussing on the safety of tenants and financial viability.

RSH previously announced that it would pause In-Depth Assessments. It now extends that pause until further notice. In addition, it postpones the submission deadline for the Statistical Data Return and the Local Authority Data Return until 31 October 2020. The submission date for the Financial Forecast Return is deferred and updates will be provided in due course.

To address the risks arising to tenant safety and from the economic impact of Coronavirus, RSH will survey providers to collect information about how they are delivering emergency and urgent repairs, care and support services and compliance with health and safety requirements. It will also ask some providers who face higher financial risks to share more of their own financial information.

RSH will continue to keep its regulatory approach under review over the coming weeks and months.

Fiona MacGregor, RSH Chief Executive said:

Coronavirus leaves us all facing unprecedented challenges in our daily lives and an uncertain future economic climate. Amid very significant operational pressures housing providers are rightly prioritising their work and services to protect their tenants and communities whilst keeping their staff safe.

We are supporting this by pausing some of our usual regulation and focusing our oversight on the things that matter most: that providers keep tenants safe and that the social housing sector remains financially viable.

The [letter to registered providers](#) is also published on the website.

Notes to editors

1. The original submission deadline for the Statistical Data Return was 31 May 2020. This has now been extended until 31 October 2020. The Local Authority Data Return deadline has also been extended to 31 October

2020.

2. The original submission deadline for the Financial Forecast Return was 30 June 2020. This deadline has been deferred.
3. Providers will still need to submit Q4 returns between 1 April 2020 and 23 April 2020 for the Quarterly Survey, but no longer need to provide the same level of year end information.
4. The Regulator of Social Housing promotes a viable, efficient and well-governed social housing sector able to deliver homes that meet a range of needs. It does this by undertaking robust economic regulation focusing on governance, financial viability and value for money that maintains lender confidence and protects the taxpayer. It also sets consumer standards and may take action if these standards are breached and there is a significant risk of serious detriment to tenants or potential tenants. For more information about RSH, visit: <https://gov.uk/rsh>.
5. For press office contact details, see the [Media enquiries page](#). For general queries, please email enquiries@rsh.gov.uk or call 0300 124 5225.