

# News story: New indemnity scheme for general practice introduced

GPs will benefit from comprehensive indemnity cover for future NHS clinical negligence claims under a new government-backed scheme.

The [Clinical Negligence Scheme for General Practice](#) is designed to provide more stable and affordable indemnity cover for GPs. Cover will be provided automatically and at no charge to GPs.

The scheme will provide cover for all GPs and their practice teams for clinical negligence incidents, relating to provision of NHS primary medical services, occurring from 1 April 2019.

The scheme will be administered by [NHS Resolution](#) on behalf of the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care. It will allow the government to have greater oversight of costs and claims.

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has also committed to put an existing liabilities scheme (ELS) in place subject to reaching agreement with the medical defence organisations. This would cover claims for historical NHS clinical negligence liabilities.

As part of this commitment, DHSC has agreed commercial terms with the Medical Protection Society (MPS) covering NHS clinical negligence claims made against their GP members in respect of liabilities arising before 1 April 2019.

NHS Resolution will have oversight of the arrangements for the new scheme and, for an interim period, claims handling will be retained by the MPS. Discussions are ongoing with other medical defence organisations.

The introduction of the scheme delivers an important part of the GP contract for 2019 to 2020. The extra support for GPs follows commitments which made primary care central to the [NHS Long Term Plan](#). It will help improve the recruitment and retention of GPs.

The Long Term Plan aims to bring up to 20,000 extra staff into general practice by 2023 to 2024, including pharmacists and social prescribing link workers. This would free up GPs to spend more time with patients who need them most.

Minister of State for Care, Caroline Dinenage, said:

GPs are the bedrock of the NHS and they are at the heart of delivering the Long Term Plan.

The launch of a new government-backed scheme as part of a landmark new contract demonstrates our clear commitment to supporting a sustainable future for general practice.

This new scheme will bring significant benefits to general practice staff, bringing arrangements in line with those for NHS trusts so GPs and their staff can focus on continuing to provide excellent care to patients, knowing they have comprehensive cover in place.

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## **News story: New initiatives introduced to support modern service life**

These new measures, including new flexible working arrangements, expanded accommodation options and new co-habitation rules are designed to modernise the armed forces and ensure the military remains a competitive employer that meets the changing needs and expectations of service personnel and their families.

As of today (April 1st) regular personnel can apply for Flexible Service, allowing them to work part-time for a defined period, and giving them the option to restrict the amount of time they would spend away from their home and their families, such as by limiting their deployability.

A new pilot scheme is to be launched that will allow service personnel more choice in their accommodation, allowing them to rent homes off base, potentially with partners, friends, or military colleagues, rather than living on site.

Finally, new policy is being introduced to allow couples in long-term relationships, including same sex couples, to live together in surplus Service Family Accommodation (SFA), subject to availability. Currently only married couples, those in civil partnerships, and those with legally dependent children can live in SFA.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

It's hugely important that the armed forces keep pace with modern society, creating a more attractive option to live, work and bring up a family.

By making our policies fairer and more flexible, we will help retain our diverse and talented workforce and give them greater freedom as they carry out their service.

Minister for Defence People and Veterans Tobias Ellwood said:

Personnel have told us that they want more flexible working

arrangements and so I'm delighted these measures are now in place.

This new package of modern measures will help us retain personnel who want a more flexible approach to how they live, work and serve.

## **Flexible Service**

The new legislation means personnel can apply to temporarily work part-time and restrict their separation from their home-base, should their personal circumstances change – whether it's to care for young children or elderly relatives, or to embark on training or further education. It will also improve work life balance, and ensure the military is able to cater for an increasingly diverse work force. The operational capability of the armed forces will still come first, and will be the most important consideration when assessing all applications.

Surveys show that the impact of a military career on families and personal lives is the most important factor that might influence personnel to leave service, which is why the new measures aim to retain those with invaluable training and experience.

## **Future Accommodation Model**

From September 2019, the new pilot for the Future Accommodation Model (FAM) will be rolled out to three military bases, starting with HMNB Clyde. The pilot, which will last for approximately three years, will also be established at Aldershot Garrison and RAF Wittering in 2020, ensuring the new policy is keeping pace with changing requirements and 21st century expectations, while also gathering evidence to inform future decisions.

The FAM will provide more choice to service personnel regarding where and with whom they live, making use of the private rental sector, alongside existing options. This means personnel will be able to live near their children's school or their partner's work place, if they choose, and their rent will be in broadly the same as the equivalent type of SFA.

Personnel are already supported by the Forces Help to Buy scheme which offers the opportunity to borrow up to 50% of their salary for a deposit, interest free. Currently, nearly 17,000 personnel have benefited from some £255m of loans.

Under FAM, entitlement to SFA will no longer be allocated according to the rank of individuals, but will instead focus on the size of the family, promoting fairness and ensuring homes are fit for purpose.

## **Cohabitation**

The MOD has taken steps to broaden access to Service Family Accommodation (SFA) by amending current accommodation policy. From today, all service personnel, who have more than four years' service in the armed forces and who are in a long-term relationship or have residential responsibility for a

child will be able to apply to live together in surplus SFA at all UK bases where properties are available. This important change in policy to allow cohabitation will benefit all services and all ranks.

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## News story: Level playing field for all operators is key aim of traffic commissioners

Sarah Bell, the London and South East Traffic Commissioner, has used the actions of two bus companies to highlight the importance of providing a level playing field for all operators.

At the conclusion of a public inquiry last month, she said the commissioners' role is protect operators when fair competition is compromised.

She added that failing to complete forms and ignoring guidance, as the two operators had, was a gross breach of trust.

