

[News story: Spanish state visit 2017](#)

King Felipe and Queen Letizia of Spain are in the UK on the first official Spanish state visit in more than 30 years.

Their Majesties the King and Queen of Spain have started their 3-day state visit to the United Kingdom today, 12 July, at the invitation of Her Majesty the Queen.

This will be the first state visit to the UK by King Felipe and Queen Letizia. The last state visit from Spain was by King Juan Carlos I and Queen Sofia in 1986.

The visit will celebrate the very close royal, historic, cultural and commercial ties between our 2 countries.

Foreign Secretary [Boris Johnson](#) welcomes the King and Queen of Spain to the UK:

[Boris Johnson welcome for the Spanish state visit](#)

The UK and Spain are close allies: partners in NATO, the UN, G7 and G20 among numerous international organisations. We continue to co-operate in the European Union, and once the UK leaves the EU we want to strengthen our strong and constructive UK-Spain bilateral relationship.

The UK and Spain are major business partners. Spain is the 10th largest export market for UK companies, the UK exports more to Spain than India and Brazil combined.

British Ambassador to Spain [Simon Manley](#) talks about the close ties between our 2 countries:

[Simon Manley talks about Spanish state visit](#)

[Press release: Businesses to access millions in government export support through partnership with high street banks](#)

Secretary of State for the Department for International Trade, Liam Fox, has

today announced that UKEF will partner with five of the UK's biggest banks to deliver government-backed financial support to exporters more quickly and efficiently.

Partnering with Barclays, HSBC, Lloyds Banking Group, RBS/NatWest and Santander, UKEF will also be able to extend its support to supply chain companies of UK exporters, significantly increasing the number of businesses able to access UKEF-backed trade finance.

As a result, smaller companies that support big UK exporters will be able to secure government-backed financing to deliver products and services and benefit from their clients' international business.

Secretary of State for International Trade, Liam Fox, said:

As an international economic department, this new partnership shows the Department for International Trade's commitment to help small businesses seize the global demand for British exports. Providing easily accessible finance, backed by UKEF's guarantee, will lift a common barrier to exporting. Providing that finance to suppliers as well as exporters means spreading the benefits of global trade, supporting more jobs and growth for companies large and small.

Jeff Longhurst, UK Finance Head of Commercial, added:

The industry is committed to making it easier for UK exporters to access finance and UK Finance has worked closely with lenders and UKEF to make this process simpler. With nearly 70% of international SMEs planning to grow in the next 12 months, today's announcement is a boost for both SMEs and the wider economy, helping support businesses across the country.

Through this new model, banks will be able to provide export-related trade finance, for example working capital loans and bonds required by overseas buyers, to support their SME customers directly, and with UKEF's guarantee in place should it be needed.

At the same time, UKEF will make trade finance support directly available to direct suppliers supporting UK exporters, in a major enhancement to its existing offer. This will allow thousands of companies in manufacturers' and service providers' supply chains to access contract bonds and working capital loans with the government's guarantee.

All of this is being delivered to banks through a new and secure digital platform to help ensure the quickest response times and most efficient customer experience.

John Mahon, Head of Barclays Corporate Banking, said:

Barclays' partnership with UKEF is an important part of our trade and working capital strategy, and this initiative will allow us to deliver more comprehensive support to our clients. Delegated authority will make accessing UKEF guarantees simpler for many businesses and will help companies we work with grow more quickly. Both exporters and companies involved in international trade through supply chains will benefit, and we look forward to further collaborating with UKEF and our colleagues across the industry to find more new and innovative ways to help UK businesses take full advantage of export opportunities.

Ian Tandy, Head of Global Trade and Receivables Finance at HSBC, added:

HSBC supports many of the UK's SMEs so we welcome any initiatives designed to help our customers. We look forward to working closely with UKEF and continuing to support the UK's hard working, creative and inspiring SMEs.

Steve Everett, Head of Propositions & Product for Lloyds Bank, Global Transaction Banking, added:

In line with our helping Britain prosper commitment, the Government and Lloyds Banking Group are working closely to deliver even more comprehensive and streamlined support for our customers to trade internationally.

Alison Rose, CEO, Commercial and Private Banking at NatWest welcomed the initiative, saying:

We're delighted to continue our partnership with UK Export Finance, working to support businesses that export. As part of our mission to become a simpler bank for our customers, we are committed to making it as easy as possible for all UK businesses to access export finance whenever it is required.

Mike Ellwood, Managing Director, Santander Corporate & Commercial, added:

We want to help businesses prosper and for many, going international will help them do just that. We're passionate about connecting up our five million SME customers around the globe, and enabling them to make the most of the exporting opportunities that exist. SMEs make up the majority of British business, yet four in five of them do not export. We are fully supportive of the objectives of UKEF, specifically the delegation and digital projects which are aimed at making it easier for SMEs to access

finance and making that process more efficient.

Since UKEF's trade finance products were launched in 2011, nearly 300 companies have benefited from nearly £500 million in support for several billion pounds worth of overseas contracts. This development follows a partnership agreement between the Department for International Trade and the five banks signed in July 2016.

Notes to editors

1. [UK Export Finance](#) is the UK's export credit agency and a government department, working alongside the Department for International Trade as an integral part of its strategy and operations.
2. It exists to ensure that no viable UK export should fail for want of finance or insurance from the private market. It provides finance and insurance to help exporters win, fulfil and ensure they get paid for export contracts.
3. Sectors in which UKEF has supported exports include: manufacturing, construction, oil and gas, mining and metals, petrochemicals, telecommunications, and transport.
4. UKEF has a regional network of [24 export finance managers](#) supporting export businesses.
5. UKEF supports exporters with a range of products that include:
 - Bond insurance policy
 - Bond support scheme
 - Buyer & supplier credit financing facility
 - Direct lending facility
 - Export insurance policy
 - Export refinancing facility
 - Export working capital scheme
 - Letter of credit guarantee scheme

[News story: Government announces further funding to tackle gang related](#)

violence

This funding will allow the expansion of local area reviews and targeted support offered as part of the government's ongoing commitment to Ending Gang Violence and Exploitation (EGVE).

