

# UK strengthens protections for taxpayers in energy treaty negotiations

- UK agrees new modernised terms for outdated Energy Charter Treaty, strengthening its sovereignty in the transition to cheaper and cleaner energy
- reforms bolster PM's Energy Security Strategy and include new investment protections for green technologies, such as carbon capture and hydrogen
- new terms will limit costly legal challenges from fossil fuel investors in the UK under treaty, reducing risk to British taxpayers

The UK has reached a landmark agreement to modernise the terms of the Energy Charter Treaty (ECT), maintaining its current benefits but winning new legal protections for taxpayers and investors.

This successful outcome follows 2 years of international negotiations and supports the Prime Minister's recent [Energy Security Strategy](#) by establishing new protection for taxpayers and private sector investors, and reducing the risk of potential costly legal challenges on the road to net zero by 2050.

Today's announcement concludes 2 years of negotiations between 53 contracting parties to modernise the outdated ECT. The treaty provides the framework for international trade and investment on energy matters but was drafted and first published in 1994, in a world when fossil fuels dominated power generation.

The modernised treaty, which is due to be signed in November 2022, will have a much stronger focus on promoting clean, affordable energy. It will protect the UK government's sovereign right to change its own energy systems to reach emissions reductions targets in line with the Paris Agreement.

For the first time, it will ensure legal protections for overseas investments into the UK in green technologies, such as Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage and low-carbon hydrogen production, alongside other renewables. This will help give private investors in these types of technologies increased confidence as the technologies develop.

Energy Minister, Greg Hands, said:

The UK cannot support an outdated treaty which holds back investment in clean energy and puts British taxpayers at increased risk from costly legal challenges.

Our success in negotiating a modernised treaty will boost our move to cheaper and cleaner energy by providing greater confidence to the private sector investors and risk takers we need for this

transition.

The move comes as several EU countries, including Italy, Poland, and Slovenia face costly legal challenges over reducing reliance on fossil fuels and growing their renewable industries, which could cost their taxpayers billions of pounds. The Netherlands is currently facing a challenge over its phase out of coal, which could cost its citizens \$1.4 billion.

Renewables now generate around 40% of the UK's electricity, compared to just 0.3% when the treaty was drafted in 1994. During that time the cost of renewables have dropped significantly, with wind power halving in cost since 2012, while gas prices have increased almost four-fold.

The UK will continue to protect investments in efficient abated gas power – gas power stations with carbon capture technologies attached to them. Other than that, overseas investors in new North Sea oil and gas will not be able to make legal claims against the UK under the treaty from the point that the changes come into effect.

Coal is the only exception, which will lose protections from 1 October 2024 – the date when coal's role in energy generation in the UK will cease.

The UK government remains committed to supporting the North Sea, with homegrown oil and gas playing a key role in the UK's energy security. Ministers are working closely with industry and have secured joint investment of up to £16 billion through the [North Sea Transition Deal](#) to support it in exploiting new technologies like hydrogen production and Carbon Capture Usage and Storage, which gain new protections under the Energy Charter Treaty – helping them cut production emissions by 50% by 2030.

Director of Policy at the Association for Renewable Energy and Clean Technology, Frank Gordon, said:

Any measure that encourages investment in renewable energy and supports the transition to net zero is a welcome development. We need to urgently move to clean, green energy, and renewables are the quickest and cheapest way to achieve this.

We hope this modernised treaty will help boost investment in the sector, both here in the UK and around the world.

The changes to the treaty align with the UK's commitment to reach net zero by 2050, helping step up investment in homegrown clean renewables and gradually phasing out protections for fossil fuels. This includes a pledge to a fivefold increase in offshore wind capacity to up to 50GW by 2030 – enough to power every UK home – along with a doubling of up to 10GW of low-carbon hydrogen production capacity to help power industry and transport, and a fivefold increase in solar capacity by 2035.

