

GPA launches competition for property and financial services

Press release

GPA has launched a competition to appoint a new strategic partner for property and financial services.



London, Old Admiralty Building

The Government Property Agency (GPA) has launched a competition to appoint a new strategic partner for property and financial services. The new property partner contract is aligned to the GPA's current and future needs and will deliver improved tax-payer value, enhanced satisfaction across GPA's clients and social value.

The new contract will be for an initial three-year term, with the option to extend for up to an additional four years. It will be procured via the Crown Commercial Services Estates Management Services framework (RM 6168).

Service requirements include outstanding client satisfaction, high quality data provision, a commitment to Net Zero and improvements in corporate real estate management. The new strategic supplier will be a partner in GPA's continued growth and will deliver high quality property and financial management services.

Alan Whitelaw, Property Director at the GPA said: "We have taken lessons learnt from our previous contracts as well as feedback from the market to improve how we procure services.

"We want to attract best-in-class service providers to ensure we continue to deliver a transformed, shared, sustainable and value for money government estate which supports civil servants to work productively in every nation and region of the UK."

The GPA is an Executive Agency of the Cabinet Office, and is the delivery body of the Government's property strategy for its office and warehouse

portfolios. It plays a crucial role in delivering the property elements of the Government's Levelling Up agenda, Net Zero initiative and the Civil Service Reform. This includes our Whitehall Campus, Government Hubs and Smarter Working programmes.

Find out more about the [Government Property Agency here](#).

Media enquiries: contact the Communications Team at the GPA on comms@gpa.gov.uk

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UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK launches today in Scotland

- UNBOXED: Creativity in the UK kicks off today in Paisley, Scotland, as part of a series of events including the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, and Coventry's year as the UK City of Culture that will bring the country together this year
- About Us is the first of ten major multi-site and digital creative projects commissioned as part of UNBOXED, an entirely free UK-wide programme that runs until October
- Paisley Abbey is being turned into a giant artwork combining science, art and technology for a spectacular live experience

About Us is the first of ten groundbreaking creative projects commissioned as part of UNBOXED, a once-in-a-lifetime celebration of creativity. Audiences will experience an awe-inspiring multimedia event that uses cutting-edge projection mapping, animation, music, poetry and live performance to celebrate our place in the universe and the connections between us.

The show has been created by 59 Productions, the award-winning video artists behind the London 2012 Olympic Games Opening Ceremony; Stemettes, the social enterprise supporting young women and non-binary people into STEM careers; and The Poetry Society. It also boasts award-winning composer and musician Nitin Sawhney CBE who has composed the original score, which will be performed as part of the live shows by local choirs in each location. In Paisley, the show features the Paisley Philharmonic Choir, The City of Glasgow Chorus and Strathclyde University Chamber Choir.

Lord Parkinson, Minister for Arts said:

I'm delighted this fantastic series of events is kicking off today in the historic town of Paisley. This opening performance will take people through an awe-inspiring trip through world history.

UNBOXED is about bringing people from across the UK together, and forms part of a fantastic year of creativity, renewal and excitement alongside Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, the Birmingham Commonwealth Games.

What's on in Paisley

Evening shows in Paisley will last 25 minutes and run several times each night. They include children and young people's winning entries from the About Us nationwide poetry and Scratch animation competition, on the theme of 'connectivity and the universe'.

In addition, from 10am to 5pm each day, pop-up multimedia installations will showcase the boundless creativity of local children and young people, with poems and Scratch animations created in school workshops.

Ten UK-wide projects

[About Us](#) is being presented in five cities, with night-time projections onto landmark buildings in Paisley before it moves on to Derry-Londonderry (15-21 March), Caernarfon (30 March-5 April), Luton (14-20 April) and Hull (30 April – 6 May), with local participation at each location.

The ten projects bring together science, technology, engineering, arts and maths (STEAM) with hundreds of free events and activities taking place throughout England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and online. UNBOXED can be experienced across 80 live sites across the country, as well as digital and broadcast engagement so get involved wherever you are.

Together, they say something about who we are, reflecting on our past, our present, and ideas for our shared futures, covering a range of subjects, from growing and sustainability, to identity and community.

In a major year for the UK, and as we begin to emerge from the pandemic, UNBOXED is putting creativity front and centre through collaboration across STEAM sectors, forging skills and development opportunities for young creatives. It has provided hundreds of people with employment to develop the ten projects.

