

Government fund to accelerate nuclear fuel supply opens

- £75 million Nuclear Fuel Fund opens to boost production of fuel for reactors
- from today businesses can register their interest in applying for funding, with the scheme opening for applications later this year
- fund will support and create high value jobs and skills in the sector and give businesses the confidence to invest in the UK

Domestic production of nuclear fuel will be driven forward by a £75 million fund opening today (19 July 2022), with the cash boost set to encourage investment and expansion in new nuclear infrastructure while protecting high skilled jobs in the sector.

The [Nuclear Fuel Fund](#) will seek to award grants to projects that can increase the UK's domestic nuclear fuel sector, reducing the need for foreign imports and creating the material used in nuclear power stations to generate electricity – with funding going towards designing and developing new facilities.

The government backing will encourage private sector co-investment into the projects and ensure the UK builds on its legacy of nuclear fuel innovation and production.

Business and Energy Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said:

We've got big plans to boost British nuclear power, so it makes perfect sense to ensure we have a strong, resilient, domestic fuel supply chain to match.

This funding will kickstart projects in the UK and generate private investment in facilities that will fuel the nuclear reactors of today and tomorrow, shoring up our energy security while creating jobs.

The government is today asking parties to register their interest in bidding for funding and inviting further information on the sector's investment needs. It is also inviting nuclear stakeholders who are not planning on bidding for the Fund to provide information from their experience that will help to mature fund design ahead of opening the bid window in Autumn 2022.

Today's announcement follows the [British Energy Security Strategy](#) earlier this year, where government set an ambition to approve up to 8 new reactors by 2030, including taking one project to full investment decision (FID) this Parliament and 2 projects to FID in the next Parliament, helping further boost energy independence and move away from costly fossil fuels.

As the UK considers its future nuclear requirements, there may be a greater range of reactor types to draw from. This will see the nuclear fuel sector become even more important. A secure, resilient supply of fuel for domestic reactors will build on this, ensuring they can be called upon to power the economy.

Up to £75 million in grants will be awarded to support the development costs of investments into new nuclear fuel capabilities in the UK, supporting a range of reactor types and sizes, including small and advanced modular reactors.

The Nuclear Fuel Fund will also support companies to access new markets both domestically and internationally, and preserve and create skills and knowhow in parts of the country – with the sector having a large presence in the Northwest.

[Transport Secretary more than trebles investment for rail in the north to over £9 billion](#)

- investment in TransPennine route upgrade bolstered by more than 200% to deliver a gold standard rail network to level up the north
- additional funding will be spent on digital signalling technology, electrifying the full route and building additional tracks for passenger and freight services
- this comes as government announces over £950 million for next phase of TransPennine route upgrades, which will deliver better journeys, sooner for passengers in the north

Passengers in the north are set for a major boost as Transport Secretary Grant Shapps more than trebles the investment for TransPennine route upgrades (TRU), slashing journey times, setting the foundations for Northern PowerHouse Rail and reducing carbon emissions by up to 87,000 tonnes per year.

The increase in funding, from £2.9 billion to more than £9 billion, is set to strengthen TRU and Northern Powerhouse Rail, transforming an already ambitious project to a 'gold standard' and delivering on the government's priority of Levelling Up the country.

The full route will be fitted with the latest technology, from complete electrification and full digital signalling, to increased capacity along the route for passenger and freight services between Huddersfield and Westtown in Dewsbury, doubling tracks from 2 to 4.

A further £959 million of funding has been released to progress the next phase of TRU between Manchester and York. The almost £1 billion will be spent on the remaining electrification of the railway between Stalybridge and Manchester and unlocking shorter journey times and trans-Pennine rail freight flows, with electric trains between Manchester and Stalybridge expected to hit the tracks around the middle of the decade.

Funding will also facilitate Northern Powerhouse Rail potentially doubling the amount of direct construction jobs from 2,000 to up to 4,000, taking thousands of lorries off our roads and delivering better journeys, sooner for passengers across the north.

Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps said:

Through our record-breaking [integrated rail plan](#), we have a once in a lifetime opportunity to redesign the railways and it's only right that we deliver this in line with the best quality technology at our disposal.

By trebling the overall investment in the TRU, I'm ensuring the north is at the forefront of the government's Levelling Up agenda and guaranteeing passengers gold standard services set to deliver greener, faster and reliable services through Northern Powerhouse Rail, electrification and additional train tracks.

Once complete, the TRU is expected to deliver multiple benefits, delivering an extra 2 passenger trains every hour and additional hourly freight slots. Upgrades are expected to service more reliable journeys and slash journey times by up to 40%. Northern Powerhouse Rail will be fully electrified, improving the local environment and air quality across the north.

The [TransPennine route upgrade, announced in November 2021 as part of the integrated rail plan](#), will be hitting the tracks from 2025 – boosting economic growth and creating local skilled jobs.

[**Ambassador Nick Whittingham strengthens ties with Honduras**](#)

World news story

British Ambassador to Honduras, Nick Whittingham, will conduct a three-day agenda to advance prosperity, human rights and climate awareness in Honduras.



Ambassador Whittingham will engage with government officials, civil society and private sector representatives from 18-20 July on actionable strategies and opportunities to strength the UK-Honduras relationship.