Members of the Energy Charter Treaty, including the UK, have been in

negotiations since 2020 to modernise the treaty in line with modern day international treaty practice and to reflect modern energy priorities. [See the final treaty.](#)

The modernised treaty has a stronger climate focus, clarifying that states can regulate to reach emissions reductions targets. It also includes new protections for green and low-carbon technologies, such as Carbon Capture and Storage and hydrogen. It allows ECT members to phase out investment protections for fossil fuels in their own territories in line with respective decarbonisation plans.

The UK has specifically tabled terms which mean new investments in all types of fossil fuels would lose protection under the ECT following entry into force. Existing investments in fossil fuels will lose protection under the ECT ten years after entry into force of the modernised treaty, except for existing investments in coal which would lose protection under the treaty from 1 October 2024. This position includes some exceptions for abated gas, which will play a key role in the UK's net zero transition.

The UK has never faced an investor-state dispute under the ECT that has proceeded to arbitration.

The modernised ECT is in line with modern day international treaty practice, including investment protection provisions which provide greater clarity with regards to the nature of the protections provided under the ECT and the recourse available to investors where protections are not upheld.

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## **UK announces new support for Commonwealth LGBT rights campaigners**

- £2.7 million funding will support civil society organisations working to amend discriminatory laws and practices
- PM confirms funding for Birmingham Pride House at the upcoming Commonwealth Games
- UK has committed £11m to the protection of LGBT rights as Commonwealth chair-in-office

The UK is announcing further funding today [Friday] to support grassroots human rights defenders and advance equality and freedom across the Commonwealth.

Despite welcome progress in recent years, many LGBT people in Commonwealth countries continue to face discrimination and criminalisation.

The £2.7 million package announced by the Prime Minister at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting today will continue work with partners, including

The Commonwealth Equality Network and Kaleidoscope Trust, to encourage the reform of outdated laws and policies that fail to protect all individuals from violence and discrimination.

The Prime Minister will also confirm funding for the Pride programme at next month's Commonwealth Games in the UK, with the project being backed by over £40,000 from Government and £50,000 from the Commonwealth Sport Foundation. Delivered by Pride House Birmingham, the programme will include a Pride House presence at the three main athlete village sites for the first time ever at a Commonwealth Games.

Since taking over as Chair-In-Office 2018, the UK has invested over £11 million in the promotion and protection of LGBT rights across the Commonwealth.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

The Commonwealth is a voluntary grouping of independent and equal nations, but as a collective it has long been a powerful force for good. The values that our members hold dear, from human rights to equality, should apply to everyone in society.

I am immensely proud of the UK's record on LGBT rights – the freedom to love who you want is a core British value and a vital component of any democracy. I hope world will see these values in action at next month's Commonwealth Games.

The majority of the new funding (£2.5m) announced today will go to civil society organisations and human rights defenders working to amend and repeal discriminatory laws and policies, and to safeguard progress in equalities.

A further funding allocation will support a secure data storage system for LGBT refugees from Afghanistan, and fund the UK's continued work alongside the global Equal Rights Coalition as co-chairs.

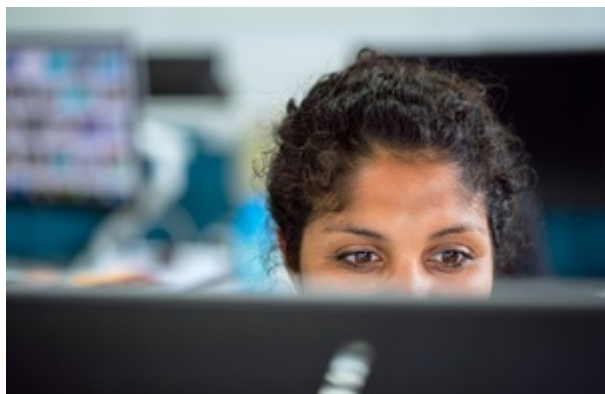
The UK plays a leading role in promoting LGBT rights around the world. Last year, the Prime Minister appointed Lord Herbert as the UK's Special Envoy on LGBT rights, bringing together the Government's domestic work and global leadership on the issue.