"Traffic commissioners understand that we live in challenging times. We have done for years," Miss Bell remarked.

"But we regulate for the benefit of all operators including those suffering the same operating challenges.

"Margins are tight, but if you choose to operate buses, coaches or lorries, then there are rules to be met and they are there to make sure that standards are maintained for public safety."

Forms and guidance, Miss Bell pointed out, aren't just administrative paperwork. They are the "bedrock" on which commissioners ensure road safety and fair competition.

"It is essential not just because there is an operator's licence – all directors of companies across Great Britain have a statutory duty to exercise independent judgement, skill, care and diligence."

The two firms, Renown Transport Services Limited and Eastbourne Coachways Limited, were criticised by the Traffic Commissioner for failing to disclose links between their businesses ahead of a pre-pack sale.

Renown entered financial difficulties and tried to save parts of the firm, with a view to resurrecting it via Eastbourne Coachways. This left HMRC, trade creditors and some financial institutions out of pocket.

Before all of this was disclosed, Eastbourne Coachways had applied to the Traffic Commissioner's Office to get special permission to run bus services

at short notice. This followed Renown cancelling its services without giving legal notice.

Operators are required to give certain periods of notice to local authorities and the Traffic Commissioner's Office before they can start, change or stop running a bus service.

Miss Bell told both companies their actions were "not how we do things". She added that the regulations, legislation and processes are very clearly set out in guidance and on the relevant forms.

Concluding that the firms had "avoided a whole process", the Commissioner said she couldn't step back from revoking the licences held by both companies and noted compliant bus operators are entitled to protection.

Miss Bell also remarked on the importance of local authority transport officers better understanding the role of traffic commissioners and giving greater consideration to the fair competition element when supporting applications by bus operators who want permission to run services at short notice.

#### Decisions

The public inquiry was held on 13 March 2019.

The operator's licence held by Renown Transport Services Limited was revoked with immediate effect.

The operator's licence held by Eastbourne Coachways Limited will be revoked from 23:45 on 24 July. Until that time, the licence will be reduced from 16 to 8 vehicles.

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## **Press release: £60 million search begins for the next Peppa Pig, Art Attack and Desert Island Discs**

The hunt for the next big thing in radio and young people's television has begun, as applications opened today for a share of a Government financed £60 million fund set up to provide a boost to the UK's Radio and Television sector.

Over the past decade the output of children's television from public service broadcasters (PSBs) in the UK has been in decline, with them spending roughly 40% less than they did in 2006.

As a result a significant amount of programming on children's channels now

consist of repeats. [The Young Audiences Content Fund](#) (YACF), being administered by the British Film Institute (BFI), will aim to help reverse that trend and is the first of its kind to specifically focus on television for young people under the age of 18.

The [Audio Content Fund](#) (ACF) will be used to produce distinctive, public service radio programming that is traditionally more difficult to support on a commercial basis. This includes programmes such as documentaries, comedy, drama and light entertainment.

Both funds will also provide a boost to indigenous UK languages programming such as Welsh and Gaelic, with an aim to invest five per cent of the total fund on this.

Minister for Digital and Creative Industries Margot James said:

Young people in the UK deserve high quality content that entertains, informs and reflects their experiences growing up across the country today.

The UK's broadcast sectors reach hundreds of millions of people of all ages around the globe and are a tremendous success story that we are justifiably proud of. This innovative project is an integral part of our ongoing support for the UK's vibrant media sector which we want to see go from strength to strength.

Both the YACF and the ACF will bring a positive injection of investment to their sectors, which will help create new avenues for creators of original content and bring new voices to the market.

Sam Bailey, Managing Director of the Audio Content Fund, said:

We're really excited to start receiving bids for the Audio Content Fund. It's going to be fascinating to see the great ideas the audio production sector has to offer, and where the fund can make a difference on the UK's commercial and community radio stations.

It's clear that the ACF is going to develop creative collaboration between sections of our community that may not otherwise have the opportunity to work together, and we're looking forward to hearing innovative radio that gives a platform to new and diverse voices around the UK.

Jackie Edwards, Head of the Young Audiences Content Fund at the BFI, said:

It is such a thrill to throw the Fund doors open, and a privilege to help support the development and production of brilliant, innovative television programmes that uniquely reflect the lives of

children across the UK. Thanks to investment from the DCMS, this Fund has the power to create a real cultural impact in this country, fostering creativity, helping grow and preserve the Public Service Broadcast landscape and best of all, creating exciting, nourishing content that the audience will treasure for life.

Information on how to apply and what the administrators are looking for is available on the BFI's and the ACF websites.

ENDS

## **Notes to Editors**

- In 2016, 98% of children's content on commercial children's channels and 91% on public service broadcasters were repeats.
- In 2017, Ofcom found that over 40% of 12-15 year olds felt that the content they watched did not reflect their lives.
- Production levels of new children's content have declined over the past decade, with public service broadcasters spending roughly 40% less than they did in 2006 (down from £116 million in 2006 to £70 million in 2017).
- Commercial radio is listened to by 65% of UK adults (over 35 million people) every week.
- Commercial radio stations broadcast an average of 13 hours of public service content each week, mostly consisting of news and sport, travel, weather, charity appeals and local events.
- The pilot is also aimed at stimulating greater variety in a market where the BBC is often the dominant buyer and broadcaster of children's content. In 2016, the BBC accounted for 87% of all first run UK originated children's programming by PSBs.

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## **Press release: £60 million search begins for the next Peppa Pig, Art Attack and Desert Island Discs**

Multimillion pound funds for UK radio and television now open and accepting funding applications