

News story: Merger of credit score providers raises competition concerns

ClearScore and Experian are the first and second-largest providers of free credit score checking in the UK. Experian is also the largest paid credit score checking provider. Millions of people in the UK use the companies' services each year to check their credit scores, understand their finances, and choose loans and credit cards online.

As Experian and ClearScore are the market leaders in this field, and each other's main competitor, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) is concerned that the merged company would be less likely to innovate to help people better understand their finances, potentially leading to people paying more for credit cards and loans.

Experian and ClearScore have until 27 July to offer solutions to resolve the CMA's concerns, otherwise the merger will be referred for an in-depth phase 2 investigation.

More information can be found on the [Experian/ClearScore case page](#).

Open consultation: Proposals for navigation boat registration charges 2019 to 2021

Updated: Added consultation document.

The current cost of the service we provide across our waterways far exceeds the income we receive from customer charges.

We need to make our waterways more financially sustainable so we are carrying out a full review of navigation charges. We want our charges to be fair, transparent and linked more closely to the cost of the service we provide for boating customers.

This 2-year proposal will allow us time to fully develop our future charging plans and look at new ways to fund the service. We'll use feedback from customers to make our work more financially sustainable, whilst providing customers with greater certainty about the charges they'll need to pay until 2021.

News story: Haulage and Trailers Act bolsters EU exit preparations

New legislation on cross-border haulage has today (19 July 2018) been given Royal Assent marking a significant step in the government's preparations for exiting the European Union.

The Haulage Permits and Trailer Registration Act will ensure that the UK has the powers it needs to support British hauliers to continue operating internationally after exiting the EU.

As our recent White Paper set out, the government's overall aim in its negotiations with the EU is to retain reciprocal access for road hauliers.

However, it is possible that the future exit deal could require a form of permitting system and the government needs to have legal frameworks in place to introduce a new administrative structure. This act provides the government with this flexibility.

Transport Secretary Chris Grayling said:

Royal Assent of the Haulage Permits and Trailer Registration Act is a significant step in our preparations for exiting the European Union.

The haulage industry is at the heart of our trading relationship with the EU and we are confident that we will reach an agreement to maintain the current liberal access that is beneficial to both sides.

But these powers give us the flexibility to have systems in place if a permit system is required and provides reassurance for hauliers to continue planning for a smooth EU exit.

The act comes as part of wider government preparations to ensure the UK can deliver a smooth and orderly EU exit.

The key elements of the act include:

- establishment of a framework for the regulation and enforcement of existing permit arrangements with non-EU countries which may be used, if necessary, to manage permits arrangement with EU, ensuring hauliers can obtain the necessary paperwork to provide services after the UK leaves the EU
- the establishment of a trailer registration scheme allowing UK trailers users to meet the registration standards outlined in the 1968 Vienna

Convention – this will ensure UK operators driving on the continent can comply with the requirements of those EU countries which require the registration of all trailers travelling on their roads

The DVSA is making progress in creating a permit administration scheme and the DVLA on establishing a trailer registration scheme. It is intended that both will be open for applications later this year.

The department has also begun working with stakeholders to produce a trailer safety report. This follows extensive debate around trailer safety during Parliamentary consideration of the act. The report, scheduled to be published by July 2019, will consider whether mandatory registration and periodic roadworthiness testing should be extended to additional trailer categories.

News story: New powers to kick-start the rollout of electric chargepoints across the nation

- massive improvement of electric charging infrastructure across the country as Autonomous and Electric Vehicles Act becomes law
- motorway services will be upgraded for the electric vehicle revolution
- insurance rules modernised to cover self-driving vehicles

The UK took a major step in its electric vehicle revolution later today (19 July 2018) when the Automated and Electric Vehicles Act passed through Parliament.

The act is a significant step towards improved air quality, cutting congestion, boosted road safety and the creation of thousands of jobs across the UK.

The [AEV Act](#) will see a massive improvement in electric chargepoint availability; giving the government new powers to ensure motorway services are upgraded with plenty of points, and even allowing mayors to request installations at large fuel retailers in their areas.

The new laws will improve consumer confidence in charging their vehicles by:

- making sure that public chargepoints are compatible with all vehicles
- standardising how they are paid for
- setting standards for reliability

Jesse Norman, Roads Minister, said:

The UK is becoming a world leader in the roll-out of low-emission transport. Today we have passed a significant milestone in that journey.

The increasing automation of our cars is transforming the way we drive, and the government is steadily updating our laws in order to prepare for the future.

This act will ensure that the UK's infrastructure and insurance system is ready for the biggest transport revolution in a century.

The act will also bring automated vehicle insurance in line with longstanding motor insurance practice, ensuring that motorists are covered both when they are driving, and when the driver has legitimately handed control to the vehicle.

The measures in the new act form part of the government's recently launched [Road to Zero strategy](#). The strategy sets the stage for the biggest technology advancement to hit UK roads since the invention of the combustion engine

The UK will also be hosting the world's first [Zero Emission Vehicle summit](#) later this year in Birmingham, promoting the UK as a world leader for investment in and uptake of zero emission vehicles.

[News story: Defence Secretary meets civil society groups to discuss human rights in conflict-affected areas](#)

Staff from organisations representing the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Iraq, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Ukraine, as well as several international action groups, were welcomed to London to discuss the issues faced in their countries, particularly by women.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Conflict can have devastating effects for anyone caught in its path, but life can be particularly traumatic for women. They are subject to violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, and their calls for justice are often falling on deaf ears.

I am determined we do more to listen to those who are often not given a voice. It is only by understanding the situation faced by

women and girls that we will be able to protect them.

The event allowed the Defence Secretary to gain a greater understanding of the security situation faced by women, men, girls and boys in conflict-affected areas. In turn this will allow the military to develop better plans for protection of civilians.

The meeting was the first time a UK Defence minister has sat with civil societies groups specifically representing women's human rights from areas affected by conflict. The groups represented included Gender Action for Peace and Security, Action Aid, International Alert, the International Rescue Committee, Plan, Saferworld, Women's League for Peace and Freedom, Women for Women International, Security Women, Nigeria INGO Forum and Legal Action Worldwide.

The UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security has currently nine focus countries, five of which were discussed yesterday: DRC, Iraq, Nigeria, Somalia and South Sudan. These nations either have UK military directly deployed there, or are nations where UK-trained peacekeepers are deployed.

The UK has already increased peacekeeping in Sudan and Somalia, has deployed four Military Gender and Protection Advisers to DRC and has established a UK centre of excellence to integrate guidelines on women, peace and security into its work. It is also among the first countries to publish a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.