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## [Civil news: launch of new excel escape case claim forms](#)

News story

Excel versions of the EC Claim1 forms are available online for use by providers.



We have developed Excel versions of the EC Claim1 forms for providers to use when submitting escape case claims for controlled work matters.

The file format change will allow us to speed up the processing of your submission. But you will find that there is no change to the:

### **Accessibility**

The new standard versions of each escape case claim form include merged cells. So, we are also uploading accessible versions without merged cells. This should assist people who may be using a screen reader.

### **Does this affect processing of work?**

There are no changes to the way your work will be processed. Providers should continue to submit escape case claims in the usual way using the updated forms and relevant supporting documents. The previous Word-based versions of the form have been removed.

### **Mandatory to use new forms**

Using the Excel escape case claim forms will be mandatory for submitting your claims for controlled work from 1 August 2022. We are asking providers to stop using the old Word forms as soon as possible.

### **Further information**

[Escape fee case claim forms](#)

[Escape cases electronic handbook](#) – for guidance on making claims

[mhu-ec@justice.gov.uk](mailto:mhu-ec@justice.gov.uk) – email for advice on using Excel claim forms

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## Men urged to talk about mental health to prevent suicide

- Health and Social Care Secretary today met with bereaved families and key stakeholders, such as Papyrus and James Place, to talk about his personal mission to prevent suicides
- Key initiatives set out to reduce risk of suicide and bolster services, including new National Suicide Prevention Plan
- Men urged to respond to mental health call for evidence as only 19% of respondents so far are male

The Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid set out actions being taken to prevent suicides and urged men to talk about their mental health in a speech at suicide prevention charity Papyrus's headquarters in London today [Friday 24 June 2022].

In his speech, spurred by his own family's experience of suicide and bereavement after the death of his own brother, the Health and Social Care Secretary highlighted the importance of seeking help and the wide-ranging plans already underway to bolster support services as well as new initiatives coming up to reduce suicides.

These include a refreshed suicide prevention plan, better services for bereaved families, and better use of technology to understand the causes of suicide.

Ahead of his speech Mr Javid also met with key stakeholders, such as Papyrus, to discuss suicide prevention and his personal mission to bolster the support available, particularly for men. He also met people with lived experience of suicide including Philip Pirie, Harry Biggs-Davison, Mike McCarthy and Steve Philip whose sons died by suicide, as well as key partners such as: If U Care Share, Samaritans and James Place amongst others.

Men can be reluctant to engage with health and other support services and anyone who needs help is being encouraged to speak to their GP or self-refer through the NHS.

In 2021, there were over 5,000 suicides registered in England. Suicide is the biggest cause of death in men under the age of 50 and around three quarters of deaths from suicides each year are men. On top of this, according to data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the highest rates of suicide in men have been in mixed and white ethnic groups. The Samaritans answer a call for help every 10 seconds, and tragically, around every 90 minutes someone dies from suicide in the UK alone.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

We must treat suicides with the same urgency that we treat any other major killer [...].

I'm determined to make a difference on this issue [...] and one of the ways we'll do this is by publishing a new 10-year suicide prevention plan.

[...]This is something that is deeply personal to me – there are too many families that are left incomplete, and too much potential has gone unfulfilled.

Mr Javid outlined steps the government is taking to engage communities at greatest risk, focusing on socioeconomic and regional disparities, improving services and utilising new technologies.

He announced that work would be undertaken with experts to standardise safety guidance for front-line professionals working with at risk people to ensure best practice and there would be access to suicide prevention training for all MPs, parliamentary staff, and frontline government workers to ensure they are equipped with the skills to interact with people in crisis.

Most people who have been bereaved by suicide within their immediate family will be contacted by bereavement services proactively within days of a referral to offer support, removing the onus from the bereaved at their time of grief.