There are lots of ways for the public to get involved and to help co-create the commissions. Millions of young people across the UK will benefit from a unique and ambitious learning programme that puts creativity at the heart of experience-based teaching. The UNBOXED Learning Programme aims to inspire young people aged 4 to 19 through a mix of learning opportunities drawn from

ten major creative projects that have been developed through STEAM.

UNBOXED is funded and supported by the four governments of the UK and is commissioned and delivered in partnership with Belfast City Council, Creative Wales and EventScotland.

The UNBOXED projects open throughout the year with activity taking place across the UK until October 2022. The other nine commissions are:

- [Dandelion](#), commissioned by EventScotland, a Scotland-wide project inspired by the global 'grow-your-own' movement, featuring Unexpected Gardens, vertical farms, free music festivals and plant giveaways that reimagines harvest for the 21st century
- [Dreamachine](#), presented in the UK's capital cities, an artwork experienced with your eyes closed that unlocks the power of the human mind
- [GALWAD: A Story from our Future](#), a transmedia experience that sees Wales propelled thirty years into the future, commissioned by CreativeWales;
- [Green Space Dark Skies](#), with 20,000 'Lumenators' creating outdoor artworks in 20 of the UK's National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- [Our Place in Space](#), a 10km sculpture trail scale model of the solar system designed by artist Oliver Jeffers including an interactive augmented reality app, commissioned by Belfast City Council
- [PoliNations](#) will see giant fabricated trees and thousands of plants take over the centre of Birmingham, creating a colourful canopy for a festival of live performance including spoken word, music and drag
- [SEE MONSTER](#), a decommissioned North Sea offshore platform in Weston-super-Mare transformed into one of the UK's largest public artworks
- [StoryTrails](#), which uses new developments in 3D internet technology and augmented and virtual reality to reveal the hidden and forgotten histories across 15 UK towns and cities and
- [Tour de Moon](#), a festival of nightlife and countercultures inspired by and created in collaboration with the Moon is travelling in convoy around England.

Find out more

[New online system launched for ongoing provision of free PPE to continue protecting our workforce and](#)

communities

- Follows [previous announcement](#) on the extension of free COVID-19 PPE until the end of March 2023
- Through the [previous PPE Portal](#), more than 6 billion items have been distributed to over 54,000 health, care and public sector providers in England to date

A new [online platform](#) to order personal protective equipment (PPE) in England has been launched.

The new system builds on user feedback to improve the experience of those using the site.

There is an ongoing migration period from the previous system to the new platform, and from April 4 2022, all customers will be automatically redirected to the new PPE Portal from the previous site. The new platform will be managed by NHS Supply Chain.

During the soft launch of the new portal, the Department carried out a survey, and received 446 responses. A total of 96% of respondents stated they were either “very satisfied” (76%) or “satisfied” (20%) with the new website. Also, 97% stated they were either “very confident” (85%) or “confident” (12%) when using the new platform.

The PPE Portal will serve a range of health, care and public sector providers including GPs, adult social care, dentists, orthodontists, community pharmacies, optometrists, children’s social care providers, drug and alcohol services, other government departments, local authorities, independent sector providers who carry out NHS work, and more. This will cover millions of staff, patients, clients and service users, in England.

Last month, it was announced that following a public consultation, NHS trusts, primary care and adult social care providers will continue to receive COVID-19 PPE free of charge until 31 March 2023 or until infection prevention and control (IPC) guidance is withdrawn or significantly amended. This is to ensure staff and their patients are protected as we learn to live with COVID-19.

The new platform cements the Department’s commitment to continuous improvement of this critical service, including considerations around product offerings and who is eligible to use it.

Some of the key benefits of the new platform are a more user-friendly site that makes it easier to place orders, view order limits and track deliveries, and, where needed, the capability for responding to and mitigating against evolving situations and potential future health crises.

Eligible users have been emailed about their transfer to the new platform and communication will continue over the coming weeks.

Those who have any questions regarding the migration can contact the customer services team on 0800 876 6802, which is available 7:00am to 7:00pm, 7 days a week. Users can also raise queries directly through the new platform.

[Reinforcing our support to the Ukrainian people as they face an urgent humanitarian crisis](#)

Thank you, Mr President, and I start by thanking our briefers Filippo Grandi and Martin Griffiths.

As a result of President Putin's decision to launch a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, a country of 44 million people is now on the brink of humanitarian catastrophe.