The Ambassador's priorities include continue working closely with Honduras in condemning Russia's ongoing, brutal aggression against Ukraine, which is also generating devastating impacts on energy and food prices worldwide. The UK commends Honduras' international engagement to end the war.

Ambassador Whittingham will also explore opportunities to advance human rights, freedom of the press and transparency. The UK welcomes Honduras' plans to strengthening the battle against corruption, and President's Castro commitment to protect the rights of vulnerable minorities.

In order to foster prosperity and investments, Ambassador Whittingham will stress the need to seize opportunities of the UK-Central America Association Agreement, while urging Honduras to continue improving the rule of law, the business environment and fiscal discipline.

Finally, Ambassador Whittingham will discuss the UK's Biodiverse Landscapes Fund, a US\$20 million project that will help Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador and Belize to protect biodiversity, reduce poverty and tackle the impacts of climate change. In Honduras, the fund would work in the tri-national zone of El Trifinio and La Mosquitia.

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[New consultation on civil penalties to tackle illegal migration](#)

The government has today (18 July 2022) launched an industry [consultation on proposals for tougher penalties to tackle illegal migration](#), including increasing the maximum penalty for hauliers and vehicle drivers who are found carrying a clandestine entrant from £2,000.

As part of the continued fight against illegal migration and the criminal gangs behind it, changes to the existing clandestine entrant civil penalties scheme will be made through the Nationality and Borders Act.

These include new civil penalties for hauliers and vehicle drivers who fail to adequately secure their vehicle and conduct proper checks, regardless of whether a clandestine entrant is found, as part of efforts to prevent dangerous journeys which risk serious injury or even death.

Since 2020, the number of clandestine entrants coming to the UK via HGV and goods vehicles has continued to increase year on year. The government is determined to stop this, including via these refreshed penalties for hauliers and vehicle drivers who leave themselves vulnerable to exploitation.

Ahead of implementation, we are seeking the views of vehicle drivers, companies and other interested parties on all these new measures.

The consultation with the industry will run for 8 weeks and will close on 12 September 2022.

Alongside the consultation, the Home Office will be running a series of engagement events to explore these issues in more detail.

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State Simon Baynes MP said:

We are determined to do all we can to prevent illegal entry into the UK.

Criminal gangs who risk the lives of desperate people for profit are taking advantage of those whose vehicles travel in and out of the country.

Far too many vehicles are currently not adequately secured, and we will seek to increase penalties on those who are negligent and prosecute those who are complicit.

This consultation is the next vital step in achieving this, and we look forward to working with the haulage industry and other interested parties to ensure that they are aware of the necessary requirements.

The recently enacted Nationality and Borders Act is part of the government's New Plan for Immigration to make it fairer for those in genuine need, deter illegal entry into the UK, break the business model of people-smuggling networks and remove those from the UK with no right to be here.

BSL users to advise government on key issues for Deaf people

- Minister for Disabled People, Chloe Smith, launches recruitment for the British Sign Language Advisory Board
- Launch follows BSL Act recognising BSL as an official language in England, Scotland and Wales, which c. 151,000 people in the UK use
- For the first time in government applications will be accepted in BSL, and the Board will have both BSL and English as official languages

The Minister for Disabled People, Chloe Smith, has today launched recruitment for the newly formed British Sign Language (BSL) Advisory Board, which will see BSL users advising the government on key issues impacting the Deaf community.

Recognising BSL as an official language in England, Scotland and Wales for the first time, the BSL Act 2022 will make a considerable difference to people across the country. The new Board will provide personal and expert advice to the government on the implementation of the Act.

The Board's remit will be:

- advising on the use of BSL in public communications and policy delivery
- advising on how to tackle key issues facing Deaf people, such as how to increase the numbers of BSL interpreters

The Minister for Disabled People, Health and Work Chloe Smith said:

The British Sign Language Act is helping to remove barriers faced by Deaf people in daily life and the Advisory Board is a key element of this important work.

The Board will help deliver better outcomes for the Deaf community by advising government on how to tackle key issues facing Deaf people, such as how to increase the number of BSL interpreters and making sure BSL is at the heart of government policy.

I would urge anyone with a passion for helping us create a more inclusive and accessible society to consider applying for a position on the Board.

Guidance will also be published on making public services more accessible to BSL users, and departments will report on how they are ensuring their communications are accessible.

The Board will be co-chaired by one external and one senior civil servant chair. The Board membership will comprise of at least 16 members plus the co-chairs, with a majority of Deaf BSL signers including Deafblind people and/or those who use tactile sign. For the Board members and the independent co-chair the main criteria for appointment will include a lived experience of BSL, alongside a willingness to work collaboratively in assisting the government to be more accessible.

The British Sign Language Bill, a Private Member's Bill introduced by Rosie Cooper MP, recognises BSL as a language of England, Wales and Scotland in its own right. It is supported by a duty on the Secretary of State for the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) to report on what each relevant government department has done to promote or facilitate the use of British Sign Language in its communications with the public.

The closing date for applications is 5pm on Friday 2 September 2022.

ENDS

- Full details on [how to apply to the Board](#).
- Recruitment is also open for the [Regional Stakeholder Network](#). Each of the 9 chairs will work with networks in their region and the Cabinet Office to ensure the voices of disabled people throughout England are heard and valued in a way that informs policy and strategy.
- Figures from the British Deaf Association suggest that 151,000 people use BSL in the UK, 87,000 of whom are Deaf.