As well as this, he outlined the greater use of apps and online services and better data collection, including rolling out a national suspected suicide surveillance system early next year which looks at risk patterns and will enable better mitigation methods. This will enable a better understanding of tackling complex causes of suicide, including online through the Online Safety Bill and ensuring upcoming legislation adapts to rapidly evolving challenges.

He said:

The Online Safety Bill gives us a once in a generation opportunity to tackle this issue. [...]I will also work jointly across government to look at both upcoming and current legislation to make sure it meets the rapidly evolving challenges that we face.

Because when it comes to the encouragement of suicide we are currently relying on legislation that was primarily created long before the digital age.

He talked about the new, long-term Suicide Prevention Plan and how important it is that this is shaped by views and experiences of the public, professionals and people with lived experience. He also highlighted how the

government is bolstering voluntary and community suicide prevention services through £5 million of funding in 2021/22 and reiterated the improvement to support services to ensure by 2023-24 anyone in the country can dial NHS 111 to reach their local NHS mental health team and access around the clock support. This would make England one of the first countries in the world to have this offer.

Initially launching the [call for evidence](#) on 12 April, the Health Secretary also called specifically on men to contribute their views on what can be improved within current services to help inform a new 10-year mental health plan as well as a refreshed National Suicide Prevention Plan.

Through its call for evidence, the government is seeking views on what can be improved within the current service, looking for representation across all ages, genders, and backgrounds, particularly in light of the pandemic which has led to record levels of people seeking treatment. Men in particular are urged to respond as only 19% of respondents so far are male.

He urged:

I want to hear views from far and wide about how to shape this work and the roundtable that I chaired here earlier this morning was so illuminating.

I heard heart-breaking tales of love and loss but also inspirational stories of the work being done to divert people from this painful path, including of course here at Papyrus.

I am determined to make a difference on this issue.

The 10-year plan will help tackle the Covid backlogs, building on the NHS Long Term plan and forms part of the government's wider commitments to Build Back Fairer, working towards putting mental health on a level footing with physical health, and forms a key part of the commitments to address health disparities across the country and to improve the mental wellbeing of the nation by 2030.

To respond to the call for evidence visit [www.gov.uk/talkmentalhealth](http://www.gov.uk/talkmentalhealth)

Background

- The Health and Social Care Secretary's speech will be available on gov.uk shortly.
- Mental health [Call for Evidence](#) closes on 7 July.
- Resources and helpful tools can be found on [Every Mind Matters](#).



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# Charity Commission announces inquiry into Muffin Pug Rescue

Press release

The Charity Commission has opened a statutory inquiry into Muffin Pug Rescue, over concerns about potential misconduct and/or mismanagement at the charity.



The charity was established to relieve the suffering of pugs through re-homing them and providing care, protection and treatment where necessary.

The Commission has previously issued the trustees with advice and guidance on submitting the charity's accounts but they have repeatedly failed to comply with the legal requirement to do so for the past 5 years.

An analysis by the Commission of the charity's bank statements identified concerns that some funds may not have been spent in furtherance of the charity's purposes.

The trustees' repeated failure in their legal duty to submit the charity's accounts and the concerns about spending will now be investigated within the framework of a statutory inquiry. The inquiry will examine the administration, governance and management of the charity and in particular:

- The trustees' compliance with legal obligations for the content, preparation and filing of the charity's accounts and other information or returns
- The possible misappropriation and/or misapplication of the charity's funds

The Commission may extend the scope of the inquiry if additional issues emerge.

It is the Commission's policy, after it has concluded an inquiry, to publish a report detailing what issues the inquiry looked at, what actions were

undertaken as part of the inquiry and what the outcomes were.

Reports of previous inquiries are available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

**ENDS**

**Notes to editors:**

1. The Charity Commission is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales. Its purpose is to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and strengthen society.

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