Sarah Newton, Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability said:

Gang related violence devastates lives and I am pleased to announce further funding to tackle these appalling crimes.

It's often the young and most vulnerable in our society who become ensnared in gang activity having been preyed upon by gang members.

This government is determined to do all we can to protect them by ending this cycle of exploitation and the crimes that inevitably go alongside it.

The £99,000 funding for 2017/18 was announced by the minister at a government forum held to bring partners – including from the police and key charities – together to tackle the issue of gangs.

It will enable a further 15 local area reviews to be conducted in regions who are experiencing gang related issues to assess their resilience and help address the issues they face.

Once the areas who will be reviewed are selected, an expert team will help local authorities and their partners map gang problems in their area, review how effectively they deal with it, and make recommendations to help improve their response.

Local areas will also be able to benefit from tailored follow on support to help them implement the suggested changes and do more to tackle the issue of gangs. This could include developing multi-agency action plans to tackle county lines, training and support, and help to develop relevant town and city centre safeguarding measures.

The funding will also support several regional strategic reviews to identify a common framework that the police, Police and Crime Commissioners and partners can agree to effectively tackle the damage caused by county lines gangs.

This further funding follows a number of measures taken by the government to reduce gang activity. This includes an amendment to the [Digital Economy Bill](#) to significantly disrupt drugs gangs by compelling communications providers to disconnect a mobile, SIM card or phone number where it can be proven they are being used in connection with drug offences. This will also protect children and vulnerable people who are being exploited as couriers moving drugs and money between suburban areas, market and coastal towns and their

urban hub.

The government has also banned the sale of so-called '[zombie knives](#)' and major retailers have signed up to a voluntary agreement to prevent the underage sale of knives.

This government is committed to providing meaningful alternatives to gangs, such as education, training and employment to end the detrimental impact they have on our society.

[Press release: Churches Conservation Trust appointments: Graham Donaldson and Susan Wilkinson](#)

The Queen has approved that Graham William Donaldson and Susan Wilkinson, may be appointed as Members of the [Churches Conservation Trust](#) for a period of three years from 1 July 2017.

Notes for Editors

Born and raised in Western Canada, Graham William Donaldson moved to the UK to read Theology at the University of Wales. Following an early charity-sector career in property management with the Diocese of Gloucester he became a founding shareholder, now Group Director and Co-Chairman of Mainstay Group, gaining a wealth of experience in managing large teams delivering industry-leading customer service and innovations. Having led successful joint venture projects, most notably with the Pemberstone Group in acquiring residential freeholds between 2006-2011, Graham recently spearheaded Mainstay's new division delivering high-end management solutions for their most prestigious instructions, and continues to be heavily involved in providing residential asset management to some of the UK's largest pension funds in the ground rent and private rented residential sectors.

Graham is delighted to be involved with Churches Conservation Trust, bringing together his love for churches, architecture and entrepreneurship.

He is married with four children and lives in London and Gloucestershire

Sue was an executive board director at the National Trust until the end of 2016 with responsibility for leading on membership, fundraising, volunteering and participation; she was also the Trust's executive lead on tourism. Sue is currently a trustee of the Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich and the Medical Research Foundation. She is a board director of the Association of Leading Visitor Attractions (ALVA) and chair of the Canal & River Trust Living Waterways Awards. Previously she served on the Visit England Board and as a

trustee of the Institute of Fundraising.

News story: Self-service approach reduces fees for some low-risk licences

The MMO has introduced an automated process for obtaining permission to carry out activities which are a low risk to the marine environment. Applicants are now able to self-assess their proposals against specific criteria using a new assistance tool. Where projects qualify they can complete an online form and instantly get a licence for their activity.

The new self-service scheme, which covers six categories of activity, has also enabled the MMO to reduce the associated cost for such applications from £175 to £50.

Some of the activities which may qualify for the new scheme are:

- Burial at sea
- Maintenance of existing structures and assets
- Minor removals
- Non-navigational clearance dredging
- Beach maintenance activities
- Deposit of markers

Continued improvement of marine licensing processes

Where people or organisations want to undertake activities in the marine area they may need prior permission (a 'marine licence') from the Marine Management Organisation under the Marine and Coastal Access Act 2009. Such activities [may include construction, dredging, deposits or removal.](#)

The MMO is continuing to enhance the marine licensing process to ensure that it is as efficient as possible, maximises value for money and proportionately manages risks to the marine environment.

It launched a fast-track scheme for some marine licence applications in 2013, which it extended in 2014. The MMO has carried out a further review of this process and the activities eligible for it. It has identified that a number of activities covered by the scheme were sufficiently consistent in nature and extent that they could be considered low risk to the marine environment and be suitable for self-service.

Proportionate approach to regulation

The MMO is able to lower the fee for such licences by removing the need for manual consideration by its case officers. Instead it has carried out risk-assessment work for the relevant activities in advance. As a result applicants who meet self-service criteria will be provided with a licence containing pre-determined standard conditions relevant to the activity selected.

The MMO is supporting applicants to assess their circumstances against self-service criteria by adding a function to its free online Geographical Information System (GIS). This tool helps applicants to understand any sensitivity associated with the location of their proposed activity and determine whether the self-service criterion is met.

More information about and guidance on the activities eligible for self-service processing is available in the [marine licensing section](#).