

# News story: HM Treasury and HMRC invest in customs training and automation

The government fully acknowledges the potential capacity challenges facing the customs intermediaries sector in the unlikely event of no deal being reached before the UK leaves the EU on 29 March 2019.

Therefore, HM Treasury and HMRC have designed a package of measures to support the intermediaries sector to expand ahead of March 2019. This will include a one-off investment of £8 million to support broker training and increased automation.

Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Mel Stride, said:

HM Treasury and HMRC have been engaging extensively with the customs intermediaries sector on EU exit, including customs brokers, freight forwarders and fast parcel operators. We have listened to their concerns about the extra demand for customs broker services in the unlikely event that the UK leaves the EU without a deal in March 2019.

That is why we plan to invest £8m for customs training and automation to support the sector to expand to help meet the potential increase in demand for this scenario.

This investment will involve:

1. a procurement process to establish contracts with training providers for creating and delivering new training courses and/or expanding existing material for customs brokers to assist in a no-deal scenario. The government's engagement with key intermediaries and training providers identified a lack of widely available and accessible training provision for customs brokers. It wants to support the sector to train more people, to a good standard.
2. a grant scheme to support intermediaries and/or traders with the upfront costs of training their employees. The government understands that intermediaries train their staff using both internal and/or external training provision. This element will support customs intermediaries with some of these upfront costs to make it easier to train staff.
3. a grant scheme to support investment in automation in the sector. The government understands that upfront cost is a key barrier to automation, particularly for smaller businesses. This will seek to improve the productivity of smaller intermediaries that rely on manual data input to complete customs declarations by supporting them with the set up costs

of IT solutions.

We expect the procurement process for establishing contracts with training providers to start in coming weeks, with the grant schemes to support upfront costs of training or increased automation expected to be available in late autumn.

Further details will be published on GOV.UK in due course. There is no need to contact HMRC at this stage.

---

## **[Press release: New River Wear fish pass is complete](#)**

An Environment Agency project to safeguard the flood warning service for Stanhope has also improved fish passage on the River Wear.

---

## **[News story: New measure to tackle grade inflation at university](#)**

Universities will be discouraged from inflating students' results with 'grade inflation' one of the key criteria institutions will be measured against in the government's national rating system, Universities Minister Sam Gyimah announced today (22 October).

The Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF) rates universities with gold, silver or bronze scores based on a number of criteria including their overall provision, student experience, teaching quality and whether courses are sufficiently stretching enough – the government is also piloting a subject specific version of it.

Announcing a second year of pilots to move subject-level TEF a step closer, Sam Gyimah confirmed today that these will also look at grade inflation, with TEF panellists reviewing evidence to see whether universities are taking a responsible approach to degree grading and not awarding excessive numbers of firsts and 2:1s. It means a university's provider-level rating of gold, silver or bronze will take their approach to tackling grade inflation into account.

Grade inflation will be an important feature of the criteria considered alongside how a university is stretching its students through course design

and assessment, and through their ability to develop independence, knowledge and skills that reflect their full potential. It forms a key part of the government's commitment to delivering real choice for prospective students.

This is one of the first measures taken by the government to tackle grade inflation, with the plans confirmed in the government's response to the [subject-level TEF consultation](#).

In the last five years alone, figures from the Higher Education Stats Authority show the proportion of graduates who gained a first class degree has increased from 18% in 2012/13 to 26% in 2016/17, which means over a quarter of graduates are now securing the top grade.

Universities Minister Sam Gyimah said:

When you look at what makes our universities so prestigious, it comes down to the value of our degrees – they open up a huge range of opportunities and the chance to step into a rewarding and highly-skilled career.

The value of those degrees is threatened by grade inflation and that is a problem for students, employers and the universities themselves. These new measures will look at how we can protect our globally recognised higher education system by discouraging universities from undermining the reverence a degree qualification from the UK commands.

The Universities Minister has also outlined in the government's consultation response that a year of pilots will take place this academic year to see how this works in practice, involving 50 higher education institutions.

The government's response additionally confirmed that plans to extend TEF to subject-level have moved a step closer, meaning individual subjects will also be rated with a gold, silver or bronze rating in the coming years.

Subject-level TEF builds on the greater choice being made available to prospective students by letting them look behind provider-level ratings and access information about teaching quality for a specific subject.

The new subject-level framework will take into account student feedback, drop-out rates and graduate outcomes – helping students to make the right decision, which for many is life-changing.

---

**[Speech: Approbation of the Lord Mayor](#)**

# Elect ceremony

My Lord Mayor Elect, I am commanded by Her Majesty The Queen to convey Her Majesty's express approval of the choice of the citizens of London in electing you to be Lord Mayor for the coming year.

I am delighted to welcome you, your family and other distinguished guests to formally convey this message.