Whatever my Russian colleague claims, the world can see Russia's indiscriminate attacks against men, women and children across Ukraine, and its disregard for international humanitarian law.

Missiles have rained down on Kharkiv, with cluster munitions hitting residential areas and injuring residents. Disruption to supply chains has caused food shortages in Kramatorsk.

The reckless bombing of an oil depot in Vasylkiv, has unleashed toxic fumes in nearby communities.

Violence in Kyiv has forced people to seek refuge underground, with many thousands, including the elderly and disabled, unable to evacuate.

And as we've heard from the UN, today, hundreds of civilians have been killed as a result of the Russian invasion.

My Russian colleague may try to paint the UN's reporting as hysteria.

Just as they said it was Western hysteria to warn of their impending invasion.

But let's look at the facts: half a million people have already fled to Poland, Hungary, Romania, Moldova, Slovakia and other countries. 7 million people have been displaced and that figure, as the High Commissioner told us, is rising exponentially.

UN agencies and humanitarian partners have been forced to suspend operations.

In this moment, as the High Commissioner said, of urgent need, the situation that the agencies face is impossible.

The UK stands with the Ukrainian people during their time of need.

Yesterday, Boris Johnson, the UK Prime Minister, announced \$54 million in aid to help our Ukrainian friends.

This latest assistance package brings the total amount of UK Government aid pledged to Ukraine this year to \$190 million.

Last week, Prime Minister Johnson also announced the UK would guarantee up to \$500 million of loans to Ukraine through the Multilateral Development Banks.

The UK will also participate in tomorrow's UN appeal.

UK Government experts have also deployed to the region to provide humanitarian support to those fleeing violence in Ukraine.

But colleagues,

We know that a humanitarian response is not enough to save the Ukrainian people from the disaster that Russia is inflicting on them.

So our message today is simple:

Once again, for the sake of humanity, we call on President Putin to stop this war and withdraw his forces from Ukraine.

Thank you.

[Government to crack down on unregulated cosmetic procedures](#)

- Amendment to Health and Care Bill will give the Health Secretary powers to introduce a licence for non-surgical cosmetic procedures such as Botox and fillers
- Scope and details of regulations to be determined via public consultation
- Move follows ban on procedures for cosmetic purposes on under 18s in England

The public will be protected against botched Botox and fillers, as the government confirms its intention to introduce a licensing regime for non-surgical cosmetic procedures.

An amendment to the Health and Care Bill tabled tomorrow (Tuesday 1 March)

would give the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care the power to introduce a licensing regime for Botox and fillers, the scope and details of which will be determined via extensive engagement including a public consultation.

Although the majority of the aesthetics industry shows good practice when it comes to patient safety, this step will ensure consistent standards and protect individuals from those without licences, including from the potentially harmful physical and mental impacts of poorly performed cosmetic procedures.

It is the latest move by the government to safeguard those who access non-surgical cosmetic treatments and follows on from new legislation making it illegal to administer such treatments to under 18s, and banning adverts on all forms of media including social media, influencer advertising and traditional advertising for cosmetic procedures which target under 18s.

Health and Social Care Secretary Sajid Javid said:

While most of those in the aesthetics industry follow good practice when it comes to patient safety, far too many people have been left emotionally and physically scarred after botched cosmetic procedures.

I am committed to protecting patient safety by making it an offence for someone to perform these cosmetic procedures without a licence.

We're doing all we can to protect patients from potential harm, but I urge anyone considering a cosmetic procedure to take the time to think about the impact on both their physical and mental health and ensure they are using a reputable, safe and qualified practitioner.

Minister for Patient Safety Maria Caulfield said:

The spread of images on social media has contributed to an increase in demand for cosmetic procedures such as Botox and fillers. While these can be administered safely, we are seeing an unacceptable rise in people being left physically and mentally scarred from poorly performed procedures.

Today's amendment is the next step on the road to effective regulation of non-surgical cosmetic procedures in England.

The licensing scheme will introduce consistent standards that individuals carrying out non-surgical cosmetic procedures will have to meet, as well as hygiene and safety standards for premises.

It will focus on those cosmetic procedures which, if improperly performed, have the potential to cause harm such as Botox and fillers.

This amendment in addition to ongoing work with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency on the potential to bring certain devices, such as dermal fillers without a medical purpose, in scope of medical device regulations. The government is currently analysing responses from a public consultation which ran to 25 November 2021 and will publish a formal response in due course.

Further details on a public consultation will be set out in due course.