May I also welcome you, Mr Recorder, and pay tribute to the huge contribution you have made – and continue to make – to our justice system.

My Lord Mayor Elect, you will be the 691st Lord Mayor, coming with an extensive background in finance and banking and having been Alderman for the City of London ward of Coleman Street since 2013.

It is a ward that, by virtue of Finsbury Circus, not only provides an oasis of calm right in the heart of the City, but historically, has also proved a refuge for Members of Parliament in times of political and constitutional crisis.

Most famously, for five MPs in 1642, Coleman Street served as a sanctuary from Charles I who tried to have them arrested. My Lord Mayor Elect, it's good to know where to head if things get really bad over the next months ahead!

I'd also like to take this opportunity to recognise the outgoing Lord Mayor. Charles, your focus on rebuilding trust has been timely in its need and already tangible in its effect.

Your launch of the 'Business of Trust' programme is an important step, not only in rebuilding trust that has been eroded from past events, but in building new guiding principles that will sustain people's trust in institutions and businesses for our digital and technologically-driven future.

My Lord Mayor Elect, your priority for the year ahead also looks to the future. You have said your focus will be 'Shaping tomorrow's City today'. In so doing, you will promote and champion digital skills, innovation and technology, with a particular focus on young people.

I welcome that important agenda. Ensuring we have a skilled workforce fit for the future is essential not just for the competitiveness of the City, and for the whole of the UK, but in ensuring people are equipped to seize the new opportunities that will be before them.

We both share a passion for the importance of education as a foundation in life and in the belief that every young person, no matter what their circumstances, should be able to develop their potential and have the same opportunities.

You have never forgotten how instrumental the education you received at King Edward's, Witley was in shaping your future. With the school's origins in educating the poor and under-privileged, and its links with the City of London, it clearly also served – and continues to serve – as an inspiration.

In your role as a school governor there and through your support of education charities and initiatives – such as Barclays Life Skills – you have sought to help young people get that good start in life and develop the skills they need to seize opportunities and fulfil their ambitions.

And the fact is, today, many of those opportunities for young people lie in – or will come out of – the technology revolution. It's a revolution that is transforming every aspect of our personal lives, civil society, our courts and justice system, government, workplaces and the wider economy.

Mr Recorder, as you alluded to, we have a choice. We can either let this revolution sweep over us, or we can prepare for what's on the horizon and equip ourselves with the means to harness its power.

It's an important area of work for the Ministry of Justice in terms of looking at and anticipating the kind of justice system we need for the future and the skills we need from those working in it.

I welcome the focus you will bring to preparing the City for the future during your term in office. And in particular, making sure that we are giving today's young people the skills and support they need to succeed in the world of tomorrow, to ensure that nobody is left behind and that we are all masters of, and not slaves to, this exciting revolution.

My Lord Mayor Elect, as we have heard, you and your family are keen skiers. I want to end with what Olympic skier Lindsey Vonn said when she was asked the other week why she was retiring at the age of 33. She said:

I really would like to be active when I'm older....

...so I have to look to the future and not just be so focused on what's in front of me.

As well as being very telling about the toll skiing can take, it speaks to the foresight that you will bring to your Mayoralty – of shaping tomorrow's City today. You might say, it's about looking ahead to the next summit as well as to the next slalom.

The roots of the City of London run deep with its enduring traditions and institutions. But, as with the City's skyline, it also constantly looks to the future – evolving, innovating and renewing – attracting new ideas and fresh blood to flow through its ancient arteries. That is what keeps the City's heart beating strongly.

My Lord Mayor Elect, I know through your passion for supporting opportunity and focus on nurturing the skills and talent we need for the future, that

heart will beat with ever-more relevance and resonance as you shape the City for the world of tomorrow.

---

## [News story: MAIB has a new Chief Inspector](#)



The Department for Transport has announced the appointment of [Captain Andrew Moll](#) as the new Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents, the head of the Marine Accident Investigation Branch (MAIB). He has been the interim Chief Inspector since his predecessor, Steve Clinch, retired in June of this year, and he takes up the post with immediate effect.

Andrew joined the MAIB in 2005 as a Principal Inspector, and assumed the post of Deputy Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents in 2010. Prior to this, he spent 27 years as an officer in the Royal Navy, rising to the rank of Captain. He left the Royal Navy in 2005 specifically to join the MAIB.

Following the announcement, Andrew said:

I will build on the MAIB's reputation for excellence in accident investigation, by ensuring that all investigations continue to meet the standards of rigour, objectivity and integrity for which the Branch is widely acclaimed. By working closely with the industry and other stakeholders, while maintaining the essential independence of the Branch, I will ensure that the UK remains at the forefront of marine safety.

Published 22 October 2018